
Indonesia – Nigeria Strategic Cooperation: An Indonesia's Perspective

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Abstract

Indonesia-Nigeria cooperation resumed since President Gus Dur made an official visit to Nigeria in 2000. Indonesia relations became increasingly constructive by creating several trade agreements with the Nigerian government and formulating Indonesia-Africa Forum (IAF) is a real constructive strategy in focusing on Indonesia's Foreign Policy toward the Africa region. There are more than 15 Indonesian companies operating in Nigeria and Nigeria was Indonesia's largest trade partner in Africa with a total volume of trade at USD 1.5 billion in 2019. In the oil sector, Indonesia has a trade deficit with Nigeria but not in the non-oil sector, Nigeria became the entry point for Indonesian products to other African regions. This research is qualitative research using a political cooperation concept as an analytical tool by looking at the dynamics of the Indonesia-Nigeria relationship in the framework of strategic cooperation. The data is gained from a focused review of relevant theories, literature, and previous research findings of the discussed topic. Besides, the data were taken from books, journals, reports, and websites.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Economic, Cooperation, Trade, IAF.

Abstrak

Kerjasama Indonesia-Nigeria dimulai kembali sejak Presiden Gus Dur melakukan kunjungan resmi ke Nigeria pada tahun 2000. Hubungan Indonesia menjadi semakin konstruktif dengan menciptakan beberapa perjanjian perdagangan dengan pemerintah Nigeria dan merumuskan Forum Indonesia-Afrika (IAF) adalah strategi konstruktif nyata dalam memfokuskan Kebijakan Luar Negeri Indonesia menuju wilayah Afrika. Terdapat lebih dari 15 perusahaan Indonesia yang beroperasi di Nigeria. Negara ini adalah mitra dagang terbesar Indonesia di Afrika dengan total volume perdagangan mencapai USD 1,5 miliar pada tahun 2019. Di sektor minyak, Indonesia memiliki defisit perdagangan dengan Nigeria tetapi tidak di sektor non-minyak, Nigeria menjadi titik masuknya produk Indonesia ke wilayah Afrika lainnya. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan menggunakan konsep politik kerjasama sebagai alat analisis dengan melihat dinamika hubungan Indonesia-Nigeria dalam kerangka kerja sama strategis. Data diperoleh dari tinjauan terfokus pada teori, literatur, dan temuan penelitian sebelumnya yang relevan dari topik yang dibahas. Selain itu data diambil dari buku, jurnal, laporan, dan situs web.

Kata kunci: Politik Luar Negeri, Kerjasama, Ekonomi, Perdagangan, IAF.

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, Indonesia-Nigeria relations have grown stronger and more constructive. As developing countries, Indonesia and Nigeria have

had something in common in the past, namely being part of the process of western colonialism and imperialism. The Asian-African Conference in 1955

became an important part of Indonesia and other African countries in building communication and relations on the same fate as a colonized country. In 1965, Indonesia for the first time established diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Nigeria, this was marked by the opening of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Sub-Sahara, Lagos, Nigeria. On the other hand, Nigeria responded by opening its diplomatic office in Indonesia in 1976 in Jakarta (Kementerian Luar Negeri Republik Indonesia, 2015).

The dynamics of the relationship between Indonesia and Nigeria are largely determined by global political conditions. During the Soekarno administration, the relationship between Indonesia and African countries was very strong considering that African countries were also trying to get out of colonialism. On several international issues, Indonesia and Nigeria have the same views and positions. For example, in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), World Trade Organization (WTO), Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and are members of the Developing Eight Countries (D8) and other international organizations. The Indonesia-Nigeria cooperation is not only based on past similarities, but development and mutual equality are

the strong foundation for the two countries in cooperation.

Indonesia-Nigeria cooperation is relevant to be strengthened, given the facts of the relationship between the two countries. For example, Nigeria as the largest oil exporter to Indonesia, Indonesia being the largest investor in Nigeria, the volume of trade between the two countries reached 1.5 billion dollars in 2016. This fact is a strong reason the two countries strengthen cooperation at a higher level (Haryanto, 2017). Some of the achievements of the cooperation between the two countries are interesting to study further, how the focus of Indonesia's foreign policy on Africa is able to encourage the development of sustainable cooperation.

