

INDONESIA UPDATES

Responding, Mitigating, and Recovering from
the Covid-19 Pandemic: Indonesia's Experience

CREATIVE MINDS

Meet the creator of Mila

SPECIAL REPORTS

What the West Needs to Understand
About the Cartoon Protests

indobuzz

Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Brussels

ISSUE #3 DECEMBER 2020

Resilient Indonesia: Emerging from the Covid-19 Crisis



INTERVIEW: AMBASSADOR ANDRI HADI OF INDONESIA

COFFEE! AND BEYOND Indonesian Coffee at a Glance

Photo Credit: Amir Tondra

CONSUME YOUR VITAMIN SEA



GILI TRAWANGAN, INDONESIA The Handcrafts of the Gods

Gili Trawangan or Gili T, is where travelers flock to enjoy a laid back atmosphere during day light and still are up to enjoy moonlit parties all night by the beach. You can also enjoy a great scuba dive and circle the island on bicycle to catch the most incredible sunset

→ For more info please visit [Indonesia.travel](https://indonesia.travel)

* Image source : Fiky Auliya (image Indonesia travel)



THE EDITORS

Editor-in-chief

Dara YUSILAWATI, First Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Socio-Cultural Affairs, Embassy of Indonesia in Brussels

Editors and main contributors

Dara YUSILAWATI, First Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Socio-Cultural Affairs, Embassy of Indonesia in Brussels

Nefertiti HINDRATMO, First Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Socio-Cultural Affairs, Embassy of Indonesia in Brussels

Elisabeth Sri Unggul Ida MULYANI, Staff, Embassy of Indonesia in Brussels

Contributors

Alberto **TURKSTRA** and Barbara **DIETRICH**

Amb. Yuri O. **THAMRIN**

Dr. Dino Patti **DJALAL**

Dewi Putri **MEGAWATI**

Haryo **NINDITO**

Hijjaz **SUTRIADI**

Lynn **KURNIAWAN**

Martine **MILLET-VERVAT**

Olivia **N MARYATMO**

Sasi **HEMAWARDHANI**

Jessica Clara **SHINTA**

Interviews

Amb. Andri **HADI**

François Van **HOYDONCK**

Philippe **DELAISSE**

Cover Picture Contributors

Amir **TOHA** (IG: @amirtohatj)

Martine **MILLET-VERVAT**

Research and Administration Team

Desti **PERTIWI**

Tovanni **PANJAITAN**

Proofreader

Tamryn Romayne **MARSHALL** (via Upwork.com)

Graphic Design

Moh **RIKZA**

Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia

Boulevard de la Woluwe, 38
1200 Brussels Belgium

Email: publicdiplomacy@embassyofindonesia.eu
<https://kemlu.go.id/brussels/en>

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AMBASSADOR'S NOTES

Dear Friends of Indonesia,

When I arrived in Brussels on 11 November 2020, the global Covid-19 pandemic was hitting hard globally for the second time, including in Belgium and most parts of Europe. Now that the vaccines are finally here and have been rolled out in some parts of the world, it gives me great relief and confidence that eventually the pandemic will be over — hopefully soon.

As 2020 is very much the year of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Embassy decided to highlight how Indonesia is doing during this difficult year. Although our economy was hit hard, especially in the second quarter with a deficit of around 5.5%, it improved marginally in the third quarter, with growth of around 1.5% compared to the previous quarter. This was thanks to a stronger domestic market and more effective government policies in response to the pandemic. If we do better in the fourth quarter, we are hoping for an annual contraction of between 1.7% and 2.2% this year. In this edition, we are pleased to present you with a summary of Indonesia's policies in response to and mitigation of this pandemic. We also highlight the other side of the pandemic, which is a strong philanthropic spirit among the Indonesian community. In fact, besides the government, society is doing awe-inspiring work during the pandemic to help its fellow communities. Therefore, this year's theme is "Resilient Indonesia: Emerging from the Covid-19 Crisis".

The issue of Islamophobia, especially in response to certain events in France, was again highlighted this year, as well as in Indonesia. Therefore, we have included in this edition a great piece written by my colleague Amb. Dino Patti Djalal on "What the West needs to understand about the cartoon protests", which was published in the Jakarta Post on 10 November 2020. We hope this article will enlighten us on the issues of Islam and the Muslim community.

Since 2020 is a "Green Deal" year, we have included a few articles about Indonesia's commitment to sustainability post the Covid-19 recovery, such as on the issues of palm oil and forestry. To satisfy your longing for Bali, our Belgian colleague Martine Millet-Vervat is very excited to share her Bali love story in this edition. Articles on Indonesian traditional jamu magic drinks and Indonesian specialty coffee are also included to give you a better taste of Indonesia.

Last but not least, I am so excited to be working closely with everyone to elevate Indonesia's relations with Belgium, Luxembourg, and the European Union. I am pleased to share with you in this bulletin my short interview in which I explain my mission here in Belgium. I hope you will find this bulletin enjoyable and informative.

I wish you a happy, healthy, and more promising 2021.

Andri Hadi

Ambassador of Indonesia



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INDONESIA UPDATES



Responding, Mitigating, and Recovering from the Covid-19 Pandemic: Indonesia's Experience

DARA YUSILAWATI

2020 has been a tough year for everyone. Not a single country is immune to the coronavirus (Covid-19). The impact of this pandemic is incalculable and unimaginably massive to everyone. For Indonesia, the largest economy in Southeast Asia with a population of approximately 270 million people, responding to and mitigating the pandemic has been very challenging. At least 26.42 million people still live below the poverty line, 74 million people work in informal sectors (with an average income of only US\$100 - 200 per month), and 85 percent of the population's health care is co-funded by the government. Therefore, dealing with the pandemic in Indonesia is a huge responsibility as both health and economic issues must be addressed at the same time.

While the Indonesian government prioritizes health issues for its citizens, it is "forced" to enact policies that will not create new problems, especially when people cannot avoid becoming victims of the virus, as well as poverty and hunger. The government has tried its best to take into account all considerations to formulate balanced and effective policies that can help people to "survive" and "live with" the pandemic. Its approach to overcoming this pandemic, therefore, focuses on two elements: preserving life (health) and maintaining people's livelihoods.

To preserve the life (health) of the population, the government has implemented numerous policies, including enforcing border controls, strict health protocols, and carrying out large-scale lockdowns (*Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar* or PSBB) locally. It has also expanded testing, quarantine, and treatment capacity, empowered health workers and improved their ser-

vices, provided medicines, established health facilities, and provided the population with access to vaccines.

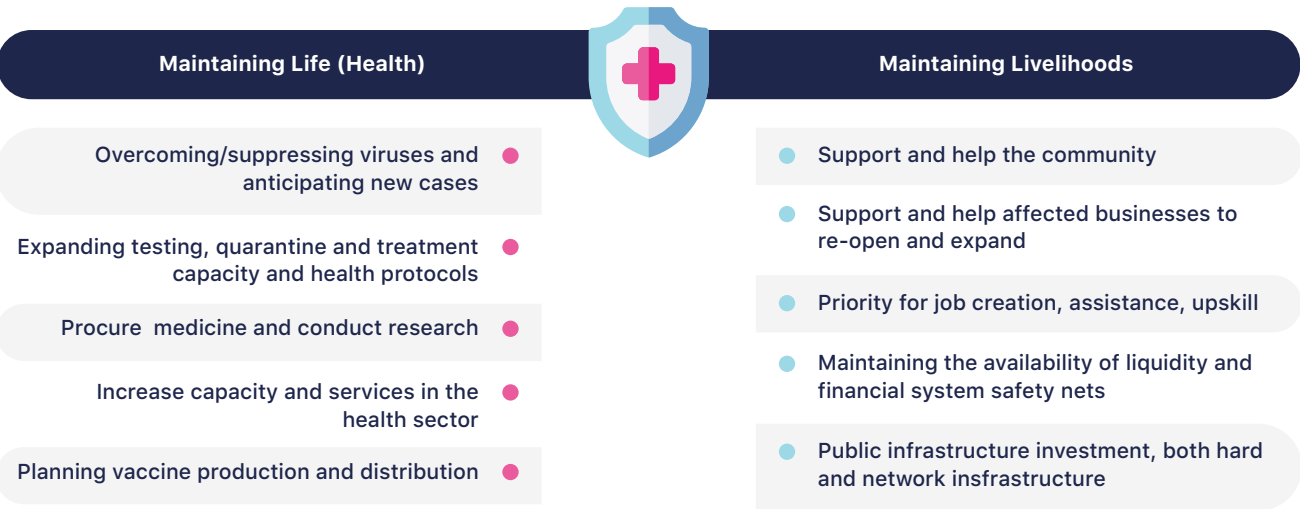
To maintain people's livelihoods, the government has provided support to less fortunate communities, among others, by lowering electricity tariffs, relaxing taxes, easing credit, creating new jobs, providing no-work compensation, as well as providing daily support, such as food parcels. With the lockdowns, tourism has vanished, and businesses have been badly hit by the pandemic. The government has also created support mechanisms for affected businesses by providing fiscal incentives, maintaining the liquidity of financial systems, encouraging domestic consumption, and creating a better investment climate.

Fiscal package for mitigating the pandemic

To fund all the above programs, the government has allocated a fiscal package amounting to RP695.20 trillion (US\$46.7 billion), which is equivalent to 4.3 percent of GDP for the fiscal year 2020 alone. The package is divided into six subprograms/measures, namely: 1) strengthening the health sector; 2) providing social protection for the most vulnerable; 3) empowering sectoral and local governments in handling Covid-19; 4) providing fiscal incentives for business; 5) empowering small and medium-sized enterprises; and 6) providing finances for the economic recovery phase.

As of 18 November 2020, about 60 percent of the total funds have been used, and social and business support has been distributed. With the second wave's worse impact in the second half of the year, the gov-

Two Strategies Facing the Covid-19 Pandemic



ernment aims to better mitigate the pandemic and has set itself the target of spending all allocated funds by the end of 2020, including the purchase and distribution of vaccines.

We are relieved that Covid-19 vaccines have been announced at the end of November 2020. They have been clinically tested and are more than 95 percent effective. However, the pandemic is still far from over. The vaccines will not be immediately available to everyone. Therefore, next year we will still have to live with this pandemic and start recovering from it. Even without a third wave in 2021, the number of people living below the poverty line in Indonesia will certainly increase, and all the long-term impacts of the pandemic will start to surface. To remedy these possible situations, the government has allocated IDR356.6 trillion plus IDR15.8 trillion of additional expenditure (total of IDR372.3 trillion) to support the national economic recovery in 2021. The Indonesian government has also drawn up an exit strategy that will rely on the implementation of the "New Normal Scenario" that aims to maintain the balance between the health and welfare aspects of the population.

Responding to the pandemic: Indonesia's experience

Besides the measures and policies mentioned above, Indonesia has also attuned its regulations and policies in accordance with its "unique" circumstances. One example is the repatriation of Indonesian citizens in Wuhan, China, and many of its migrant workers from around the world. Given that many Indonesian workers are from the informal sector and therefore cannot bear the cost of returning home, the Indonesian government, mainly through its missions abroad, sponsored, arranged, and funded the repatriation process. By July 2020, approximately 121,638 Indonesians had returned to Indonesia.



BUDGET
IDR6.73 Trillion
Period of Implementation
Oct - Dec 2020



MAIN TARGET
48 Million
Students, Teachers,
& Lecturers

STUDENTS Early Childhood Education	STUDENTS Elementary to Senior High School	TEACHERS Early Childhood to Senior High School	LECTURERS & UNIVERSITY STUDENT
20 GB/Month	35 GB/Month	42 GB/Month	50 GB/Month
- 5 GB General Quota - 15 GB Study Quota - Duration : 4 Months	- 5 GB General Quota - 30 GB Study Quota - Duration : 4 Months	- 5 GB General Quota - 37 GB Study Quota - Duration : 4 Months	- 5 GB General Quota - 45 GB Study Quota - Duration : 4 Months

Internet quota assistance consists of: **General Quota** - Quota that can be used to access all webpages and applications
Study Quota - Quota that can only be used to access learning pages and applications

Another example of the Indonesian approach is to provide free tests at airports and quarantine facilities at a dedicated Covid-19 facility 'Wisma Atlet' and 'Asrama Haji' for Indonesians and foreigners returning or travelling to Indonesia for essential journeys. Although these facilities are not considered fancy, many people appreciate this service as it has helped slow the spread of the virus. In most countries, travelers bear the cost of the test at the airports as well as the quarantine hotel.

While many countries in Europe can easily move their education systems online (school from home), this solution was not easy to implement in Indonesia. Even in big cities like Jakarta, Surabaya, and Bandung, many children do not have good internet access. Although many Indonesians have mobile phones, they have to spend extra rupiah to use the internet. In response to this situation, the government has provided special internet assistance to students from elementary to higher education, teachers, and lecturers to support the implementation of effective teaching and learning activities. While this challenge was identified belatedly, at least students from low-income families can now continue their learning and schooling from home.

The following infographics summarize some of the measures and policies taken by the Indonesian government (as of November 2020) to respond to, mitigate, and recover from the Covid-19 pandemic. As the pandemic continues, some of these policies may evolve in accordance with the latest developments.

Concerted Efforts to Mitigate Covid-19 Risks

General Measures, among others:

- Establishment of the COVID-19 Task Force (Presidential Decree No. 9, 20 March 2020).
- Implementation of emergency status from early March for COVID-19 until 29 May 2020.
- Massive promotion of health protocols: social distancing, hand washing, masks, working from home, and prohibition of activities with large crowds.
- Border mobility control of Indonesian citizens and foreigners.
- Evacuation of Indonesian citizens from affected countries.
- Increasing Covid-19 testing capabilities.
- Establishment of designated hospitals on Galang island.
- Utilization of Wisma Atlet Kemayoran as a designated Covid-19 emergency hospital.
- Empowerment of health workers, volunteers, and non-medical personnel.
- Upgrading of 132 hospitals' capacities to treat patients with Covid-19.
- Establishment of contingency plans at regional and local level.
- Immediate procurement of Covid-19 related drugs and personal protective equipment.
- Implementation of a large-scale lockdown in the country, starting locally on 15 March. This lockdown was reactivated during the second wave until 21 December 2020.
- Issuance of Presidential Regulation No. 82/2020 on the Covid-19 Response and National Economic Recovery Committee in July 2020.

Trade Stimulus, among others:

- Reduction and simplification of restrictions on export activities to maintain export performance and competitiveness.
- Reduction and simplification of restrictions on import activities to ensure the availability of raw materials.
- Acceleration of export-import processes.
- Elimination of surveyor reports (LS) on mandatory commodities for 735 companies with good reputations.
- Improvement of the national logistics ecosystem.

Banking and Financial Sector, among others:

- One-year postponement of credit or leasing payments for loans up to Rp10 billion for MSMEs and informal workers.
- Postponement of credit or leasing payments without ceiling limits in accordance with the debtors' ability to pay the credit and the agreement with banks or leasing companies (for SMEs and non-SMEs).

Fiscal Support and Stimulus, among others:

- Launch of pre-employment cards in Bali, North Sulawesi, and the Riau Islands to accelerate job creation on a local level and then nationally. The cards provide holders with training programs and IDR3,500,000 stipends.
- Disbursements of the Noncash Food Assistance Program (BPNT) for poor families, initially IDR200,000 and then IDR500,000, for a six-month period commencing in March 2020.
- Stimulus package for housing.
- Reduction of the air passenger service fee (PSF) by 20% for March-May 2020.
- Discount on the price of aviation fuel at airports located around nine travel destinations for March-May 2020.
- Support grants for local governments affected by lower tax revenues from food service activities totaling IDR3.3 trillion.
- Relaxation of income taxes (PPh Article 21, 22, and 25) and relaxation of Value Added Tax (VAT) restitution.
- Issuance of a job creation law in November 2020 to accelerate job creation.
- Establishment of the Indonesia Sovereign Wealth Fund to pool investment funds and access global capital, primarily for infrastructure projects.
- Exemption of electricity costs for 3 months for the 24 million customers in the 450VA group, and a 50% payment reduction for the other 7 million customers receiving 900VA electricity.
- Provision of a one-time cash grant of IDR2,400.00 for small and medium enterprises affected by the crisis.
- Provision of a salary support/wage subsidy for 15.7 million workers, each receiving IDR600.00 per month for four months.
- Release of 22,158 prisoners to prevent infections among prisoners.

International and Regional Cooperation

- Working closely with ASEAN and ASEAN dialogue partners, such as ASEAN Plus Three, the US, Japan, China, and the EU.
- Cooperation on vaccines with China (Sinovac and Bio Farma), the UK, Russia, and UNICEF.
- Close cooperation with the World Health Organization.

Source:
Republic of Indonesia Presentation Book November 2020 by Bank of Indonesia.
Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia.
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.
www.kompas.com
www.thejakartapost.com

Solidarity in Times of Corona: Indonesia's Social and Resilient Spirit

ELISABETH IDA MULYANI

The COVID-19 pandemic has been hitting hard everywhere in the world. Amidst the economic and health problems caused by the novel coronavirus, symptoms of the very strong emotional toll it is having on individuals are also appearing, including fears, uncertainties, and doubts. How do Indonesians cope with all these inevitable repercussions of the current crisis, especially in the spirit of togetherness and "gotong royong" (roughly translated as communal work or neighbourly help), which is one of the Indonesian people's most prominent characteristics? Let's look at some initiatives undertaken by various groups of people during this precarious time.

GENDULI: From an alumni group to an emerging social commerce start-up

The lockdown that was imposed in some areas of Indonesia severely affected the farmers to the extent that they could not sell their produce due to the sharply decreasing demand from the hotel, restaurant, and catering (HORECA) sector, and especially the halting of transport services. Consequently, there was an oversupply of fresh vegetables that could not be held for a long time because of Indonesia's high temperatures and lack of storage facilities. Normally, people buy vegetables that are harvested on the same day or the day before. At the start of the pandemic, this oversupply resulted in extremely low prices for vegetables.

It started as a spontaneous act when some alumni of Universitas Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta began helping farmers around Mt. Merapi and Mt. Merbabu in the "Komunitas Petani Lereng Merapi dan Merbabu", the community of farmers on the slopes of the Merapi and Merbabu volcanoes. During a friendly visit to this community, they began identifying some of the problems the farmers were facing and decided to arrange a temporary order and delivery service for vegetables. They helped to sell and distribute the harvests under the name GENDULI, an acronym for "Gerakan Peduli Petani" (Solidarity Movement for the Farmers). They created a system of Open PO/Pending Orders, with different vegetable packages and prices. Using social media, they advertised the packages and carried out the sales. Each package consisted of ingredients for several dishes and included the recipes. Think of the "maaltijdbox" (meal box) that has gained popularity in Belgium and is provided by a number of companies and supermarkets. However, Genduli was a not-for-profit and fully voluntary movement. The

decision to offer packages with suggested recipes was a smart one as it got more farmers involved in the sales, instead of only selling per specific commodity. From April to June, Genduli worked tirelessly in 7 villages in Sleman, Boyolali, Klaten, and Magelang, with over 200 farmers involved. Due to the restrictions on transport, and limited storage/packing facilities and human resources (all of which was free assistance from other alumni), the maximum harvest of one commodity that could be distributed was "only" 2 tons, quoting Iqbal Tuwasikal, one of Genduli's founders. With 15 to 17 commodities in total, they distributed two harvests every week.

With the reinstatement of transport facilities and the opening of hotels, restaurants, and cafes, traditional markets are thriving again, and farmers can now resume trading on their own. Meanwhile, the Genduli team of six people is busy with preparations for an Agrotech start-up that is scheduled to be launched in the first quarter of 2021. Having secured funding from an angel investor, they are designing the online platform and app to expand their areas of operation, with the long-term goal of covering the whole of Indonesia. Today there are already 1,500 farmers who are ready to join Genduli Social Commerce as soon as it's established, and making daily deliveries. The sales and distribution will be local and the sources/farms mentioned, taking into account the environmental aspects, and also the short shelf life of the vegetables. Furthermore, Genduli works on a fair trade principle, whereby the farmers receive a higher price than the basic production cost, which is much fairer in comparison with sales to middlemen. There is also no exclusivity agreement, which means the farmers can sell their crops elsewhere too. Genduli plans to play an educational role: to the buyers, for example, about the



Mr. Iqbal Tuwasikal, one of the Genduli pioneers, showing his crop for the package

importance of buying locally, why their prices may be higher, et cetera; while for the farmers, there will be a sharing of knowledge and technology. Genduli is committed to supplying very fresh products, fair-trade, environmentally responsible practises (with some organic produce), social involvement, and education. Kudos!

● **From Indonesian artists with love: Greeting cards for Brussels retirement homes**

During the first lockdown in Belgium, Indobuzz's contributor had to self-quarantine after returning from the United States. Being confined in her small apartment without a garden was by no means a desperate time. In fact, it was the perfect moment to start a collaboration! Answering the call for voluntary works from Brussels Helps, your contributor contacted three Indonesian artist friends who agreed to do a drawing for cards for the elderly and care personnel in Brussels retirement homes. The first few dozen cards were printed with a simple home office printer on the only available paper since the non-essential shops, including those selling paper, were closed at the time.

Yudha Sandy, who exhibited in Belgium at Euro- palia Indonesia in 2017-2018, created an image of a wonderful world in which humans, animals, and the modern environment coexist in harmony. Erwan Su- santo's drawing of singing children conveyed a spirit of joyfulness and hope for better days in the future. In- spired by the need for WiFi connectivity in this digital era, Danang Catur made a drawing with an old-style woodcut print. Given the current lockdown and the problem of increasing loneliness among people, the Indonesian Embassy in Brussels responded to this in- itiative by offering more professionally printed cards to be sent to the elderly, as well as anyone who would be happy to receive a greeting card. Hundreds of cards will be sent out in collaboration with the Brussels Ou- derenplatform (BOP).



Greeting Card designed by Yudha Sandy



● **Indolux in Luxembourg**

In the early stages of the pandemic, Tieka, Aan, Tita, and Sahara (based in Indonesia) started a move- ment involving many Indonesians living in Luxem- bourg to help their fellow citizens back in their home country fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Luxembourg was also badly hit by the novel Coronavirus, but this did not discourage the Indonesian community in Luxembourg (INDOLUX) from reaching out to less fortunate communities in Indonesia, including single mothers, the elderly, homeless people, becak drivers, et cetera. Indolux has been registered as a non-profit organisation in Luxembourg since October 2019.

During the first wave of the pandemic, Indolux provided severely affected groups with daily staple products (*sembako/sembilan bahan pokok*, nine basic necessities including rice, meat, eggs, cooking oil, salt, among others) to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. Indolux also reached out to medical per- sonnel and crew at various hospitals in Jakarta, Java, and Bali, and provided them with healthy food for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. They also assisted the hospitals with medical supplies that are currently still scarce, such as hand sanitizers, surgical masks, disposable gloves, and personal protective equip- ment (PPE).

During the second wave of the pandemic, they again benefitted from selling "Indonesian and Lux- embourg flag" masks, thereby helping many Indone- sians in need. In the lead up to Christmas, they have started fundraising by selling batik mask pouches to bring a little bit of happiness to Indonesian kids cele- brating Christmas this year. However, these projects are not only for Indonesians, as Indolux also reached out to the CHL Strassen Luxembourg hospital to ex- press support for their medical personnel and health workers by providing simple breakfasts.

Indonesia – EU Relations: an Overview



• **1981**

Indonesia and the European Union relations started in 1981, when the EU and ASEAN established a formal cooperation. Mostly at the sideline of ASEAN meetings, Indonesian delegation and the EU's delegation first met and discussed their future engagement and cooperation.



3rd

32nd

The EU is Indonesia's third largest trading partner while Indonesia is the 32nd global trading partner for the EU.

• **1988**

In 1988, the European Commission established its representative in Jakarta, followed by the establishment of the Indonesian permanent representative to the European Union in Brussels in 1990.



The relations between the two continue to evolve and strengthen over the years. On 9 November 2009, the two signed the **Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Partnership and Cooperation**, which entered into force on 1 May 2014.

- Total trade in goods between the EU and Indonesia in 2019 amounted to €23.8 billion
- EU's exports worth €9.4 billion and Indonesia's exports worth €14.4 billion (Eurostat)
- EU is the 4th largest investor to Indonesia with investment amounted to €9.1 billion for five accumulative years from 2015 to 2019 (BKPM).



€23.8 billion

€9.1 billion

4th

HIGH LEVEL VISITS:

Visit of President Abdurrahman Wahid to Brussels. He met with the European Commission President Romano Prodi.

7 FEBRUARY 2000

Visit of the European Commission President José Manuel Barroso to Jakarta. He met with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

23 NOVEMBER 2007

Visit of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to Brussels. He met with the European Commission President José Manuel Barroso. They agreed on the need to enhance bilateral ties, especially in trade and investment.

14 DECEMBER 2009

2000

2007

2009

2017

9 OCTOBER 2017

Visit of Vice President Jusuf Kalla to Brussels at the sideline of Euro- palia Indonesia. He met with Vice President of the European Commission Andrus Ansip.

Visit of a delegation from the European Parliament to Jakarta. They met with Indonesian senior government officials and members of Indonesian parliament.

7 - 9 MAY 2018

2018

2016

21 APRIL 2016

Visit of President Joko Widodo to Brussels. He met with President of the European Council Donald Tusk as well as the President of the European Commission Jean Claude Juncker. Indonesia and the EU agreed to start a preparatory discussion for the **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**.

Visit of Vice President Jusuf Kalla to Brussels at the sideline of ASEM. He met with Vice President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans.

18 OCTOBER 2018

2018

MECHANISMS:

MAIN MECHANISM AND WORKING GROUP OF THE PCA:

- Ministerial Strategic Dialogue.
- Joint Committee (DG levels), 3rd round on 11 December 2018 in Brussels.
- Security Policy Dialogue, 5th round on 21 October 2020, held in hybrid.
- Human Rights Dialogue (HRD), 8th round was on 8 November 2019 in Brussels.

- Political Dialogue, 5th round on 17 November 2020, held in hybrid.
- High Level Dialogue on Maritime and Fisheries (HLDMPF), 3rd round was in October 2020, by video conference.
- Working Group on Environment and Climate Change (WGECC).
- Working Group on Trade and Investment (WGTI).
- Working Group on Development Cooperation (WGDC).

WITH THE PARLIAMENT OF EUROPE:

2

- Indonesia-EU Parliament Friendship Group (IEPFG), activated in 2016.
- Active Dialogue with the Delegation for Relations with the Countries of ASEAN (DASE).
- Active Dialogue with the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament (AFET).

TRADE NEGOTIATIONS:

3

- Indonesia - European Union Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (I-EU CEPA), was launched on 18 July 2016 and now has finished nine rounds of negotiations.
- A Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) in support of FTA negotiations between the EU and Indonesia, was launched in 2018.
- ASEAN - EU FTA negotiations.

OTHER ECONOMIC COOPERATION:

4

- Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade-Voluntary Partnership Agreement (FLEGT-VPA), agreed on 1 May 2014 and implemented since 15 November 2016.
- Arise+, Indonesia Trade Support Facility as a flagship initiative under the EU - Indonesia Cooperation Framework to enhance Indonesia's capacity to boost trade and competitiveness through technical assistance and funding.
- ASEAN - EU Strategic Partnership, agreed on 1 December 2020.
- Joint Working Group on Palm Oil between the EU and relevant ASEAN Member States.

SOCIO - CULTURE AND EDUCATION COOPERATION:

5

- Indonesia Interfaith Scholarship (IIS), since 2012. The 6th round of IIS was held in August 2019.
- Indonesia is a beneficiary country of Erasmus+.
- EU member states are beneficiaries of Darmasiswa Scholarship and Indonesian Social and Cultural Scholarship (BSBI).
- Various education cooperation (exchanges students/lectures) and scholarship programs.

EU-INDONESIA: TRADE IN GOODS

2017	€15.2 billion	€9.3 billion	€24.5 billion
2018	€15.0 billion	€8.9 billion	€23.9 billion
2019	€14.4 billion	€9.4 billion	€23.8 billion

EU-INDONESIA: TRADE IN SERVICES

2017	€2.0 billion	€3.8 billion	€5.8 billion
2018	€2.4 billion	€4.3 billion	€6.7 billion
2019	€2.4 billion	€4.3 billion	€6.7 billion

Source: Eurostat

- EU is the 4th largest investor to Indonesia with investment amounted to

USD11,5 Billion (€9.1 billion)

for five accumulative years (2015-2019)

or

USD15.10 Billion (€12 billion)

including Switzerland.



EU'S INVESTMENT 2016 - 2019:

2016	US\$ 2,6 billion	(2819 projects)
2017	US\$ 3,2 billion	(3072 projects)
2018	US\$ 2,1 billion	(2966 projects)
2019	US\$ 2,7 billion	(2402 projects)

Source: Indonesian Investment Board (BKPM)

EU'S TOURISTS TO INDONESIA:

2017	1.751.495
2018	1.789.923
2019	1.811.092

Source: Indonesian Bureau of Statistics (BPS).

Navigating the Ship during Thunderstorms:
A talk with Ambassador Andri Hadi

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RESILIENT INDONESIA: EMERGING FROM THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Navigating the Ship during Thunderstorms: A talk with Ambassador Andri Hadi

On 18 December 2020, our Indobuzz team, Elisabeth Ida Mulyani and Dara Yusilawati, had the opportunity to meet with the new designated Ambassador of Indonesia to Belgium, Luxembourg, and the European Union, the very friendly and welcoming H. E. Ambassador Andri Hadi.

EI: What came to your mind and how did you feel when you first learned about your assignment in Belgium, Luxembourg, and the EU?

AH: I was excited. Belgium, Luxembourg, and the European Union are good friends and strategic partners of Indonesia. Belgium is one of the first countries in Europe that recognized Indonesia's independence; Luxembourg is the financial capital of Europe; and the EU is the largest supranational regional organization in the world consisting of 27 member countries. I feel very blessed.

DY: What are your vision and main missions in Belgium, Luxembourg, and the EU as directed by the President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo?

AH: President Joko Widodo expressed his hope that my assignment to Brussels can help elevate Indonesia's friendly relations with Belgium, Luxembourg, and the EU, based on equality and respect. He asked me to continue and, if necessary, establish new mutually beneficial cooperation with Belgium, Luxembourg, and the EU in all fields and sectors.

Translating this task, therefore, my missions here are, firstly, to expand market access for Indonesian products and services to Europe; secondly, to attract more investment from Europe to Indonesia; and thirdly, to promote a better understanding of Indonesia, a country with the largest Muslim population in the world that is tolerant, democratic, and plural. I also would like to advance our multilateral cooperation with Belgium, Luxembourg, and the EU in various multilateral and international fora for a better world order. Finally, since my assignment here is also to serve the Indonesian community, I would like to improve our Embassy's service and protection for the Indonesian community here.

EI: What pending matters are your priorities in the first quarter of your posting, and what goals have you set yourself to achieve?

AH: This is my first posting in Europe, after the United States, Canada, and Asia. In my first quarter here, naturally, I would first like to gain a better understanding of the EU's communities, policies, and member states. As you may know, Indonesia, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the European Union have abundant potential to explore. Our relations are at a good point now, but there is always room for improvement. I would love to explore deeper, so our potential is "not left untapped".

With Belgium, I am happy to share with you that we are finalizing an MoU on Bilateral Consultation. Our Foreign Ministers will sign this MoU in circular. This mechanism will certainly help



Ambassador Andri Hadi

us to intensify our bilateral relations. Indonesia has been benefiting from the successful development of artificial insemination technology and embryo transfer from Belgian Blue. I am grateful to Belgians for this. I also see a big potential cooperation with Belgium in chocolate and coffee. Belgium produces the world's best chocolate, certainly has a quite large number of coffee drinkers; while Indonesia is one of the biggest producers of cocoa and the world's best coffee. There are so many untapped potentials with Belgium that I would like to explore, especially in trade and investment. Our National Counter Terrorism Agency (BNPT) and Belgium's Coordination Unit Threat Analysis (CUTA) have been working closely on cooperation in counter terrorism. I hope this MoU on counter terrorism cooperation can be finalized in the near future.

Just recently in December 2020, Indonesia and Luxembourg have agreed to establish an Air Service Agreement (ASA). The Indonesian Transport Minister has signed the Agreement and in turn the Minister for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure of Luxembourg will also sign the Agreement. I hope this agreement will bring the two countries even closer as it will enable direct flights between Luxembourg and Indonesia. I believe Indonesia and Luxembourg's relations have a promising future. Indonesia has a quite strong practice of 'Syariah' Islamic banking, and I know Luxembourg would be interested as it was one of the first countries in Europe to take an interest in Islamic finance. Indonesia is also interested in green bonds and this potential will be further explored with Luxembourg.

With the EU, I am excited that the Joint Working Group on Palm Oil between the EU and relevant ASEAN member states is finally agreed just now. I think this is how Indonesia and the EU should work in the future, focused on the way out that is mutually beneficial for both parties. With the EU and ASEAN being strategic partners, I truly hope this will lead to the right path for Indonesia and the EU.