Shifting of Indonesia's foreign policy which focuses on cooperation in Africa cannot be separated from the revitalization of the values of the Asian-African Conference framed in the framework of cooperation and renewing several long-standing collaborations. The new round of relations between Indonesia and Africa, in particular with Nigeria is interesting to study. It's possible to provide the other side and contributing to the framework of cooperation of Indonesia through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This research is framed in the big theme of

Indonesian Foreign Policy, Indonesia-Nigeria strategic cooperation. The New Face of Indonesian Foreign Policy in Africa with the formulation of the problem, how is the cooperation between Indonesia and Nigeria and the focus of Indonesia's foreign policy in Africa?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Africa as a region with complex problems has indirectly become the object of research for world researchers. Soeratman in African History describes how countries on this great continent came out of colonialism and tried to catch up. The 20th century is considered the African century considering that in the middle of the 20th-century African nations gradually separated from imperialism-colonialism to become independent and sovereign states. The spirit against colonialism and neo-colonialism has become important as the dynamics of the African struggle in global politics. Industry and capitalism encouraged the birth of new imperialism, Britain with the advancement of the industrial sector was forced to acquire new areas as suppliers of industrial raw materials (Soeratman, 2012, p. 17).

The movement of African nations against imperialism is also described by Basil Davidson in *Modern Africa: A Social and Political History* which is getting stronger and

more systematic, as an example of a major movement in Nigeria. British imperialists divided this area into western and eastern parts. In 1950 the Action Group movement group under the leadership of Aminu Obafemi Awolowo was born in the west and voiced resistance to Britain. The birth of Nigeria into a sovereign state takes a long time, Britain gives independence periodically and regulates the constitution that will be used (Davidson, 1995, pp. 135–136).

Understanding the socio-political dynamics of Africa is important to strengthen the understanding and analysis of the strong reasons for Africa to build constructive cooperation with Indonesia. The birth of the African nation into a sovereign state could not be separated from the enthusiasm voiced by Soekarno as President of Indonesia. The Asian African Conference (KAA) in 1955 became the catalyst for the African nation to seize independence from western imperialism. It is evident that during the '50s to '60s, African nations were gradually free from colonialism.

One of the researchers who specifically discussed the cooperation between Indonesia and Nigeria is Ismail Bello in the *Indonesia-Nigeria Foreign Economic Relations Partnership for Economic Development*. Bello explained how the focus of Indonesia's policy has

begun to shift and prioritize the African region as a very attractive destination for economic cooperation. The Indonesia-Nigeria relationship is interesting given that Nigeria has several similarities that strengthen the mutual trust of both parties. Geographically, the distance between the two countries is not close, but the two have something in common in several ways. For example, the same experience of colonialism, high levels of corruption, being led by the military junta, cultural and ethnic diversity, and high population growth rates. The strengthening of cooperation between Indonesia and Nigeria was initiated by President Abdurrahman Wahid in 2001, on a state visit to Nigeria as a form of a return visit for the visit of the President of Nigeria to Indonesia in 2001, 2005, and 2006 (Bello, 2017).

Indonesia-Nigeria relations were further strengthened during the time of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono with the holding of a high-level meeting in New York in 2007 with Nigerian leader Umar Musa Yar'adua. The next meeting was held with the new Nigerian leader Goodluck Jonathan in 2013. In this meeting, the two countries agreed to the Bilateral Indonesia Nigeria Joint Commission. This agreement strengthens cooperation in the field of global peace and security; democracy; agriculture; strengthening the role of

women; investment; socio-cultural; good governance and the mining sector. The implementation of this collaboration is very real in several sectors, for example establishing schools in Nigeria as a form of cultural diplomacy.

Strengthening other cooperation can be seen in the field of eradicating corruption. The Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) signed an MoU with the Nigerian Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) in 2007. Since 2001 Indonesia-Nigeria has had a fairly sound economic cooperation framework, for example, the signing of the Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement. This agreement is a great asset to enter into more specific cooperation, namely the Joint Commission in 2007 and was signed in 2010, in the era of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

Pradana also discussed the Indonesia-Nigeria cooperation in a journal entitled in a more specific field which was also discussed by Pradana in the Indonesia-Nigeria Cooperation in Handling the Nigerian Drug Trafficking Network in Indonesia 2015-2017. Indonesia's drug emergency status prompted the government to form comprehensive cooperation with Nigeria. In 2013 an MoU was formed which specifically discussed the prevention of drug

trafficking. Nigeria is the country of origin for the largest drugs in Indonesia, 90% of the distribution is done by sea. The Indonesian-Nigerian government agreed to improve communication and cooperation with the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), Indonesia, and the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Nigeria. This collaboration is running quite effectively as evidenced by the disclosure of several major cases in the narcotics eradication process (Pradana & Utomo, 2020).

This research tries to analyze the framework for Indonesia-Africa cooperation, especially Nigeria after the formation of the Indonesia Africa Forum (IAF) as a frame of reference in encouraging economic cooperation between Indonesia and Africa. This is a fundamental difference from previous studies. The shift in the orientation of Indonesia's foreign policy has become one of the analytical variables to see foreign policy support in increasing cooperation with Africa, especially Nigeria. So that the framework of Indonesia-Nigeria cooperation is transformed into comprehensive cooperation in all sectors.

METHOD

This research is a qualitative research. Qualitative research is a comprehensive approach to

exploration that requires. It is also possible to classify qualitative research as an efficient model which takes place in a natural environment that helps the researcher to build a degree of detail from being highly active in the study real experiences (Creswell, 2003). The data is gained from a focused review of relevant theories, literature, and previous research findings of the discussed topic. Then it converts both primary and secondary sources in addressing the issue of the topic will be discussed. Besides, the data in this research were obtained through books, journals, government documents, and online media. Data analysis was carried out by looking at the dynamics of Indonesia-Nigeria relations, particularly in the trade and investment sectors.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Building cooperation in world politics that has long been dominated and influenced by the realism setting is not something easy. The state is the only dominant actor in global politics which then plays very significant role. Cooperation describes the actions of actors that lead to togetherness or compromise with others. So that cooperation is simply considered as policy coordination. Lindblom explained policy coordination as A set of decisions is coordinated if adjustments the consequences of any

one decision for other decisions are to a degree and in some frequency avoided, reduced, or counterbalanced or outweighed (Mugasejati & Rais, 2011).

Axelrod at least provides an overview of the reasons why cooperation has become desirable and sustainable. There are three factors that drive the determinant, among others; mutuality of interests, the shadow of future and the number of players. The first factor, mutuality of interests, favorable circumstances or vice versa, is the driving force for cooperation. Interests can be said to be the main key to encouraging cooperation. Subjective interpretation by one party becomes the basis for objective reality for the other (Axelrod & Keohane, 1985, pp. 228–230).

Then the second factor is the shadow of the future, Axelrod illustrates that the consideration of interests that will be obtained in the future is one of the reasons for actors to build and commit in a cooperation. There are several important points that make a cooperation more desirable; long time horizon, regularity of stakes; reliability of information about the others action, and quick feedback about change in the others action. The last factor is the number of actors, Axelrod explained that reciprocity in cooperation greatly determines the sustainability of cooperation. Effective

reciprocity consists of three conditions: the actor can identify the defector; they are able to focus retaliation on defector; they have sufficient long-run incentives to punish defector. Indeed, bilateral cooperation will certainly open up wider space for sustainability (Axelrod & Keohane, 1985).

The Indonesia-Nigeria cooperation is certainly based on the three important things above, as well as historical factors. The image of the potential market and Nigeria's position as an entry point for Indonesian products in Africa is an integral part of the driving force for Indonesia to re-strengthen its cooperation with Nigeria. The importance of Nigeria is not only limited to a potential trading partner, but also because Nigeria becomes key actor in Africa that is being part of Indonesia's political interests as a consideration for Indonesia in strengthening relations with Nigeria.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Indonesia – Africa Relations

The relationship between Indonesia and Africa has a long history. The connection between Indonesia and Africa can even be traced back to ancient times. In terms of anthropological ties, several studies have revealed that the ancestors of the Madagascan people may have

originated from Indonesia. In South Africa, there is a Malay community, whose members are descendants of Sheikh Yusuf, an Islamic religious leader from South Sulawesi in the 17th century (Chidester, 2019). The important history between Indonesia and Africa then continued when Indonesia became independent. The first country to recognize Indonesia's independence came from Africa, namely Egypt on March 22, 1946.

On 18-24 April 1955 in Bandung, the Asia-Africa Conference or also known as the Bandung Conference was organized by Indonesia, Burma (Myanmar), Pakistan, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and India and was coordinated by Ruslan Abdulgani as Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. The twenty-nine participating countries represent a total population of 1.5 billion people, 54% of the world's population (Warnapala, 2005).

Prior to this conference, Indonesia played an important role in encouraging the meeting which was attended by the Heads of Indonesian Representatives in Asia, Africa and the Pacific. Taking place at Wisma Tugu, Puncak, West Java on 9-22 March 1954, to discuss the formulation that Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo would bring to the Colombo Conference, as the basis for Indonesia's proposal to expand the

idea of interregional cooperation at the Asian-African level.

Then at the Colombo Conference which was held from 28 April to 2 May 1954, Indonesia spearheaded efforts to hold a conference of African and Asian countries. At that time, Indonesia's great regional ambitions were evident and showed great concern for the countries on the same boat. Indonesia has been recognized by history as the leading actor for the Asian and African Nation as "a great awakening" and "search for unity"(Lee, 2015). Not many people know that the big idea of starting the step of unifying Asian and African Nations through the Asian-African Conference was very doubtful at its success at that time.