Being just two months in Belgium, to be honest, it is regretful to see an extensive practice of discriminatory labelling against palm oil here in Europe. The European consumers should not be worried. Our palm oil is strictly regulated and certified according to international sustainability standards. I learned that Indonesia needs to work harder on promoting our sustainable palm oil to the European consumers. Palm oil is an important commodity for Indonesia. It is the source of livelihood of at least 16 million people. It is an important element for Indonesia to be able to meet its 2030 SDGs' target. The government is working hard to make sure that our palm oil will not jeopardize our environment.

It is my wish that we can conclude the Indonesia - European Union Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (I-EU CEPA) at the earliest, hopefully by the end of 2021. I am proud that Indonesia was the first country to have the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade-Voluntary Partnership Agreement (FLEGT-VPA) with the EU, which was implemented in November 2016. I would like to see an effective implementation of this great milestone from both sides.

I believe Indonesia and the EU's relations are already in the right direction. We will use all avenues and existing mechanisms under the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Partnership and Cooperation to elevate our engagement, including the Joint Committee, Security and Political Dialogue, as well as the Human Rights Dialogue.

DY: What challenges are you expecting to face in your current posting with regard to Belgium, Luxembourg, and especially the European Union, compared to your previous positions, for example in Singapore?

AH: Well, they are very different in nature. Each posting always has its own challenges. For my assignment in Singapore, both Indonesia and Singapore are members and founding states of ASEAN. I would say we have a "brotherly and neighborly bond". So, as you can imagine, although the scale of our cooperation with Singapore is massive, we have paved our way there. My new posting is quite unique. Our embassy here is responsible for elevating bilateral relations with Belgium and Luxembourg, as well as with the European Union and other international organizations like the World Customs Organization, which is based here. So, the challenges are very different from those of Singapore and the United States. In addition, we also have to establish a good relationship with each member of the EU. To compare it with ASEAN, well, Indonesia is not a member of the European Union, but rather we are a partner, so from a diplomacy point of view, it is quite different.

EI: What image of Indonesia do you want to leave with the people in Belgium, Luxembourg, and the EU by the end of your mission here?

AH: Given that Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world, I want the European community to see that Indonesia is a tolerant country with a moderate Muslim majority. I hope the EU will be able to point to Indonesia when they talk about Islam and Muslims. Also, in this regard, Indonesia is a very pluralistic country that respects human rights and democracy, and we are making progress in so many aspects.

DY: What are your specific views on cultural diplomacy, especially in times of crisis, to strengthen the bond between Indonesia and Belgium, Luxembourg, and the EU?

AH: In my opinion, cultures and cultural diplomacy have no boundaries. People will connect with each other despite the politics or actualities. In this regard, cultural diplomacy is an effective, powerful, and peaceful way to elevate the relationship between our countries and the people. I know the trend of people to people contact between Indonesia and Belgium and Luxembourg is quite promising. Of course, during the pandemic, the level of people to people contact decreased significantly, but before the pandemic, Europeans visited Indonesia for tourism, work, cultural and educational exchanges, etc., and vice versa, without being affected by any political issues.

I am very grateful that Indonesia had the opportunity to showcase our rich cultures at the Europalia Indonesia in 2017 and 2018, which was honored by the presence of the King Philippe of Belgium to inaugurate the event. The impact of this festival was massive and long lasting. The Rumah Budaya Indonesia or Indonesian Cultural House that was launched last year, was in fact inspired by Europalia Indonesia. This RBI serves as a "window" for Europeans to understand and learn more about Indonesia. We provide everything for free, including courses in music, dance, and language. We also visit schools and give workshops to students. I am also happy that our Indonesian community in Belgium and Luxembourg also played their role in promoting our cultures here. Our Embassy happened to have an asset that I intend to use to expand our cultural diplomacy in Belgium, Luxembourg, and the EU in general.

EI: The global pandemic is a reality. How do you see yourself and your team navigating the ship in this time of crisis?

AH: We learn that with such a big impact of the pandemic, each country tries to cope differently. Most countries prioritize their citizens, economy, and interests first, above anything else. I think this is very natural and is mirrored in smaller scales. It is everyone's hope that this pandemic will not last longer than we can cope.

In my capacity as ambassador, I have a philosophy that people who are working with me should be happy. I want them to "want to work", not just "need to work". One way to do this is by putting people with the right capacity in the right place.

In the context of the pandemic, I need a strong and healthy team. This is admittedly not an easy thing to achieve as infections are quite widespread. But at the same time, Indonesia needs to turn the pandemic into opportunities, so we must work even harder during this time. I think the key is to find a good balance. I want my staff at the Embassy to be able to adapt with the new situations, the new normal.

DY: Leaders, thinkers, and people in general realize that we are heading toward an unimaginable future. What would be unimaginable for you? Do you think we will go back to the way things were pre-COVID-19, or are we living in a new normal?

AH: Unimaginable for me is no more wars, no more racism. I honestly want to go back to the time before the pandemic. I think I liked it better [laughs].

I am very happy that the vaccines for Covid-19 are here. Many countries in Europe have started to vaccinate their citizens now. To be able to “go back to the time before the pandemic”, I will be willing to take the vaccines as soon as the stocks for foreigners and diplomats become available.

Since you mentioned a new normal, I think it is evident and unavoidable. In the next five to ten years, we will think that we have returned to normal, but psychologically we will have changed. For example, we will be more cautious about social distancing and health protocols, and I am sure we will be more adapted to technology for virtual conferencing.

DY: In response to your answer, do you think that in the new normal people will change the way they live — decide what is and isn’t essential in their lives, for example? What about in the Indonesian context?

AH: I think the pandemic is teaching us to be more mindful of the things that are truly important to us as we go about our lives. Priorities change. Behavior also changes. And so does diplomacy.

I am honestly amazed how creativity can grow during the pandemic. Every meeting is now virtual including meetings with counterparts, with my colleagues ASEAN Ambassadors, with the parliament’s members, via Zoom and WebEx. Not only that, at my Embassy, my introduction and Christmas parties were also done online via YouTube. In the past, with offline meetings we could cater around 300 people, but with virtual/hybrid styles, we could reach more audiences, exceeding 2,000 viewers.

In the Indonesian context, one example is the actions of the government. Before the pandemic, most government institutions did not believe in working from home, flexible hours, and working with “targets”. Now, this is totally changing. And the government is adopting this new approach very quickly as it is proven to be effective, if not ideal. For Jakarta, where traffic is quite heavy, this could be how workplaces will look in the future.

EI: What will and will not change in Indonesia?

AH: Because Indonesia has a large young population, I think its people will easily adapt to new technologies. What will not change in Indonesia is that we will always be friendly and give you a smile.



EI: What is in the DNA of Indonesia that will ensure the country triumphs over this crisis?

AH: I think there are two things in our DNA, to say the least. Firstly, I think the Indonesian people are quite resilient with good spirits. I was amazed to see how quickly the people in Aceh were able to move on with their lives after the tsunami in 2004. The same goes for the people in Yogyakarta after the major earthquake in 2005. Possibly this is because we are used to so many natural disasters. Secondly, Indonesia has a large domestic market with about 270 million people. If we manage these two well, then I strongly believe that we will survive and thrive through this crisis.

DY: What advice do you have for Indonesian students, especially in Belgium, Luxembourg, and Europe, to build a great career like yours?

AH: Besides studying hard and mastering the field they have specialized in, I would like to see our students exploring Belgium and Europe — the center of Western civilization. I want them to understand the pluralism here and to learn European languages, also to learn how advanced countries govern their people, and then to apply the lessons to our context — the Indonesian context.

DY: What is your message to the Indonesian diaspora in general and the friends of Indonesia here?

AH: Firstly, I would like to extend my appreciation for their important role in promoting Indonesia. They are in fact the true ambassadors of Indonesia to the local community here. They have an important role to play in helping the Belgian and Luxembourg people to understand Indonesia better.

I am very happy that our Indonesian community here is strong, united, respectful, and blending with the local community. I am sure they can contribute in a positive way to their community here.

Indonesia: Towards a Sustainable and Resilient post-COVID 19 Recovery

ALBERTO TURKSTRA AND BARBARA DIETRICH*

We live in uncertain times. The ongoing pandemic continues to have far-reaching social, economic and human impacts across the world. It has altered the drivers of growth of economies; disrupted supply chains; slowed down and trade and investment flows; and impacted livelihoods, especially among the vulnerable segments of the population.

But every crisis offers an opportunity. In this case, an opportunity to build back in a green, sustainable and inclusive manner. An opportunity to rebuild economies and livelihoods without losing momentum on the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement targets. And an opportunity to increase the resilience and adaptability of economies, and their preparedness for future pandemics and other exogenous shocks.

In the case of Indonesia, we foresee the recovery to be strongly focused on three pillars: green, digital and private sector-led. This article will primarily focus on the first of these pillars: a green recovery.

The post-COVID recovery phase should be used by Indonesia as an opportunity to transition from a fossil fuels-based economy towards a more green, diversified energy mix with renewable energy sources at its core. An economy that relies too heavily on fossil fuels is vulnerable to exogenous and often unpredictable market shocks, in addition to the inherent price volatility of fossil fuels. As a recent study from Oxford University puts it¹: “climate-positive policies and recovery packages that seek synergies between climate and economic goals have better prospects for increasing national wealth and enhancing productive human, social, physical, intangible and natural capital”.

Indonesia is currently integrating low-carbon development into its national, regional and local development and planning processes following the ambitious targets it has set for itself. Indonesia’s National Energy Policy aims for 23 percent of Indo-

nesia’s electricity energy mix to derive from renewable energy sources by 2025, and to cut greenhouse emissions by 29 percent by 2030². The findings of the Indonesian National Development Planning Agency’s (Bappenas) Low Carbon Development Initiative (LCDI)³, which was designed following multi-stakeholder consultations with all segments of society, have been incorporated into Indonesia’s 2020-2024 National Mid-Term Development Plan. This is an ambitious document which makes clear that economic growth, human development and climate change targets are not mutually exclusive. With political will and innovative policies, all three can be reconciled.

One specific project showcasing green recovery efforts in Indonesia is the “Solar Archipelago” (Surya Nusantara) plan⁴, a scheme which envisages the construction of solar panels with a combined capacity of 1 Gigawatt/year (GWp) and the creation of over 20,000 jobs according to estimates from Indonesian think tank Institute for Essential Services Reform (IESR). In this context, it is worth remembering that Indonesia is a signatory to the 2015 Paris Climate agreement and has pledged to grow its solar power capacity to 5.7 percent of Indonesia’s energy mix by 2025. There is a similarly high potential for the generation of hydro and wind power in Indonesia.

In addition, in order to contribute to the reduction of greenhouse emissions, Indonesia is aggressively switching to Electric Vehicles (EVs). Indonesia can become a regional manufacturing hub in Southeast Asia on EVs and has the ambition that 20 percent of its vehicle production is comprised of electric and hybrid vehicles by 2025⁵, as laid out in presidential decree 55/2019.

The post-COVID era will also require a resilient circular economy, this is to say a shift from a conventional linear economy (in which products are made, used and disposed of) to a circular economy based on the principles of “Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle”.

¹ <https://www.smithschool.ox.ac.uk/publications/wpapers/workingpaper20-02.pdf>

² <https://www.iisd.org/system/files/2020-08/indonesia-energy-policy-briefing-july-2020-en.pdf>

³ <https://lcdi-indonesia.id/>

⁴ <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/06/19/indonesia-working-on-1b-solar-driven-green-economic-recovery-scheme.html>

⁵ <https://www.pv-magazine.com/2019/12/04/indonesia-plans-domestic-electric-vehicle-industry/>



Solar panel in the Morotai Island, North Maluku, Indonesia.
Photo Source: ANTARA Yudhi Mahatma

There are wonderful private sector initiatives in Indonesia putting circular economy into practice. One concrete example is a new pavilion built by green firm Parisauli Arsitek Studio in Tangerang, not far from Jakarta. This multi-purpose pavilion, which is currently being used as a small mosque, has been built entirely from discarded plastic crates which would have otherwise ended up in the landfill or in the ocean. This is one of the many examples at the grassroots level which is contributing to Indonesia's ambition to limit single-use plastic, reduce 70 percent of its plastic pollution by 2025 and to be free of plastic waste by 2040.

No discussion of Indonesia's future as a green powerhouse would be complete without a reference to Indonesia's most ambitious infrastructure project: a new capital to replace Jakarta⁶ in the province of East Kalimantan, expected to be completed by 2045. This project is already taking shape in the minds of Indonesian planners and policymakers and we have several clues on how this smart and green capital city will look like. President Joko Widodo has mentioned his vision for the new capital to be the first in the world to use exclusively autonomous and electric vehicles⁷. The new capital is also expected to be at the cutting edge in the use of sustainable construction methods and materials, energy-efficient and carbon neutral building designs, and smart grid electricity networks.

We also believe a strong focus of Indonesia's post-COVID recovery should be on enhancing the capacity of the private sector, particularly Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and their digitalisation. SMEs have been

particularly vulnerable during the pandemic due to their limited shock-absorbing capacity and access to capital. But SMEs, which account for 60 percent of GDP and 97 percent of domestic employment in Indonesia⁸, will be at the core of the post-pandemic recovery; their flexibility and adaptability imply that they will continue to be the backbone of economic growth, innovation and job creation. Some government support will be necessary in order to facilitate SME participation in the supply chains of larger companies to boost their export capacity. Equally important will be to invest in their digital literacy through ongoing initiatives such as the e-smart IKM programme which facilitates SME participation in e-commerce platforms that will allow them to reach overseas markets and hence a much larger pool of potential customers.

To conclude, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic risks erasing the many years of rapid socio-economic progress and poverty reduction that Indonesia has witnessed. Yet, as the world's fourth most populous nation, Indonesia has a unique window of opportunity to take a leading role in the transition to a green, digital, and private sector-led recovery. In the midst of every crisis lies a great opportunity, Albert Einstein said once. In this spirit, it is worth concluding this article quoting President Jokowi's words during his annual state of the nation address this August, when he said: "We must not let the crisis bring about setbacks. In fact, we must capitalise on the crisis as a momentum to make a big leap"⁹.

**Alberto Turkstra is the Project Manager at the Diplomatic World Institute. Barbara Dietrich is the CEO of Diplomatic World.*

⁶ <https://www.archdaily.com/930751/kotakrat-pavilion-parisauli-arsitek-studio>

⁷ <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/01/15/jokowi-wants-all-vehicles-in-new-capital-city-to-be-autonomous-electric.html>

⁸ https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment/sme-and-entrepreneurship-policy-in-indonesia-2018_9789264306264-en

⁹ <https://setkab.go.id/en/president-jokowi-make-momentum-of-pandemic-as-new-awakening-to-make-big-leap/>

Balancing Forest Protection and Palm Oil Development

HIJJAZ SUTRIADI*

Every year in March, we celebrate the International Day of Forests. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, it is no less important to remind ourselves that the role of forests in nurturing the life of terrestrial ecosystems is fundamental. Yet, global deforestation remains a challenge that still persists in many parts of the world.

Deforestation in tropical regimes and the Global North is driven mainly by land conversion for agricultural and livestock farming expansion, logging, and urban sprawl. However, the definition of a forest varies in both worlds, with a stricter one applied in the tropics due to biodiversity richness and carbon sequestration effectiveness. Forest conversion has been taking place for a long time since our ancestors succeeded in domesticating wild plants and began extracting valuable resources from nature.

The pressure on forests increases when industrialization and population growth encroach on the

areas. Forest conversion is comparable to the two sides of a coin: One side reflects pressures on the environment; meanwhile, the other side paves the way for economic development and fulfills growing human needs for food and energy. So the challenge lingers in how to balance the need for economic and social benefits while at the same time preserving forests.

One of the most talked about and debated issues related to forest conversion is the correlation between palm oil production and massive deforestation of rainforests in tropical regimes, with the developed Global North dominating the narrative. Let's take a look at the remaining forest coverage in palm oil-producing countries concentrated around the tropical belt and the EU or the Global North, where other types of vegetable oil and livestock are extensively farmed.

The above infographic shows us the current amount of forested land in the respective countries or regions relative to the total area.

As the two major palm oil-producing countries in the world, Indonesia and Malaysia are covered by forests, accounting for more than half of the nations' landmass. At the same time, the two countries are home to almost 300 million inhabitants combined. This figure is comparatively higher than the forest coverage of the developed economies in the Global North, such as the EU, where only around 35% of the area remains forested.

Lessons from history

Considering the persistent accusations of massive forest clearance leveled against developing economies, particularly palm oil-producing countries, we need to take a closer look at the story behind the curtain. We might question why more than half of the total landmass of countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia remains covered by forests while they still have to feed around 300 million mouths.

Indonesia and Malaysia are both developing countries that historically rely on agricultural production to sustain their economies. A transition into other sectors such as services and industry is taking place, but the economy's backbone remains agriculture-related activities. In the early stages, the palm oil industry was developed with the assistance of the World Bank through



the Perkebunan Inti Rakyat or Nucleus Estate Scheme. The aim was to reduce poverty and migrate inhabitants from the densely populated island of Java to the major palm oil producing islands of Sumatra and Kalimantan.

Investment in Indonesia's palm oil sector occurred even before the country proclaimed independence from the Dutch colonial power. It was initiated by a Belgian company Société Internationale de Plantations et de Finance (SIPEF), based in Medan, Sumatra, and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 1919. SIPEF is still operating in Indonesia to this day.

During the country's transformative period, they converted forests into agricultural land to pave the way for oil palm plantations. This method has been practiced all over the world when a community needs to develop its agricultural and livestock industries, and a developed region such as the EU is no exception. Through his best-selling book "Germs, Guns, and Steel," Jared Diamond has drawn attention to how the European Industrial Revolution was a game-changer at the expense of indigenous forests and, to some extent, resources and human extraction into colonies where oil palm trees are now widely cultivated.

Towards sustainable palm oil

Palm oil production in developing countries is still dominated by labor-intensive practices, evidenced by the significant number of smallholders in this sector. In Indonesia, more than 40% of the plantations are controlled by smallholders concentrated on the islands of Sumatra and Kalimantan. These groups have benefited economically and socially from the cultivation of oil palm trees. Evidence of this is the alleviation of poverty and increasing education attendance among children in oil palm growing regions.

It is mandatory for Indonesian palm oil producers to be certified to ensure sustainability requirements are complied with. Sustainability standards have become the norm since concerns over deforestation have highlighted the discourses around palm oil. Recently, the Indonesian government issued a Presidential Regulation Number 22 Year 2020 regarding the "Certification System for Sustainable Oil Palm Plantation in Indonesia" that outlines the social, economic, and environmental aspects of oil palm cultivation and production practices. The new regulation strengthens the existing Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO) standards and criteria in order to meet global sustainability requirements in compliance with the globally agreed goals and targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030.

In addition, Indonesia has taken measures to combat deforestation by implementing a permanent moratorium on forest conversion. The moratorium has been in force since 2011. It bans the issuing of new permits for clearing primary forests and peatlands for plantations and logging. Given the current percentage of forested area is 60%, this number is still higher than the minimum required forested area of 40% set globally. Indonesia's progress deserves recognition from global policymakers, as the moratorium has played a crucial role in halting further pressure on its forests.

Level playing field

Economic dependence as a result of global trade should put every country or region in a fair and balanced position with respect to each citizen's rights, regardless of nationality, to access basic livelihood needs — with no exceptions for palm oil and its derivative products. Referring to the universal and globally approved UN Resolution

for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly DG 17, which highlights the importance of promoting open and non-discriminatory multilateral trade, to help developing countries increase exports and their share of global markets, the EU, as an important trading partner for many developing countries, should emphasize the aforementioned progress.

The cultivation of oil palms in developing countries, particularly by smallholders, has helped to achieve some of the goals and targets set out in the SDGs, specifically DG 1 "end poverty in all its forms everywhere"; DG 2 "end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture"; Goal 8 "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all"; Goal 10 "reduce inequality within and among countries."

The EU is among the biggest importers of palm oil from the tropics, a valuable ingredient that has helped food and oleochemical industries in the EU to continue thriving. The EU needs to start promoting mutually beneficial and fair trade with palm oil-producing countries. At the same time, collaboration on forest restoration should be among the key priorities to be addressed. Impediments to trade will not solve the issues in developing countries but will rather lead to a weakening of the partnership and trust that have been built up together between the Global North and South.

* The writer is Advanced Master Student at the Institute of Development Policy (IOB) University of Antwerp – Belgium

Sustainable Palm Oil: the Best of Both Worlds

FRANÇOIS VAN HOYDONCK

INTERVIEW BY ELISABETH IDA MULYANI



SIPEF, a Belgian company based in Schoten, has more than 21,000 employees working in its agro-industrial operations in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and the Ivory Coast. Founded in 1919 as a publicly listed company in Europe, SIPEF has since its inception been operating in Indonesia to this day. During a century of investments, SIPEF's main commodity evolved from rubber and diversified into cacao and tea. It then shifted its focus to palm oil, which today accounts for 95% of production. The company, which is listed on Euronext Brussels, is expanding and developing its operations in Indonesia within the same areas, with six palm oil mills operating in Sumatra. Amidst the controversy surrounding this commodity and the subsequent regulations governing palm oil imports by the European Union, Indobuzz spoke to François Van Hoydonck, the Managing Director of SIPEF, at its headquarters just outside Antwerp.

EI: What are your views on the phasing out of palm oil by the EU?

FVH: I think we should look at palm oil matters from a sustainability perspective. For me, sustainability means that there is a long-term prospect. I think it's very important to realize that palm oil is one of the key industries for Indonesia and Southeast Asia in general. If we continue to use palm oil as a basic commodity for biofuel, we will, of course, be supporting the development of Indonesia and many of its people. We create added value and purchasing power for millions of people in a place in the world where development is still very important and needs to happen.

The first thing that I would consider is people. Secondly, I think it's important that when we consider deforestation and the environment, we are careful that we don't push the country into developments that will be negative for the expansion of the forestry industry in general. I'm perfectly happy with keeping the forests alive to save the world. In this case, there is sustainable palm oil available on the market that is certified as having resulted in no deforestation, and that could still be used for biofuel. So, I think it's important that we make the distinction between deforestation linked to palm oil production and the sustainable palm oil available in Europe today, which is produced in Indonesia and Malaysia. Sustainably produced palm oil can serve multiple purposes, namely: to develop a country and its people, alleviate poverty, and be a source of renewable energy. That's the best of both worlds and is what we should be promoting. However, it seems to be very difficult for European governments to make that distinction, or they are afraid to broach the subject in too much detail, so they try to stay away from the specifics of what sustainable palm oil is and so on. We are trying very hard to promote this view and to look more closely at what it really means to the European community. I hope that in the coming months we can convince the EU that where there is deforestation, we have to work against it, but also that there's a kind of development that offers the best of both worlds: sustainable palm oil.



Collection truck loaded with fresh fruit bunches at Sipef's palm oil plantation in Indonesia (source: www.sipef.com)

EI: *With the hundred years that SIPEF has been operating in Indonesia, what is your experience of doing business in and with Indonesia, including the bureaucracy and the local people?*

FVH: We are a long-term investor and have been planting for twenty-five years in remote areas away from the cities. Of course, we need a lot of people to work on our estates. It's thus important for us to discover areas where people are available to work for us. Over the years, we have seen that Indonesia is a fast-growing country where the population has increased substantially. We've always felt that Indonesia is a very welcoming environment for foreign investors. I think the Indonesian government has always appreciated foreign plantation companies coming to partner with them in developing long-term relationships with the workers. We do not come for a short period of time to try to sell products to the Indonesian people, but rather we develop businesses and produce commodities that are exported to the rest of the world, and not the other way around, which is often the case.

EI: *Regarding the bilateral relations between Indonesia and Belgium, how do you perceive it as a businessman?*

FVH: We appreciate the long-standing relations between Belgium and the Republic of Indonesia, which go back seventy years. Before the country's independence, we had already invested in it as a Belgian company. During that period, we saw how the Republic of Indonesia evolved over the years, and we have always greatly appreciated the government's approach. They have always supported us, providing assistance with our new developments by finding suitable land and people who are willing to work with us.

EI: *With your knowledge and experience of doing business in Indonesia, what would your advice be to other investors who want to invest in Indonesia?*

FVH: First of all, I think there are many companies that believe there is a large internal market in Indonesia, with over 260 million inhabitants, who could be potential buyers of their products. But instead of looking at it as a large internal market, investors should come to Indonesia with the mindset that they are working with the country for the long-term. Of course, there is an internal market — we sell palm oil locally too. But the main idea is that we should look at Indonesia as a place where we can invest by developing their businesses in the country, which will be profitable for us, but also beneficial for the country and the people who work for us. We think it is this long-term investment approach that will keep investors going and ensure that they are successful in the country.

EI: *How would you describe Indonesia?*

FVH: For me, Indonesia is a long-term relationship. Indonesians have always had the inspiration to think long-term. They also are comfortable in a pluralistic environment, with various religions, and have different ways of approaching life. Indonesians will always be open to receiving people who have different ideas and try to combine the best of both worlds. There is also Indonesia's opportunistic approach, where you say how best to move forward, how we can communicate better, and how we can solve problems. And there is always a way to solve problems in Indonesia, which we especially appreciate.

Indonesian Coffee at a Glance

DESTI PERTIWI*

The first coffee to reach Indonesia in 1696 was Arabica. It was brought to the country by a Dutch commander from Malabar, India, to Batavia (now Jakarta). This coffee was then grown and developed in what is now known as Pondok Kopi, East Jakarta, using Kedaung private land. Unfortunately, this entire first crop was destroyed in a flood. Then in 1699, more coffee seeds were brought to Indonesia, which were later cultivated around Jakarta and West Java, Priangan, and eventually spread to different parts of the Indonesian archipelago such as Sumatera, Sulawesi, and Timor Timur.

Today, Indonesia is one of the world's top ten coffee producers, with a staggering 90% of the country's coffee grown naturally by small landowners holding no more than 2.5 acres (1 hectare) of land. Indonesia produces around 5.5% of the world's total coffee production. According to data from the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture, Indonesia is the third-largest coffee producer in the world, after Brazil and Colombia.

As we all know, Indonesia has many types of coffee that are well-known around the world. There are at least sixteen coffee varieties that are in demand by international markets, seven of which are especially popular. Let's check out these seven favorite ones!



* from various sources

Kintamani Arabica Coffee, Bali

Bali Kintamani coffee comes from an area in the northern highlands of Bali. It is grown in the fertile volcanic soil of Mount Batur, on an island in the central Kintamani region. Bali's specialty coffee beans are known for their characteristic bright clean taste with elevated fruity notes. The brew's caffeine levels are naturally low.

Gayo Arabica Coffee, Sumatra

Aceh Gayo coffee beans grow in soil that is specific to the highlands, so it is almost impossible to find them in any other place. Gayo is part of the Bukit Barisan that lies along Sumatera Island, Indonesia. It is located in the central area of the Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam province. Today, Gayo is one of the most important areas for growing Indonesia's Arabica coffee. Gayo Arabica coffee has a fine aroma and a very mild bitter taste.

Temanggung Robusta Coffee

Temanggung Regency is one of the main coffee producing areas in the Central Java province. Robusta coffee from this area has the potential to become a specialty coffee because it has distinctive taste characteristics due to geographical factors. In an effort to improve competitiveness and protect their coffee production, farmers are motivated to produce and post-harvest coffee in accordance with Geographical Indication (GI) standards. However, only about 170 farmers are producing (on farms), harvesting and post-harvesting, and processing according to the standards.

Toraja Arabica Coffee

Toraja is an ethnic group indigenous to the mountainous region of South Sulawesi. Today, most Toraja coffee is certified organic and produced by indigenous farmers. The volcanic soil, relatively cool climate, and altitude (1,400 to 1,900 meters) is perfect for premium Arabica production. Toraja coffee is particularly famous in Japan, where it is branded as Toarco Toraja.

Flores Bajawa Arabica Coffee

Flores is an island just east of Bali. It has rugged terrain with numerous active volcanoes. The coffee is grown at an altitude of 1,200 to 1,800 meters, giving Flores Arabica a distinctive chocolatey, floral, and woody taste.

Ijen Raung Java Arabica Coffee

The Ijen-Raung Highland is known in the coffee world market as Java Coffee. Java Ijen Raung coffee has unique characteristics with a slightly spicy flavor and the smell of forest flowers. The acidity is moderate but tends to be a Javanese acidity rather than citrus.

Luwak Coffee

Besides the production of regular coffee, Indonesia also produces several specialty coffees. The most famous of these specialties is luwak coffee, also known as the world's most expensive coffee. The luwak coffee bean is digested, fermented inside, and then excreted by the Asian palm civet — popularly called a luwak in Indonesia. Coffee beans produced in this way were discovered and collected by indigenous farmers in Indonesia during the colonial period of the 19th century, when the Dutch forbade local workers from harvesting their own coffee. Kopi luwak is frequently referred to as the rarest and most expensive gourmet coffee in the world.

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SPECIAL REPORTS

What the West Needs to Understand about the Cartoon Protests

DR. DINO PATTI DJALAL

(Published in the Jakarta Post newspaper on November 10, 2020)

As if Covid-19 and economic recession were not enough, the world today has to bear with a wrangle between France and the Islamic world, sparked by controversy over President Emmanuel Macron's recent statements about Islam. Macron made his comments after the gruesome beheading of French teacher Samuel Paty, who had shown a cartoon of Prophet Muhammad to his students as part of a class discussion.

To be sure, Muslims do not condone — indeed they condemn — the killing of the teacher. What angered Muslims was President Macron's statement that “we will not give up caricatures and drawings, even if others back away”. In response, Muslims around the world—in Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Turkey, Africa and the Middle East—took to the streets. It has also led to diplomatic tension between France and several governments that have condemned Macron's statement, as well as calls to boycott French products.

This Macron controversy, which has calmed down a little, is yet another episode in a long-standing squabble between the West and the Islamic world regarding a caricature of Prophet Muhammad.

This “cartoon debate” is not likely to be settled anytime soon because each side sees it from a totally different perspective. The West sees it strictly from the viewpoint of freedom of speech, while Muslims see it as an assault on their religion.

I am a Muslim who studied at a madrasah (Islamic Boarding school) in Indonesia and then spent half of my life studying and working in the West. I have yet to meet a Westerner who genuinely understands why Muslims are outraged by the cartoon issue. From their biased viewpoint, the mockery of the cartoon is a trivial matter.

But in Islam, Prophet Muhammad is sacrosanct. He is the last in a long line of Prophets, and Allah addressed humanity through his spoken words, which are recorded in the Holy Quran. When one becomes a Muslim, he/she only needs to recite shahadat (attestation) that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger. Five times a day, as they pray, they repeat this testimony.



A mosque in Indonesia
Photo credit : Nick Somers

In Muslim gatherings, including Friday prayers, every time the imam mentions the Prophet's name, the whole congregation repeats it and says “peace be upon the Prophet”. When millions of Muslims perform the pilgrimage in Mecca, they stop by in Medina to pay their respects at the tomb of the Prophet, where, overcome with emotion, they weep. To a Muslim, Prophet Muhammad's life, his thoughts, words, actions—to the smallest detail, form a guidance in life. That is why Muhammad is the most common name in the world.

Thus, in Islamic teaching, it is prohibited to disrespect Prophet Muhammad in any way. It is also a sacrilege to represent the Prophet as a physical person. In Islamic books, the Prophet is portrayed not by a picture but his name written in Arabic.



Participants of Indonesian Interfaith Scholarship from the European Countries had a dialogue with teachers, students and Islamic scholars of an Indonesian Boarding School in Yogyakarta, August 2019.
Photo credit : Nathan Ishar

Hence, mocking and caricaturing the Prophet is regarded a direct assault on Islam and an enormous offense to Muslims. This would offend the radicals, the fundamentalists as well as the moderates. Indeed, many peaceful moderates who have nothing to do with terrorists would bristle with fury at the sight of the cartoon.

To Westerners, however, the act of mocking God is commonplace. When I first moved to the United States in the 1970's, I was astounded to see how comedians routinely made fun of Jesus.

So, when President Macron, in defense of freedom of speech, says "we will not give up caricatures and drawings, even if others back away", what the Islamic world hears is, "We will continue to abuse your religion, no matter what you feel about it". It's probably not what he meant, but that's how Muslims interpret it.

Can something be done about this cartoon crisis? There are two options. The first is for the West to tell the Islamic world to learn to live with it. This is tantamount to asking 2 billion Muslims to surrender their identity. Not going to happen.

There is a more realistic option: Western governments should begin to understand and accept that it is morally, politically, religiously wrong to mock Prophet Muhammad because it is offensive to Muslims. In the complex political environment in Europe, where conservative right-wing groups and demagogues are gaining ground, this may be a tricky message to convey, but it is the right thing to do.

Impossible? Actually, this form of social restraint is not totally alien to the West. A number of western countries have passed laws against hate speech, demonstrating that freedom of speech is not unlimited.

In the US, decades ago it was normal for white Americans to use the N word in referring to black people. However, over time society evolved and they gradually realized this was hurtful to African-Americans — and wrong. Today, while still embracing freedom of speech, it has become taboo for anyone to utter that racist slur.

In Europe, without compromising freedom of speech, 16 countries have introduced laws against holocaust denial - and some of them criminalizing such denial.

In all these cases, governments or society preserved freedom of speech and also showed sensitivity and respect for minority groups. Hence, the simple demand of Muslims - that Westerners show sensitivity and respect for their religious beliefs — is not unreasonable.

As to President Macron, while he has been firm in defending freedom of speech, he has shown neither sympathy nor compassion to many Muslims worldwide who feel offended and violated by the cartoons. Because of this, President Macron's core message on fighting terrorism gets nowhere.

President Macron would be well advised to emulate Pope Francis, who, when asked to comment after the funeral of those killed in 2015 Paris attacks, said that freedom of speech is important but "you cannot provoke. You cannot insult the faith of others. You cannot make fun of the faith of others. There is a limit."

This is a wisdom that the Islamic world would agree with.

**The writer is Chairman of Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia and former Deputy Foreign Minister.*

A Schengen Visa Exemption for Indonesia: Is it Possible?

AMBASSADOR YURI O. THAMRIN*

The word "Schengen" has become popular with many holidaymakers all over the world, including those from Indonesia. It is associated with a Schengen visa issued by some EU and other European countries. This visa allows foreign travelers free entry to 26 countries in Europe (Schengen area). Hence, obtaining it is not only practical and useful, but also a must-have for foreign tourists wanting to spend a great vacation in Europe. However, acquiring a Schengen visa can be quite challenging and is by no means easy for applicants.

Nowadays, citizens from around 62 countries are exempted from having to obtain a Schengen visa to visit the Schengen area. And Indonesia is also keen to be granted such an exemption. We are trying to achieve that goal through our diplomacy with the EU. Will Indonesia be successful on this issue?

By Way of History

Schengen is a small village with a population of around 600 people, situated on the banks of the Moselle River, in the border triangle of Luxembourg, Germany, and France. Yet, this village has become renowned the world over as the location for the signing of the Schengen Agreement on 14 June 1985 by five European countries: France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. The agreement included the gradual abolishment of internal borders and also extended control of the external borders between these countries. It was, therefore, the embodiment of the idea of free movement in Europe.

Subsequently, the agreement was supplemented by the Schengen Implementation Convention signed on 26 June 1990. It stipulated the complete abolition of systematic internal border controls and the adoption of a common visa policy. After almost ten years from the time of its signing, the Schengen Agreement entered into force on 26 March 1995, thus establishing a Schengen area covering 7 EU countries, namely France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain. Gradually, the Schengen area grew even larger to include no less than 22 EU countries and 4 non-EU countries in Europe, with a total population of around 400 million people.

In June 2020, the EU commemorated the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Schengen area, which symbolized this outstanding achievement of the projects of European integration and regionalism.

Some Real Challenges

Although the Schengen area has operated effectively with no internal border controls, it has also experienced some ups and downs. For instance, terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015, as well as those in Brussels in March 2016, clearly demonstrated the ease with which terrorists could crisscross the "borderless" Schengen area to carry out their deadly attacks.

In addition, groups of Eurosceptics, anti-globalists, and some European right-wing populist politicians strongly criticised the Schengen project when, in 2015, the EU faced the crisis caused by "floods" of immigrants and refugees fleeing from armed conflicts in Syria, Libya, and other parts of the Middle East and Africa, with the real threat of foreign terrorist fighters easily sneaking into EU territories.

Despite these challenges, confidence in the Schengen area remains strong. The identified weaknesses have all been addressed by enhancing intelligence and counter-terrorism cooperation among Schengen member countries with a view to promoting their internal security. Also, the so-called ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorization System) was introduced to enable EU authorities to obtain some personal data and ascertain the possible motivations of foreigners wanting to enter EU countries.

During the current Covid-19 pandemic, EU countries started to halt non-essential border crossings and temporarily activated their internal border controls to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus. However, the flattening of the infection curve has allowed EU countries to reopen their internal borders on 15 June 2020. Yet, if there are signs of a "second wave" of Coronavirus cases in Europe, internal border controls could still be reactivated.



Indonesian passports

State of Play

Since 2015, Indonesia has pursued a diplomatic approach to convince the EU to exempt Indonesian tourists from having to obtain a Schengen visa. Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi, for instance, continues to communicate this aspiration to the EU foreign ministers as well as the vice president of the European Commission. In the same vein, the Indonesian Ambassador to Brussels has conveyed the same message to high-ranking officials and politicians in Belgium, Luxembourg, and the EU.

Indonesia keeps asserting that it has granted a visa-free scheme for tourism and business purposes to citizens of all EU countries, including those of 22 EU countries in the Schengen area. Therefore, Indonesia should be duly reciprocated on this matter.

Furthermore, as a democracy, Indonesia shares with the EU similar values such as respect for human rights, free and fair elections, free media, tolerance, pluralism, good governance, and harmony among civilizations. Hence, Indonesia, belonging to the same democratic family, should receive “friendly treatment” from the EU.

Japan — an advanced and developed country — has decided to provide Indonesia with a visa-free scheme. And this decision by the Japanese government is working very well and has had no negative impact whatsoever. Factually, the number of Indonesian tourists visiting Japan is increasing.

Furthermore, no less than 210,000 holidaymakers from Indonesia had their vacations in Europe in 2018. Each tourist spent € 2178 on average. Hence, we believe that exempting Indonesia from the Schengen visa requirement would be good in the sense that more of the Indonesian middle class would be able to visit Europe and spend their money in the EU economy.

Finally, Indonesian tourists in Europe behave properly, and data shows that there have only been a small and insignificant number of immigration violations. In addition, the quality of the Indonesian passport complies with ICAO standards, and our e-passport is not susceptible to document fraud.



Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi during the meeting with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs of the European Union (HRVP), H.E. Federica Mogherini in Luxembourg, 4 November 2015, among others discussing the visa Schengen exemption for Indonesia.



The Way Forward

During the 4th Meeting of the EU-Indonesia Political and Security Dialogue in Brussels on 12 November 2019, the Indonesian delegation once again reiterated its request for a Schengen visa exemption. The ensuing discussion indicated that the EU was fully aware of Indonesia's aspirations and acknowledged the strength of its arguments.

A similar positive tone and support for this matter was also expressed by senior officials in the EEAS (European External Action Service) as well as by our friends in the Belgian and Luxembourg Foreign Affairs Ministries.

However, the current Covid-19 pandemic — with the second wave appeared globally — does not provide us with a favorable external environment to press for a Schengen visa exemption. In fact, the EU and other countries (including Indonesia) are preferring to temporarily close their borders for non-essential travel to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus.

Yet, we will not lose sight of our objective. Dialogue on this issue should be resumed when the Coronavirus pandemic is behind us. Of course, it is not an easy task to be granted a visa exemption, but Indonesia's aspirations and rationale are sound and well-founded.

**The writer is the Indonesian Ambassador for Belgium, Luxembourg, and the European Union, 2016 – July 2020.*

A Global Pandemic of Virtual Meetings

NEFERTITI HINDRATMO

The world has been in an unprecedented situation since the spread of Sars-Cov2, commonly known as the coronavirus. The outbreak was declared a global pandemic in March 2020, and the world seems to have come to a standstill since then. Nearly every country in the world has imposed restrictive measures, infamously dubbed “lockdowns”, and this of course is having a huge effect on all sectors. Not only has our mobility been restricted, but also our interactions with people have been curtailed. But in such times, one needs to adapt.

Alongside the hurdles created by the virus came the solutions. This is where the complex business of video conferences began. Multiple platforms were available, and applications that were once rarely used suddenly became a necessity. Some of the well-known ones are Zoom, Webex, and Google Meet.

The use of these platforms gained traction as the days passed and more people began meeting virtually. Proximus, one of Belgium's leading internet providers, experienced a 50% increase in network traffic, while Telenet reported that traffic was up 30%. In response, most telecommunication companies strove to provide better coverage and speed. The pandemic truly had amplified the transition toward a complete digital transformation.

Now that working from home had become the norm, the use of video conferencing platforms was filling everyone's agenda. The United Nations even held their meetings via their own video conferencing platform, including the United Nations Security Council meetings. In Brussels, the EU Council meetings, where deliberations between EU heads of state take place, were also held via video conferencing.

Then came the World Wide Web seminars, or simply webinars, which became an extended version of a sit-in seminar. The only difference is that the resource persons and participants are in different rooms, yet they can discuss matters of mutual interest as they are connected via a myriad of internet networks. This platform was also used to promote various interests, including advocating cooperation between two stakeholders from different countries, promoting trade, and encouraging discussions on specific issues.

This new wave of meetings became the highlight of 2020 and was even recognized as a “pandemic of virtual meetings”. But can we move forward with this way of meeting together?

Connecting via conferencing platforms

At the end of 2020, virtual meetings remain the only option. Webinars have become the magical quick fix to share ideas, discuss and follow up on initiatives, and promote agendas. An event where resource persons and



participants from all corners of the world come together seems like the epitome of globalization. Discussions range from health topics to the environment and also trade and investment. The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia has conducted a few webinars on diverse issues, from exploring cooperation between ports to promoting Indonesian wood products. Conferencing platforms have provided a necessary space to connect and take advantage of existing opportunities.

As the pandemic brings travel to a standstill, such a forum has become increasingly critical by involving more people in the exchange of ideas. It brings new experts into the spotlight, ones who before the teleconferencing era might not have been able to participate in an in-person event. This is especially true for experts who have limited resources. Webinars eliminate travel expenses, so it is more cost-effective. The ability to bring more people together has also contributed to greater diversity. Although there is a lack of live interaction, this diversity has ultimately resulted in a flow of valuable information from different perspectives.

Still, these platforms have their own challenges. One cannot deny our human need for physical interaction and the fact that it is deeply missed. Meeting and connecting with people after seminars or workshops is one of the best ways to expand one's network - something that is rather difficult to do at virtual events.

Virtual promotion

On the other hand, as global trade declined to -9.2%, virtual meetings reached new heights as a promotional tool. While it is undoubtedly a great way to meet and have discussions, the limitations of engaging with clients on a screen make it difficult to build trust. The introduction of new products and developing engagement between trade actors are based on mutual trust that is hard to achieve with virtual meetings.

These promotional events have not been limited to webinars. Event organizers have tried to meet the growing demand by developing virtual exhibitions. Merry Indriasari, Attaché of Trade in the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, underlined the importance of a simple user interface in these types of events. Appearance is indeed crucial, but ease of use and good communication on the part of exhibitors remains of the utmost importance.

To support businesses in these difficult times, Indonesia launched the virtual Trade Expo Indonesia 2020 or TEI for the first time. The original plan was to host a real expo in one of Jakarta's largest exhibition centers. But the plan was scrapped due to the pandemic. In the end, a virtual expo was held.

By means of webinars, it was possible for exhibitors and visitors to interact in a chat room. The 7,156 visitors at TEI could visit a 3D booth and view a product catalogue. But these virtual facilities could not build trust - a vital part of closing any deal. Another challenge was the difference in time zones. Virtual visitors came from all over the world, and the different time zones between these visitors and exhibitors limited their discussions. Consequently, back and forth communication was slower.

Virtual promotions are more challenging for new businesses that need to build trust before they can close any deals. They have not yet proven their

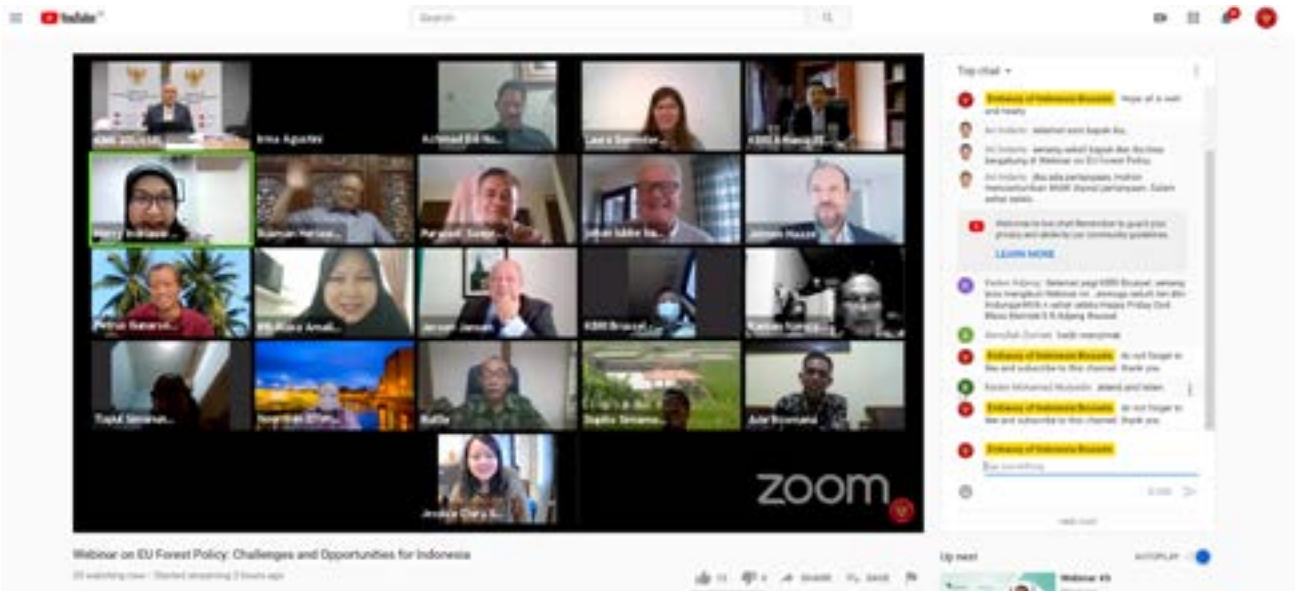
reputations and can only show their products on a screen. Meanwhile, established businesses are taking precautions because the economic depression is still weighing on their minds. Practically speaking, both sides are experiencing difficulties trading under the current conditions. The virtual TEI generated USD 681 million, a massive drop from last year's total of USD 10 billion.

New era, new normal?

2020 has been a challenging year as we've had to adapt to social distancing measures and working from home. Despite the recent vaccine approvals, some are suggesting that these restrictive measures will remain in place in 2021. Digital transformation is proceeding at lightning speed, and while some sectors are adapting easily, others are finding it difficult to cope.

In the end, the economic boost we all need will be difficult to achieve. Virtual meetings have provided valuable insights and opportunities to collaborate, but they cannot seal the deal. There is often a lot at stake, and virtual platforms have not yet been able to inspire genuine trust between traders.

We are now looking forward to brighter prospects, although the recovery will be gradual. During this time of unprecedented challenges, virtual events have helped people to stay connected with their counterparts. It is clear that the way we do business in the future will continue to be shaped by rapid digital transformations, and we will see a hybrid of virtual meetings and in-person events. Connectivity will improve and remain a crucial factor for communication, but opportunities to meet in person will also be sought out. Trade shows are still as important as ever. The challenge is to make them more efficient and effective to support the post-COVID-19 recovery.



The Embassy of Indonesia organized a webinar to discuss the EU Forest Policy issues with relevant stakeholders from Europe and Indonesia

DIASPORA

Discovering stars: Indonesian
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Indonesian Diaspora Cycling
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DISCOVERING STARS: INDONESIAN DIASPORA IN BELGIUM AND LUXEMBOURG



Agusmian Partogi Ompusunggu

Agusmian Partogi Ompusunggu

Senior Research Engineer Flanders Make vzw

I have been living in Belgium for twelve and a half years. I came to the country as a PhD student to study at KU Leuven. When I first arrived in Belgium, I faced many challenges, just like many Indonesians, but I am so glad that my family has been here with me. They helped me to stay motivated and kept me going and my spirits up.

I try to overcome the stereotypes about being an Indonesian at my workplace by making sure that I become an expert in my field so that my colleagues and the company I work for depend on me and need my expertise. I am very happy that I have achieved this goal and my work at the office is highly appreciated.

I would say the important keys to my success have been persistence, discipline, and hard work. Therefore, my message to all Indonesians living in Belgium is to be persistent, have self-discipline, and keep working hard with passion, and success is sure to be yours.

Dwianita Mutiara

Food Truck Owner, Luxembourg

I have lived in Luxembourg for ten years now. I learned the language, culture, behavior, working system and have gotten along with Luxembourg's people by participating in various activities. In my workplace, I always try to speak Luxembourgish because many locals feel that foreigners rarely speak their language.

Currently, I am running my own business, "De Reiskocher", the first Indonesian food truck in Luxembourg, which opened in August 2020. I first started cooking for friends and family, who found Indonesian food exotic, different, and delicious. They then encouraged me to start a food business, which fitted perfectly with my dream of having a business and bringing a little bit of Indonesian culture to my adoptive country.

However, to do so, I first had to face the hurdles of certification and lack of capital. So, my first step was to pass the HORECA (hotel, restaurant and café) certification exam at the Chambre de Commerce. After that, my husband and I entered a competition show "Success Story" on a radio station owned by the Luxembourg TV Station RTL. After a long process, "De Reiskocher" became one of the finalists and was awarded fifth place. This exposure brought my food to the attention of many more potential customers.

The journey is long and winding, but I have taken the first step by successfully opening "De Reiskocher". I received a very positive response and it was beyond my expectations. I thank my beloved husband, RTL, and many Indonesian food customers.

My message to my fellow Indonesians: "nothing is beyond you. We are smiling, friendly, smart, tough, and resilient people. Never give up, and never stop dreaming. Dreams do come true."



The Lelinskis



Marsin Yos

Owner of KA/YO

I have lived in Belgium for twenty years now. I own a hair salon business in Ghent.

As a tropical Indonesian person, Belgium's cold weather is certainly a big challenge for me to overcome. But over time I have gotten used to it. Another challenge was adapting to different people and cultures that are totally unlike anything I know in Indonesia.

I try to overcome the stereotypes about being an Indonesian at my workplace by reminding myself that I am no different than any other person, and therefore I must strive and work hard just like anyone else.

When I first came to Belgium, I worked for various hair salons in different places. But now that I have capital and enough capacity, I have run my own hair salon business for seven years. To share my experience, I would say that it is not easy to start a business in another country. But with strong motivation and hard work (thanks to Allah SWT, God Almighty), I survived. I am very happy that a lot of people like my work.



Marsin Yos

Aji Purwanto

Director of Business Development — NUMECA

I have to go back to 1983, and it was my first time travelling abroad. I went to Toulouse to start studying aerospace engineering. I was part of a group of fifty students who arrived over a period of five years, from 1982 to 1987, under the auspices of Pak Habibie. We did not speak French, and we also didn't know the higher education system in France. Fortunately, we had an excellent one-year program that included the French language and cultural adaptation classes.

I obtained my Master of Aerospace Engineering and Master of Research (DEA) in Fluid Mechanics in the same year. Then I was allowed to pursue my studies and research to obtain my doctorate in aerodynamics and at the same time acquire several years of working experience in different French companies, including Paris Subway, Centrair (a glider manufacturer), Airbus, and Safran Aero Engine. I then worked for five years in Bandung on an aircraft design project. From there, I returned to France for two years as a visiting professor and research scientist at ISAE-SupAero, my alma mater.

I arrived in Belgium in 2003 to start a new chapter in business development and marketing activities. In my current activities, international cooperation is very important, including with Indonesia. Today, I am in charge of growing high-performance computing capacity in the cloud, where there are no longer any limits to innovation.

Looking back over the years, I have learnt the importance of being open-minded and committed to continuous learning. Changes are normal and we all experience them. We must get out of our comfort zones so that we can explore more and then exploit more. A strong knowledge base in our chosen field is also essential. By meeting people from different parts of the world and interacting with them, realize that we live in a small village called earth. Our Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) is also applicable to our earth. So, I practice it as my way of working and living.



Aji Purwanto (second from left)

M Bobby Rahman

PhD researcher at Department of Architecture, KU Leuven PPI Leuven

In 2016, as part of an Indonesian lecturer capacity building programme, I continued my journey towards a PhD in Belgium at the Department of Architecture, Planning & Development Research Unit, KU Leuven. Before coming to Leuven, I have been a lecturer for eight years at a new state university in Indonesia, the Institut Teknologi Sumatera (ITERA).

As a lecturer at ITERA, I have the additional responsibility of opening up opportunities by cooperating with global counterparts during my stay abroad, including universities in Belgium. So, one of my professional dreams has been to help my home university establish a cooperation with KU Leuven, where I am pursuing my PhD.

So, since 2018, I started to prepare the initiation of a cooperation between KU Leuven and ITERA. I am so happy that finally, in 2019, KU Leuven's representative and ITERA's rector signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a cooperation between the two universities. It was admittedly an unexpected outcome considering the half-millennium difference in ages of the two universities. But I was so excited to be part of this cooperation. This is truly a gift for ITERA.

Fortunately, my workplace is really inclusive and respects all the differences that exist in each culture and customs. From my point of view, to address stereotypes, I have always tried to be myself (as an Indonesian person living in the West) and adapt as far as I can to socialize with the environment. I believe that our customs can also bring a positive aura to our environments.



Bobby Rahman (far left)



Risa Suseanty

Risa Suseanty

Gold Medal Women Downhill Sea Games 2011 holder

I have been living in Belgium since 2017. Before coming to Belgium, I was a professional mountain bike athlete. I won a Gold Medal Women Downhill in Sea Games 2011. I came with my family (son) on a vacation and also to introduce him to his Belgian family. After three months, we decided to move here for his education. I began to learn Dutch and took integration classes at the same time.

So far, I haven't experienced any stereotyping that I had to overcome, although I do find the language challenging. Many people say that Belgians are not friendly, but I used this to motivate myself to adapt to a new culture and learn to blend in. You just have to keep on going and not be afraid to start from scratch, work your way up, and earn the respect of the locals!

I know it is not easy to get a job here as a foreigner. The fact that I don't speak the language made it even harder. But I am determined to master the language and make connections with the locals. And, I got a job. I have worked with so many different sponsors and worked in the bike industry my whole life. You could say I have a good feel for sports in general. I also play golf and always work hard. In the end, my colleagues respect my hard work, and I am now entrusted with more responsibilities at work.



INDONESIAN DIASPORA CYCLING IN BELGIUM

LYNN KURNIAWAN

The current Covid-19 pandemic safety measures have clearly made many of us feel more anxious, stressed, and worried as they significantly restrict our daily activities. Interestingly, the pandemic has also boosted the demand for bicycles. Belgium has been a pioneer in developing cycling as a professional and popular sport. The country now boasts plenty of amazing cycling routes with varying distances, altitudes, and scenery, making biking the perfect way for people of all ages to stay fit and explore.

During the past few months, I set my plans in motion to explore Brussels and its surroundings on my faithful two-wheeler. I pedalled through cities, countryside, and forests on gravel, pebbles, soil, and asphalt. It is the best way to enjoy the changing temperatures and colours of the seasons, and I am amazed by the hidden gems I encountered, most of which go unnoticed when travelling by train or tram. British cyclist Sarah Bentley once said, "You are one ride away from a good mood," and I cannot agree more.

Planning your trip

While strolling without a plan is an option, I prefer planning my trip so that I know how far the journey will be and how long it will take. I usually modify my trip on Google Maps and follow the recommended route, or I create my own at www.fietsnet.be/routeplanner/default.aspx or follow a pre-made route based on your location at <https://www.toerismevlaamsbrabant.be/hoofdthema/fietsen/>. Using these websites, you can follow recommended trips or design your own node-to-node cycling network, and all you need to do is follow the green and white signboards on the side of the road!

What to bring

At the very least, I always bring a helmet, back and front lights, bicycle lock, water bottle, small tire pump, and a tyre puncture spray/sealant. For easier navigation, I place my phone on a phone holder, and since the weather can change unexpectedly, as I have personally experienced, a raincoat or water-repellent jacket is a smart option.

Gallery

Below are my favourite green cycling routes around Brussels. Hopefully they will inspire you to grab your bike and start pedalling.



Mechelen



1. Along the canal

If you live in Brussels, you must be familiar with the Brussels Canal that divides the municipalities of Brussels City and Molenbeek. There is a beautiful bicycle path along the canal that takes you north, towards Mechelen or Willembroek, or south, towards a charming little town called Halle, where you can enjoy a delicious cup of coffee or a Belgian waffle on the terraces. A round trip would be around 50 kilometres long.
In frame: cycling along the canal to Aarschot (left) and Mechelen (right).

2. De Groene Wandelring (the Green Walk)

This route is divided into seven sections, each highlighting different facets of the Brussels landscape, and allows you to discover and explore Brussels's green spaces. The whole route is 61.8 kilometres long, but you can of course do one or more sections as you wish. Just follow the green arrows, which are usually easy to spot at intersections. If you somehow miss a signboard, it will be an opportunity to put your hidden detective skills to good use. The map is readily available on the internet - just type "de groene wandeling" in your browser.



Koning Boudewijnpark as part of de Groene Wandelring.



Cycling along the canal to Aarschot

3. Explore the parks and forests around Brussels

Despite being the capital of Belgium and the de facto capital of the European Union, you can still find beautiful and rich parks and forests around the city. Some of my favorite parks that are within cycling distance of Brussels are the Osseghem Park next to the Atomium, Scheutbos Park, Duden Park, Ter Kamerenbos (Bois de la Chambre), Hallerbos, and Zoniënwood. I also recommend visiting Heverleebos in Leuven, though to get there you may want to take your bike on the train and start from Leuven's city centre.

Cycling has kept me fit and happy and opened my eyes to the abundant beauty around me. On the road I have met many kind and amazing people who are open to a little chit-chat if you're up for it. Twice I've suffered a flat tire. The first time an employee at a waffle shop offered me a tire pump, and the other time a kind man took me all the way to his house to lend me his pump. Once on my way home from a 100 km round trip to Aarschot, I ran out of water and all the shops were closed. I was catching my breath after an uphill climb when a friendly local offered me a much appreciated bottle of water. My most exciting experience was when I stopped at a local coffee roastery by the Brussels Canal. It turned out the owner had lived in Indonesia for some time and was now trying to raise awareness about Indonesian specialty coffee in Belgium. We even spoke a little in Indonesian!



Ossegem park



Ter Kamerenbos

To say it with Arthur Conan Doyle: "When the spirits are low, when the day appears dark, when work becomes monotonous, when hope hardly seems worth having, just mount a bicycle and go out for a spin down the road, without thought on anything but the ride you are taking."

Never stop exploring.

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INVEST IN INDONESIA

Investing in Indonesia Post Covid-19 Pandemic

NEFERTITI HINDRATMO



By far the biggest challenge in 2020 was, of course, the pandemic. Nearly every country responded by pulling the breaks and imposing restrictive measures to limit the virus's spread. This unprecedented crisis has affected virtually all sectors. The OECD has forecast that global foreign direct investment will decline by more than 30% compared to 2019.

Indonesia is obviously also feeling the burden of Covid-19. As an emerging country with a stable economy, Indonesia recorded strong growth of 5.2% in 2019, higher than the projected global growth of 3.2% in 2019 (IMF). Meanwhile, the Indonesian Finance Minister, Sri Mulyani Indrawati, estimates that Indonesia's GDP growth in 2020 will fall around 1.7 to 2.2% in 2020 because of the pandemic.

The pandemic has reversed the country's hard-won economic growth, but with the vaccine rollout and policies to support economic recovery, the government of Indonesia believes that 2021 will be brighter. The bright outlook was expected after investment realization increased 1.6% in the third quarter of 2020. Moreover, the investment realization also broke a record, as 52.8% of this investment was realized outside Java. By September 2020, Indonesia had reached 75% of its investment target of USD 55.9 billion, with USD 20.6 billion of FDI.

With these figures, Indonesia is confident that more investment will be made in 2021 to support the country's recovery process. To further promote investment in In-

donesia, a regulatory reform has been introduced through the recent Omnibus Law. The World Bank has pointed out that the new law can support a resilient economic recovery and long-term growth in Indonesia. Removing burdensome investment restrictions and signaling that Indonesia is open for business will attract investors, create jobs, and help Indonesia fight poverty.

The chief of Indonesia's Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM), Mr. Bahlil Lahadalia, has vowed to increase investment by accelerating the investment permits process. He also mentioned that he regularly monitored the permit process through the Online Single Submission (OSS) process to ensure its effectiveness. The current regulatory measures will further simplify, streamline, and integrate the business licensing service standards, which will promote greater synergy between all stakeholders, including regional governments. The government has also approved further fiscal incentives to attract investment, including tax holidays, super deductions, and tax allowances. Indonesia is also committed to ongoing infrastructure developments as a fundamental element for investment implementation.



Tax Holidays by:

- a Investment in pioneering industries**
 - Has board links
 - Provide added value and high externalities
 - Introduce new technology
 - Strategic value for the economy
- b Facility for reducing corporate income**



Super Deductions by:

- a Vocational super deduction**
 - Involve industries in vocational activities
 - providing knowledge and transfer of knowledge
 - Providing work experience, apprenticeships, and/or learning activities
- b R&D super deduction**
 - Foster innovation and utilize the latest technology



Tax allowances among others by:

- a Investment in priority sectors**
- b Have large investments or export-oriented**
- c High labor absorption**
- d High usage of local components**

Invest in Indonesia's Success Story:

Ethnicraft

INTERVIEW BY ELISABETH IDA MULYANI

Philippe Delaisse imported his first container of Balinese wooden furniture and decorations in 1995. Since then, he has successfully made a name for himself in the high-end furniture market with his Ethnicraft brand. Mr. Delaisse and his business partner Benoit Loos operate out of three sites in Indonesia: an office in Semarang, a large factory in Tegal, and a factory in Jepara for accessories. Indobuzz visited Ethnicraft's headquarters and its beautiful showroom in Antwerp to hear about Mr. Delaisse's experiences of doing business in Indonesia.

EI: After visiting Indonesia as a tourist, why and how did you start your business with your first container from Bali?

PD: I was attracted to the wood and the beauty of the objects and furniture in Bali. Also, I always wanted to start my own business, so I wanted to see if there was a market for these kinds of objects. In the beginning, I sold them to my friends and family. I particularly liked the teak that I saw in Bali — its texture, the materials. There were a lot of very nice products made with a mixture of eastern and western tastes.

EI: How has your business evolved?

PD: At first, we imported old or unique furniture in small batches. After seeing that it was very successful, we decided in 2000 to open a factory in Indonesia — from scratch. Today, we are expanding our business with 1,200 employees in our largest factory in Tegal. Our main office is in Semarang, and we are also active in Jepara. So basically we are operating in Central Java.

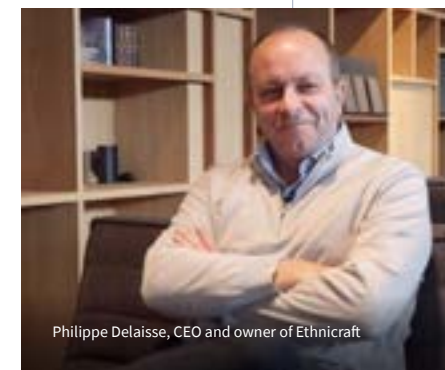
EI: What were your biggest challenges when you started your business in Indonesia?

PD: In the beginning, it was very small. We started with one container per month, then two, and after that, the number increased, and we were able to develop the business that way. Overall, it has been challenging. We have had our share of small problems, but we have a team of very good people in Indonesia. We feel as much at home in Indonesia as we do in Belgium.

Furniture is not an easy commodity because you have to start buying the logs early. The buying process is also not easy, and it involves a lot of money. So you have to manage everything from buying the logs to shipping out the complete sets of furniture in containers. It's a very long process, where of course, there can be issues of corruption, etc., but that is the same in many other countries in the world, not specifically in Indonesia.

EI: What criteria do you use to ensure the quality of your products that are produced in Indonesia?

PD: When we started 24 years ago, the tolerance level was much higher if there were little imperfections. Nowadays, everything needs to be perfect. At Ethnicraft, we are always very aware of this, and we continuously work on maintaining our high technical production levels. But it takes a lot of time and resources to achieve a certain level of quality. It's also not easy to maintain that level of quality. Overall, I think we have done a good job with a lot of quality control and quality assurance in the factories throughout the entire production process. With our level of production and volumes, it is very important to be strong on quality.





EI: Which kinds of Indonesian woods do you use for your products?

PD: For the furniture we mainly use teak that we buy from Perum Perhutani [state-owned enterprise that manages forest resources in Indonesia according to sustainable principles - EI] in Central and East Java. For the accessories department we use a lot of sonokeling and mahogany. We also import European oak and American walnut that we process in Indonesia.

EI: What about the sustainability of your products?

PD: All our products are FLEGT licensed. From the origin of the wood to the complete sourcing process, everything is precisely monitored, and that is certainly a good thing.

EI: How has your experience been working in Indonesia and with Indonesians?

PD: There are many facets to consider. I think it's important to learn about the culture, to understand how people live and work, how things are done, etc., and that takes time. We have 23 years of experience working in Indonesia, and most of the people in our office have been there for 15 years or more. In terms of collaboration, we need to understand how the people and the country work. The advantages are that Indonesians are very friendly, highly skilled, and there is a heritage — a rich history — of working with wood, unlike countries such as Vietnam or China. The challenging part is how the way people react, but that is always part of every culture, so we try to harness that and use our strengths as we do everywhere.

EI: How would you describe Indonesia?

PD: Indonesia is Wonderful Indonesia, like the slogan. I like it very much. I love Indonesia with its imperfections, how things are done, the positive and negative side, that the people are very friendly, and the beautiful locations. There is a lot that can be improved, but that's also happening as we now have a great toll road from Semarang to Tegal, for example. So things are going well.

EI: What do you think can be done to improve the ease of doing business in Indonesia?

PD: Infrastructure definitely — but things are already moving in the right direction. Also, administration and immigration rules should be simplified. Indonesia also needs to improve the education of the people, but I believe this is ongoing.

EI: What would your advice be to people who want to invest or do business in Indonesia?

PD: I'm sure that Indonesia has a great future. There is a lot of potential to develop, and demographically Indonesia is very promising. In the furniture industry, I think there's a lot of new business being done in competing countries like China and Vietnam. My advice would be to spend enough time to understand the culture and the people, prepare yourself well, and genuinely respect the people. This is very important. Of course, it will always be challenging, but it's no different in other parts of the world. I think overall Indonesia is going in the right direction, and it has a bright future ahead of it.

Jamu, Indonesian “Magic” Drinks

TOVANI PANJAITAN*

As a tropical country, Indonesia is blessed with fertile soil that allows various kinds of herbal plants that are beneficial for health to grow prolifically. Since *jamu* is made from plant-based natural ingredients, such as *rim pang* (roots), herbage, bark, and fruits, drinking *jamu* is considered a part of Indonesia's cultural heritage that represents a centuries-old herbal medicinal tradition.

As a kind of traditional medication, *jamu* plays an important role in meeting the healthcare needs of people, especially in Indonesia. *Jamu* is considered non-toxic and does not cause any side effects. *Jamu*'s health benefits have been tested by time, history, and empirical evidence of people who have consumed traditional medicine for hundreds of years. Even with the prevalence of western medicine in Indonesia today, the government still recognizes *jamu* as a medicinal practice. However, the benefits of *jamu* vary depending on the ingredients used. There are so many kinds of *Jamu*. There are *jamu* that serves as supplement and vitamin, but that are also *jamu* that heals sickness, some *jamu* also enhances beauty. Well, it is better to try to prove its 'magical' benefits. Let's get to know some the most popular ones and their amazing 'magical' benefits.

1 JAMU BERAS KENCUR (KENCUR RICE JAMU)

Jamu beras kencur is made from rice and *kencur* rhizome that are rich in antioxidants, which helps to get rid of acne. *Kencur* rice can relieve coughing and is the right brew to use as a cough remedy.



2 JAMU CABE PUYANG (LONG PEPPER JAMU)

Cabe puyang tastes like pepper and gives warm effect to the body. *Jamu cabe puyang* or *jamu pegal linu* is used to alleviate sore muscles, to reduce fever, and aches in the body. For those who suffer from anemia, *jamu cabe puyang* has ability to increase the red blood cells production.



3 JAMU KUDU LAOS (NONI FRUIT JAMU)



Jamu kudu laos is made from *noni* fruit or *mengkudu*. According to most herbal medicine sellers, this drink is effective in lowering blood pressure. However, there are others who say it improves blood circulation, warms the body, makes the stomach feel comfortable, increases appetite, smoothens menstruation, and refreshes the body.

4 JAMU KUNYIT ASEM (TAMARIND TURMERIC JAMU)



As the name suggests, tamarind turmeric *jamu* is made from tamarind fruit/leaves and turmeric rhizome. The yellow color in turmeric is due to a pigment found in the curcumin compound. Curcumin is known to be rich in antioxidants, and to have anti-inflammatory and cancer-inhibiting properties. It is believed that this acidic turmeric drink can relieve menstrual pain because it contains curcumenol compounds that act as analgesics. Whereas in tamarind fruit, compounds that act as analgesics and relieve pain are anthocyanins.

6 JAMU TEMULAWAK



Temulawak is made from ginger with added tamarind, palm sugar, pandan leaves, and cumin. *Temulawak* is often consumed as a drink to relieve nausea, stomach pain, dizziness, and cold symptoms. *Temulawak* itself contains antioxidants that can prevent cell damage to the gastric mucosa caused by free radicals. The ginger rhizome components that act as antioxidants are flavonoids, phenols, and curcumin.

5 JAMU PAHITAN (BITTER JAMU)



Jamu pahitan is used for various health problems, especially itchiness and diabetes. The basic raw material for the *pahitan* bitter herbal medicine is *sambiloto*.

Bali, I'm in love!

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INDONESIA THAT I KNOW

Bali, I'm in love!

MARTINE MILLET-VERVAT

Bali, a name that made me dream since childhood and that resonated in my head like an unattainable dream. Suddenly the dream came true in the month of June 1994. We usually travel on our own, without an agency or tour operator. Just our plane ticket in our pocket and one or two paper guides. However, for our first trip there, we behaved like perfect tourists: the ones who want to see a maximum number of things in a minimum of time.

Late at night we got out of a taxi in Kuta, and since we hadn't booked anything, we just had to trust the taxi driver who took us to an unfamiliar hotel. When we wake up in the morning we were in a very charming place. The first stroll was through a town populated by Australians who came to party, like Belgian tourists in Ibiza. Kuta, however, has a very pretty beach which is good to walk on very early morning. But we will not dwell on it.

Very quickly, we headed to Ubud, which would be our anchor point for the departure of big classic excursions. At the time there weren't many tourists, and the dirt-streets lined with craft shops were not lacking in charm. People were very welcoming and smiling. Ubud is a bit like the cultural cradle of Bali, it is there that one can discover traditions, such as painting, carving, music, dance, shadow puppets. There are many temple ceremonies that take place there which gives one the opportunity to see the shimmering outfits of its inhabitants who wander around to the sound of Gamelan (Balinese percussion orchestra). For the rest, we made the big classic excursions, Goa Gaja, Mount Batur, Tampaksiring, etcetera.

Though we were happy with the results of this first visit, we remained, nevertheless, slightly disappointed.

Once back in Brussels, remembering certain places and examining our photos, we had the certain feeling that we had missed something more intimate about this island, which we were convinced had much more to offer. So, we promised to return. And for 20 years, we have kept that promise. Why? Because Bali requires a step-by-step approach.

You must take the time to walk around off the beaten track; Ubud is not only the monkey Forest Road or Legian street. Above all, on hundreds of small paths, you must let yourself be guided by the pleasant odor of the Champaka's flowers that border the rice fields, by the fragrant spices from the dishes cooked in the courtyard of a house, and by the ringing of a nearby Gamelan, which announces ceremonies.



Ricefield in Sidemen

Sit under a Banyan or Frangipani tree, drink in its intoxicating scent, and indulge in the sweetness of life; it is as if the Balinese people were born to beautify everything around them. Bali's mountains in the Munduk region, with their magnificent lakes and plantations of coffee, cocoa, cloves, and vanilla, will thrill your senses and present you with sights lovely to behold.

But for us there will forever remain two reasons that it is our favorite travel destination: one reason is Sidemen, with its magnificent landscapes dominated by the majestic Mt. Agung. But, more importantly, this is the place where we first met our friends Ida and Gusti.

Ida and Gusti ran two beautiful little bungalows where we stayed several times; we spent our evenings in the hospitable care of Ida and all her family. After a few years, the German owner sold the bungalows. Ida faced the future and bravely opened her own little warung (little restaurant), while her husband has a car and guides tourists. They are self-sufficient and much happier. Their behaviour shows their ability to reinvent themselves and adapt to all situations—always with a smile. How can we not tell you about our little paradise and, above all, the extraordinary people who populate it?



The Dancer



Made and his family

Another reason is Lipah. Lipah is located a few kilometres from Amed—a splendid cornice overlooking an azure sea surrounded by lush vegetation and dominated, in the background, by the impressive Mt. Agung volcano. The entire coast is bordered by authentic fishermen villages. Early in the morning, typical small fishing boats loom on the horizon like a cloud of dragonflies. The seabed is populated with multicoloured fish.

For 20 years, this place has been an integral part of my life. I feel at home there, and every time I leave it, I can't help but cry, wondering if I will see it again the following year.

It is also the place of the most beautiful encounters of my life, except, of course, the meeting of the man whom I have loved deeply for 44 years and who accompanies me on all my trips.

It is the cradle of great friendships, such as the one with I formed with Audie (manager of the Hidden Paradise Cottages hotel). From our first meeting, he has welcomed me. Audie's professionalism, honesty, and kindness made each stay a delight. The lengthy discussions we have in the afternoons, when it's too hot to move, are moments of pure happiness; he taught me so much about his beautiful country. I had the immense honour and pleasure of welcoming him to Belgium for a few days in 2019.

There is also my friend Pasek, whose sympathy is matched only by his kindness. Every morning, we are greeted with his beautiful smile and fabulous sense of humour. His wife works in the market, and every day, we find the juiciest mangoes outside our front door. We have a wonderful time sitting and talking about our different lives and cracking jokes.

And then there is the phenomenal Mr. Ping (Ketut Surdana). The first year that he was a gardener at the hotel, we saw him evolve from task to task, but increasingly, he took care of the children of the various surrounding villages, giving them English lessons. And then came the turning point: he began to give even more of himself to others.

He has raised funds to bring drinking water to remote villages and collected wheelchairs for the disabled; he travels kilometres in the mountains to bring rice to people who have no food and brings along help from volunteer doctors. Never have I been around someone with so much positive energy and such a solid set of ethics.

And finally, how can I not tell you about the meeting that changed part of my life?



Fisherman in Jimbaran



Bangle near Lipah

Every year, I go to Bali with a bag full of plush toys that I have collected from my workplace to give to Balinese children. As we walk around randomly, meeting the locals, we give each a soft toy and take a photo, which we then show to Belgian children as proof that their donations have made other children happy. That year, I had Baloo, the bear from Disney's Jungle Book, my favourite cartoon film, in my bag. I had distributed all the soft toys, but I took care to put Baloo back at the bottom of the pile, in the secret hope of returning him to Brussels.

But on one of our last walks, my heart stirred. In a village near Lipah, I met the eyes of a baby, sitting on a small store stall, who gave me an incredible look with her two big black eyes; a huge smile spread across her little chubby face. Baloo had found a new friend.

Back in Brussels, I showed the photo I had taken of this little girl to all my friends and colleagues. The look she gave me never left me, and not a day went by that I didn't talk or think about her.

The following year, back in Bali, with her photo in our bag, we set out to find her to offer the picture to her family (something we try to do for all these photos of children that we take). One of the villagers showed us the place.

A beautiful lady with a beaming smile approached me. I gave her the photo, and then, a small child dressed only in a t-shirt came running. I thought that had I recognized this little face. But surprise! Made now had not only a tiny daughter, but a little boy.



Salt Crops in Amed



Balinese family

Year after year, we always find each other so happy. We are greeted by Nengah, her husband, and Supi, Made's sister; we have become like part of their family, and we spend a lot of time together. Nengah and Made entered my life, and Made became one of my best friends; she has grown up well, and I hear from her every day.

How can one avoid being seduced by Bali?

Every inch of this place is forever etched in my mind, and this reassures me that when old age catches up with me, all that I will need to do to feel completely calm and happy is to close my eyes and remember the beauty of Bali and the faces of all my friends who have accompanied me through a large part of my life.

I would like to thank the Indonesian Embassy in Belgium for its warm welcome and the opportunity it gave me, through this article, to pay tribute to all these fabulous people I have met on the island who stole my heart.



Balinese Ceremony



Balinese dancer putting on make up before performance

Uncovering Indonesia's Hidden Gems

OLIVIA N MARYATMO

Indonesia is well known as a tropical paradise and is often referred to as the “Emerald of the Equator.” As an archipelagic country, we have thousands of beautiful islands --some of them still uninhabited--, jungles, rainforests, mountains, and hundreds of active volcanoes. If you're up for an adventure, here's a list of Indonesia's hidden gems you should explore.

1 Kelingking Beach



Photo by Jerry Aurum

It is called kelingking (little finger) because the locals think its shape looks like a little finger. Kelingking Beach is located on Nusa Penida, Bali island. One of the easiest and cheapest ways to get here from Bali (the main island) is to travel from Sanur Beach to Nusa Penida in a fast boat (which costs approximately 100K IDR/6 EUR/7 USD one way). Once you've arrived there, you can rent a scooter for 50-70K IDR per day. You don't have to worry about finding a scooter to rent because as soon as you step on to Nusa Penida, there will be a lot of people who are going to offer you a scooter.

One of the things that I like about Kelingking Beach is not only the absolutely stunning views, but also that you can actually hike here! You can go on two hiking trails. If you ever come here, make sure you do both hiking, and then watching the sun go down from the top, and chilling on the beach as your reward.

2 Angel's Billabong

Have you ever swum in an infinity pool? Wait, I'll rephrase the question. Have you ever swum in a natural infinity pool? If you haven't, then you should definitely visit Angel's Billabong. For those who hate hiking, don't worry because you don't have to do any hiking to reach this place. Just come, swim, and enjoy gorgeous mother nature. To avoid crowds, make sure you come early in the morning on weekdays. If you are considering island hopping in the Nusa Islands, then you should plan to stay 2-3 nights on Nusa Penida. Trust me, there are plenty of awesome things to do on this island.



Photo by Jerry Aurum

3 Bromo Mountain



Photo by Setiadi Darmawan

This place's beauty is surprisingly not really known among international tourists. Mount Bromo (Gunung Bromo) is one of the most active volcanoes in East Java, Indonesia. My friends and I went on this trip from Yogyakarta (I think it's the nearest international airport to Bromo), took a train ride to Malang, and then a bus trip to a small village in Bromo. This photo was taken at a Mount Bromo viewpoint during sunrise. My friends and I had to wake up at two in the morning and hiked to chase down the sunrise. Even though I'm not a fan of waking up at such an ungodly hour, the view was totally worth it! I'd do it again if I had the chance. No filter needed - this beauty doesn't need a thing to look perfect.

On our way back, we passed through this picturesque savanna. Our jeep driver told us that the view of this savannah is different for each season. At the time in 2015, we visited Bromo during the dry season. That's why it kind of looks like Mars. I've only been to Bromo once, so I can't tell you what it looks like during the wet season. However, if you google it, the savannah looks spectacular during the wet season.

4 Gili Islands



Photo by Kiat

Now we move on to the Gili Islands! These islands are in West Nusa Tenggara, a little bit to the east of Bali and Lombok. The islands consist of three main islands: Gili Air, Gili Meno, and Gili Trawangan (often referred to as Gili T). If you would prefer a chilled, relaxing, and family-friendly trip, Gili Air and Gili Meno are your best options. But if you're looking for more active excursions on your itinerary, then Gili Trawangan will suit you best. Of all three islands, I have to say that my favorite is Gili Trawangan.

Gili Trawangan is more than just a pretty beach. There are plenty of things to do here, from paddle yoga, snorkeling, diving, hiking, to partying. I like this island the most because there are no cars here! So it's pollution-free. Anyway, whichever island you end up staying on, make sure you visit the other two islands as they are very close to each other.

Dieng Plateau

5

When I came here, I felt like my lungs had been detoxed. The feeling of inhaling the crisp air deep into your lungs and exhaling all the negativity felt so good. So this plateau is a large volcanic crater that formed when the ancient Mount Prau erupted. It is located in Wonosobo, Central Java, Indonesia. The easiest way to get here is to go from Yogyakarta (the nearest international airport to Dieng), and then take the train/bus/car to this place. Dieng Plateau has several attractions to offer. For example, this one in the picture above, is a lake in the plateau called Telaga Warna, which can naturally change colors due to its high sulfur content. When sunlight hits the water surface, it sometimes looks yellow or green, and at other times it looks like a rainbow. Besides this lake, the Dieng Plateau is also home to one of the oldest Hindu temples and a crater that you can visit.



Photo by Free Walpapers

So, are you ready for some adventure? Do all your research right now, and when the pandemic is over, Indonesia will be waiting for you. See you there.



Photo Source : Indonesia.Travel

Meet the creator of Mila

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Discovering the Belgian Land of
Castles through Lenses

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CREATIVE MINDS

Meet the creator of Mila

DEWI PUTRI MEGAWATI

My name is Dewi Putri Megawati. I am a 24-year-old aspiring illustrator and visual design communication graduate from the Indonesian Institute of the Arts Yogyakarta (ISI Yogyakarta).

My interest in drawing started at a fairly early age, although I didn't take it seriously. It was more of an occasional hobby. Before I was introduced to digital drawing when I got my first drawing tablet, I only knew how to draw in the traditional way. I was about 16 or 17 at the time. However, I put it off for about a year because I felt that drawing on a computer was not my thing.

It was only after I decided I wanted to apply to an art university that I began to practice more. What was great about getting into an art university was that you got to know some friends who had the same interests as you. I came from a small city and was quite surprised to learn what the other artists in a big city were actually capable of. During my college years, I got to know some great artists, did an internship, made merchandise from my own drawings, participated in several artists' events, and so much more.

My tools for digital drawing are pretty basic, consisting only of my laptop and a Wacom Intuos pen tablet. From the time I first started, I had worked with Adobe Photoshop until early 2020, when I switched to Clip Studio Paint to do most of my illustration work.

Social media sites like Instagram are a great platform to showcase artists' works. I started to get into Instagram in 2014, when I was still in high school. In April 2019, I joined up with a group of my college friends to create @tea_covey, a motivational account on Instagram where we use our drawing skills to spread positive and self-discovery messages every week. In July 2020, I also started using Twitter to share my work.



When it comes to the kind of illustrations I do, it's mostly character design and book illustration. Most artists usually create their own original character (OC), so they can develop their own self-made character through illustrations, world-building, comics, and even animations. Just like most other digital artists, the majority of my works on Instagram are my OC drawings and some fan art. Besides social media, I've worked as a freelancer on some book illustrations for a local publisher and done commissions.

When I started out drawing, my style was heavily influenced by the Japanese Manga style, like most young Indonesian artists of my generation. Then I became interested in the semi-realistic Disney-ish style for a very long time. My artistic style is now becoming much simpler and less perfect looking, but I have found my confidence in doing it. I get my inspiration and influences from other social media artists, such as Aala Musa (@general_blacko), Audrey Mok (@temari114), So Min Jeong (@sokomin), and many more.

So far, I've mostly drawn people of color like South Asian, East Asian, and African people. There's just a lot to explore visually, though I still have a lot to learn. Recently, I became interested in doing more hijabi character drawings as I found that it's still rare to find such artistic representations. My hijabi OC, who goes by the name of Mila, started out as a side character, and I'm glad that it has received more attention from global audiences. Especially since Muslim characters in popular media are often written in a misunderstood way, I thought that by having a hijabi OC, some people might get used to seeing such a likable character that they have no problem relating to.

Outside of drawing, I also have a love for self-help books. So, I'm currently reworking my visual guidebook about becoming a morning person for productive Muslims (the title's still in the works), which I submitted for my final design thesis. I hope that in the future, I will be able to earn a living selling art or merchandise of my original characters. I also hope to publish my own books and perhaps, with all the experience I've gained, have the opportunity to teach young people.

You can view my work on Instagram (@winchestermeg) and Twitter (@winchestermegg). Thank you.



Discovering the Belgian Land of Castles through Lenses

HARYO NINDITO

It is never too late to find your passion - I am convinced of that. Mine is art portrait photography, which I only got to know two years ago. Since then, it has helped me connect with many fellow photographers and like-minded people across the globe and also won me some fame.

It was only in 2018 that I fell in love with art portrait photography. I got hooked after attending a photography workshop in Indonesia. Since then, it has become a serious hobby that has already brought me some fame. My works have been put on display in several European cities, including at a solo exhibition in Brussels. I have also given about a dozen workshops for people interested in my unique technique.

But what exactly happened at that photography workshop in Indonesia? Of course, it wasn't there that I started taking photos. Like most of us, I would use my mobile for taking shots when I was travelling and upload the better ones to an Instagram page I created for this purpose. But I never really thought about dealing in earnest with photography until a friend, who liked my travel photos, asked me to shoot his daughter's wedding.

Daunted by the task, I said no, but I thought it was time to learn more about portrait photography. This is how I ended up at the workshop of a photographer I knew, who was renowned for their style. Participants were tasked with taking a portrait of a spectacularly dressed model in front of an ancient site, the Buddhist Plaosan Temple near my hometown Yogyakarta. At this magnificent 9th-century building, I was using professional lighting and gear for the first time. The effect I could achieve was unbelievable. When I finished editing the picture on my computer, I could not believe it was mine. This first portrait photo has remained my favourite ever since.





Light and shadow

Once back in Belgium, where I have lived since 1998, I bought professional photography gear and started learning and experimenting by myself. I simply fell in love with photo shoots and the Baroque style.

I started using a special technique I picked up to create a dramatic effect in my photos. Perfected by Baroque painters such as Caravaggio, among others, it is called chiaroscuro (light and shadow), which refers to the use of bold contrasts between light and dark subjects. I use lighting and post-processing in Photoshop to create the same effect.

In most of my photos, the subject is portrayed as a princess wearing impressive, colourful dresses in breathtaking locations. I am always ready to travel to faraway, often exotic places with the dress I have picked. I have already been to Paris, London, Rome, Madrid, Berlin, Lucerne, Ukraine, Singapore, Java, and Bali to do photo shoots with local models.

Belgium, the land of castles

In those exotic places, I usually try to find buildings with old architecture. That helps create the atmosphere that I want to achieve in my photos. However, in Europe, I have never found a site as ancient as the Plaosan Temple.

It was in an online article that I discovered Belgium is the country with the most castles per capita in the world. I started researching the best Belgian castles for my photo shoots last year. From fortified buildings to grand aristocratic mansions, Belgium has over three thousand castles in total. Unfortunately, you cannot visit all three thousand castles, but at least four hundred of them are open to the public.

So far, I have only done photo shoots in twelve Belgian castles. My latest photo shoot was quite memorable, though, because the model was Miss Belgium 2020. It was in a castle that is privately owned. We received special permission from the owner to do the photo shoot there. But, there are still many castles to go and shoot, so I will be kept busy in the coming months and years.

My works have been exhibited a number of times - first in The Hague at an event organised by the Indonesian Embassy last year, then in Paris, Brussels, and Denmark.

It keeps me motivated during the pandemic

In the meantime, it didn't take too much time for my unique style to attract some attention on the internet. After a while, people who saw my photos on Instagram and Facebook started getting in touch with me to ask how I do it. So, less than a year after I started my photo shoots, I decided to give workshops about my creative process and inspirations to audiences from around the world. After the coronavirus outbreak, the workshops were converted into webinars, which allows me to connect with even more people.

I am really glad I have come this far in such a short time. I think it proves that if you find your passion and are serious about it, you can achieve anything. Passion is also about having a positive mindset towards life. During the lockdown, it keeps me motivated and at the same time allows me to inspire other people.

**Haryo Nindito IG: @haryonindito, Facebook: Haryo Nindito Art Portrait Photography*

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Indonesia, a Favorite Destination at VAKANZ 2020

NEFERTITI HINDRATMO AND DARA YUSILAWATI

The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Brussels opened the year 2020 by participating in the VAKANZ exhibition, before the pandemic hit hard the tourism industry. This event is the only trade fair in Luxembourg dedicated to travel and tourism. This year's theme was "Island Vacation", and what could be better than promoting the beautiful tropical archipelago.

In line with the "Island Vacation" theme, the Wonderful Indonesia pavilion was decorated with pictures of the surreal landscape of Padar Island, the sublime scenery of Raja Ampat, and the calming white sands of Bali.

During the exhibition, globetrotters had a variety of options to shop for their next destination, as the many exhibitors offered tailor-made programs in different locations around the world. The VAKANZ 2020 tourism fair in Luxembourg was officially opened on January 17, 2020, and ran for three days. More than three hundred exhibitors participated at the Luxexpo The Box venue, offering special packages for a wide variety of holiday getaways. The event was officially opened by Luxembourg's Minister of Tourism, Lex Delles. He marveled at the beautiful landscapes and received a unique Indonesian souvenir when he visited the Wonderful Indonesia pavilion.

The Indonesia pavilion was one of the most visited stands during VAKANZ. At the stand, visitors had the opportunity to ask questions about various tourist destinations in Indonesia, and they could even directly plan their next vacation.



Opening ceremony of the Wonderful Indonesia Pavilion was crowded with guests and visitors of VAKANZ.



Minister Lex Delles visited the Pavilion and received a unique gift of Indonesia's tenun fabric

Vacationing in the Archipelago

Luxembourg tourists have increasingly been visiting Indonesia, as clearly seen by the growth in numbers during the 2016-2018 period, which reached 10.56%. This confirms the strong interest of Luxembourgers to spend their vacations in Indonesia. At its pavilion, the Indonesian delegation promoted many tourist sites, including some of the best spots for surfers looking for an adrenaline rush and other quiet beaches for families wanting a tranquil break. Cultural sites, such as the exquisite Borobudur Temple, were also featured, as well as the breathtaking sunrise views of the Dieng Plateau.

Although Indonesia is developing several areas as tourist destinations, Bali is still Indonesia's most famous destination. Many visitors listed Bali as the mandatory destination in Asia. One visitor said that one must vacation in Bali at least once in a lifetime.

Of course, the Wonderful Indonesia pavilion not only offered information about tourist destinations, but also a chance to experience Indonesia's rich culinary traditions. Indonesian dancers also performed on several occasions to give Luxembourgers at the expo a glimpse of Indonesia's diverse culture. Traditional Indonesian snacks and coffee were a big hit with visitors to the pavilion. And let's not forget the complimentary massages for lucky visitors.

Let's hope the pandemic ends soon so Bali can resume spoiling the Luxembourgian with sunlight and friendliness.

Rumah Budaya Indonesia Introduced Indonesian Culture to Belgian Children

NEFERTITI HINDRATMO

Their eyes widened when they saw a picture of the Komodo dragon and they couldn't hide their interest in a dragon still crawling on an island some 12,000 km away. They were curious about a country with 17,000 islands and wanted to know what kindergarten was like in Indonesia. It was an hour full of so much new information for them. The beautiful paddy fields and traditional costumes in myriad of colors were something that many of them had never seen before. The children were amazed by this presentation about Indonesia delivered by the Indonesia Cultural House team. The children were kindergarteners at the Institute Saint-Louis 2 in Brussels. The visit took place on 21 January 2020 and was arranged to introduce them to Indonesia's culture.

The children were not only shown images of Indonesia, but they also learned a simpler version of the Saman dance. They found the dynamic movements intriguing, and the peculiar words mesmerized them. They followed the rhythm and excitedly moved their bodies while performing the dance. They never thought that in a single day they would go on an adventure to a new country, one so far away yet filled with lively arts and culture.

To top things off, the Indonesian Cultural House's (Rumah Budaya Indonesia) team also brought a screen and a small wayang. The traditional puppet shadow play narrated a story about kancil, a small deer who manipulates a farmer. The show teaches young children not to lie and was a hit with the children.



Excited to answer quizzes from RBI team, after a presentation and performances.



The students tried playing with gamelan, a traditional music instrument from Bali, when they visited RBI

The RBI also welcomed students to our 'house' located in the Indonesian Embassy on Avenue de Tervuren. On 18 February 2020, fifty students from the Ecole Fondamentale, Institut Montjoie - Brussels, had the opportunity to explore the Cultural House and learn more about Indonesia.

The half-day excursion started with a Rantak dance — dynamic dance originating from West Sumatra and inspired by the powerful pencak silat movement. This was followed by a short presentation about Indonesia, which featured the fascinating Komodo dragon, steps in the paddy fields, and the country's rich cultures. The students learned more about a country 12,000 km away and were in awe of Indonesia's 17,000 islands. Their mouths watered with pictures of traditional Indonesian cuisine. Some of them were familiar with delicacies like satay and nasi goreng and were curious about rendang and soto. They were also amazed by the massiveness of the Borobudur Temple and the Krakatoa volcano.

The students also played an angklung, a traditional Indonesian instrument made of bamboo. Following the instructor's lead, the kids learned how to hold the angklung, tilt it and move it to create a tone. They then played an unbroken tune together, producing a harmonious version of the song "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star". They excitedly played it again and were fascinated by their collective work in producing a song.



Excited to answer quizzes from RBI team, after a presentation and performances.



The kindergarteners learned how to dance "Pari Saman" during the RBI team visit.

They continued their adventure with a tour of the Indonesia Cultural House, where they were shown two traditional musical instruments, the gamelan and kulintang. They were delighted to have the opportunity to play these instruments that they had only seen on television. The wayang display also piqued their interest, especially in how it was performed.

Although they only spent half a day in the Indonesian Cultural House, they were captivated by the massive country, Indonesia's diversity, and, of course, the musical instruments that produced great music when they were played collectively. The "RBI Visit" program was truly an adventure for them.

The RBI team will again welcome visits from schools once it is possible. The team would also love to visit schools.

For further information and inquiries about this program, please contact the RBI team at rbi@embassyofindonesia.eu.

Connecting the Docks: Dialogue on Port Development

SASI HEMAWARDHANI AND NEFERTITI HINDRATMO

Ports have always played a significant role as hubs to drive economic cooperation. This was highlighted during the Indonesia-Belgium Virtual Business and Investment Dialogue on Port Development. The event was held by the Indonesian Embassy in Brussels on 9 September 2020 and brought together representatives from the Indonesian and Belgian port authorities to identify opportunities for cooperation. During the virtual event, representatives from the Indonesian and Belgian port authorities, Association Ports, Indonesia Investment Body, Belgian dredging company, and special staff of the Indonesian Ministry of Transportation shared their views and expertise on furthering cooperation between the two countries.

Indonesia and Belgium's collaboration in this sector has been quite strong. At least 430 Indonesian Port Authority personnel have received training organized by the Antwerp/Flanders Port Training Center (APEC). Several Indonesian officials have also visited the Port of Antwerp to exchange information about port management. In 2019, officials from the Port of Antwerp visited Indonesia to explore various port sector projects for collaboration. Both parties are eager to promote further partnerships in transportation and logistics as these two sectors are particularly important to support economic recovery. Sulaiman Syarief, the Embassy's Chargé d'Affaires, encouraged the Indonesian business community to explore Indonesia's outbound investment to Belgium.

Stefan Cassimon, Director of the Port of Antwerp International (PoA), mentioned that the Port of Antwerp had prepared facilities to adapt to the "new normal". A task force was formed with stakeholders involved in the port's operations, and policies and the impact of Covid-19 have been openly addressed. He also highlighted the EU's European Green Deal, which will greatly affect the shipping industry by making it more environmentally friendly.

The participants appreciated this virtual event as the dialogue brought the parties closer together and allowed them to connect during the pandemic. In the future, this forum will be a great platform to develop and concretize closer cooperation to accelerate the post-Covid 19 recovery process.



Presiden resmikan pelabuhan. Photo Source: Setneg.go.id

Belgium Welcomes Certified Legal and Sustainable Furniture and Wood Products from Indonesia

JESSICA CLARA SHINTA AND NEFERTITI HINDRATMO

“Indonesia has demonstrated a strong commitment to address illegal logging and promote trade of legal timber products”, said Sulaiman Syarif, Chargé d’Affaires of the Indonesian Embassy in Brussels. Now, it is time for the European Union to provide market incentives as part of its obligation to implement VPA-FLEGT.

This was one of the key messages of the Indonesia-Belgium Virtual Business Meeting on Wood Products and Furniture. “Indonesia’s timber and wood products have huge potential in the Belgian and European Union markets”, said Indroyono Susilo, Chairman of the Association of Indonesian Forest Concessionaires and also Chairman of the Forum of Indonesian Forestry Communities. Currently, the EU is Indonesia’s fourth largest timber and wood products export destination after China, Japan, and the US. The export value of Indonesian wood products to the EU in 2019 was US\$1.091 billion. While total exports of Indonesian wood products globally in 2019 was US\$11.6 billion.

With VPA-FLEGT certification for all its wood products, Indonesia has a comparative advantage. In the current situation, the certification mechanism provides assurance on the sustainability, legality, and traceability of wood products. According to Alexander de Groot of FEDUSTRIA, the certification is a huge plus point for Indonesia’s products and a vital interest for all parties. With no additional due diligence needed, business communities can save money. He also mentioned that during this time of the pandemic, he has found that consumers are changing consumption patterns and prefer the comfort of their homes.



Philippe Delhaise from the Ethnicraft furniture company, which has worked with furniture artisans from Indonesia, agreed with De Groot’s view. He mentioned that with the pandemic and the reluctance to travel, people are choosing to spend their budget on making their homes more comfortable, among others, by buying wood panels to renovate their homes and acquiring new furniture. Covid-19 also presents new challenges for retail businesses, but digital platforms that enable online sales can provide opportunities to reach larger markets, especially end consumers.

Indeed, opportunities for Indonesian wood products abound, especially by diversifying export products. Currently, most of the focus is on hardwood and premium wood exports. But Indonesia should also explore the possibility of exporting softwood or medium-quality wood to EU countries. In this regard, Indonesia’s small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have a vital role to play in expanding timber and wood product exports to Belgium and the EU.

On the other hand, the EU is expected to fulfil its commitment to implement the VPA by further promoting the FLEGT mechanism and its benefits. EU support could be provided in the form of public and private procurements. Meanwhile, Indonesia will ensure that the promotion of FLEGT in public and private procurement is also reflected in the Indonesia-European Union Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) negotiations, which are still underway.



Photo Credit : Dewi Putri Megawati

Joke

English:

“Now you’ve done it and you’ve got to take full responsibility of that. I’m totally uninvolved.”

Indonesia:

“Hayo lo...”



Photo Credit : Gunawan Kartapranata - Own work based on the map in Ethnography Room, National Museum of Indonesia, Jakarta



wonderful
indonesia

visit
indonesia

For consular services and updates on entry to Indonesia,
visit <http://appointment.kbribrussel.id/>

www.indonesia.travel

Photo Credit : Martine Millet-Vervat