Indonesia showed its courage to open the way by holding a meeting in Bogor on 28-29 December 1954 to prepare for the Asian-African Conference. In fact, this meeting was attended by only five countries, namely Indonesia, Burma, Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan. Finally, the Asian-African Conference was successfully held in Indonesia with 29 participating countries, which generated echoes throughout the world. African countries that attended were Sudan, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia and Libya. During those times, Indonesia's ability to play a big role in international politics was certainly a reflection of the

abilities of its leaders. The Asia-Africa Conference has become a stage that demonstrates the capacity and capability of Indonesia's leaders. Through this agenda, Indonesian leaders who represent the Indonesian State are able to achieve what is known as actorness and be accepted internationally.

The leadership of Indonesia has won this role because it is based on the size and importance of their role in the Asian-African Conference. In particular, President Soekarno as President of Indonesia was able to construct the thinking of leaders of Asian and African countries through his ability to build and communicate ideas. Ali Sastroamidjojo as Prime Minister of Indonesia who became President of the Conference and played a role by struggling to convince the leaders of Asian African countries to carry out the conference. Muhammad Yamin, Indonesian Minister of Education who serves as the Head of the Economic Committee of the Asian-African Conference. Roeslan Abdulgani, Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who was the Secretary General of the Asian-African Conference who successfully coordinated (Lee, 2015).

There were two conferences related to the Asian-African Conference, namely the Conference of Faithful Friends of the People of Asia-

Africa in 1956, which resulted in the formation of the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization (AAPSO) in Cairo in 1957 and then the Asian-African Youth Conference in 1959. Various cooperation frameworks, social and political issues involving Indonesia and African countries are the basis for future relations between Indonesia and Africa. This is what then underlies the relationship between Indonesia and Nigeria (Sihbudi, 1997).

Indonesia – Nigeria Cooperation

Bilaterally, diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Nigeria were opened in 1965 by establishing an embassy in Lagos, followed by the opening of the Nigerian embassy in Jakarta in 1976. The relationship between the two countries has been going well so far through the participation of Indonesia and Nigeria in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Islamic Cooperation Organization, group 77, G-15, D-8, OPEC, UN, anti-apartheid, anti-colonialism/imperialism and both of them are trying to realize a New World Information Order and provide mutual support for the interests of each country (Hutabarat, 2015).

Relations between Indonesia and Nigeria experienced an increase in the era of Abdurahman Wahid's government, where bilateral

cooperation in the economic and technical fields was established on December 21, 2000 in Jakarta. It was led directly by the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, Al Haji Sule Lamiza. This economic cooperation shows increased interaction in its implementation. However, in the end, there was no clarity regarding the development of relations due to Nigeria which had not yet ratified (Bello, 2017). Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid visited Nigeria in 2001 as an effort to increase Indonesia's economic cooperation with Nigeria, as well as on his visit to the D8 Summit in Qatar. This visit is considered important because Nigeria has become the 6th largest oil producer in the world since 1974. Nigeria is considered to have an influence on the US market in the oil sector, so this is expected to provide benefits to the Indonesian economy (Falola & Heaton, 2008).

Indonesia-Nigeria relations were further strengthened during the time of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono with the holding of a high-level meeting in New York in 2007 with Nigerian leader Umar Musa Yar'adua. The next meeting was held with the new Nigerian leader Goodluck Jonathan in 2013. In this meeting, the two countries agreed to the Bilateral Indonesia Nigeria Joint Commission. This agreement

strengthens cooperation in the field of global peace and security; democracy; agriculture; strengthening the role of women; encourage investment; socio-cultural; good governance and the mining sector. The implementation of this collaboration is very real in several sectors, for example establishing schools in Nigeria as cultural diplomacy (Bello, 2017, pp. 127-128).

The increased cooperation between Indonesia and Nigeria was in the best position when the momentum of the global economic downturn occurred in 2008. Indonesia experienced a decline in the export value of non-oil and gas products in five countries, namely China, Japan, the United States, India and Singapore. This weakening encourages the intensity of relations between Indonesia and Nigeria as the largest market in the African region. Indonesia-Nigeria relations are very good for 52 years. The two countries are two major economies in their respective regions with complementary economic advantages. Therefore, the trade and investment relationship between the two countries is something that naturally exists and must be continuously improved (Bello, 2017, p. 128).

Nigeria As Strategic Partner in Trade Sector

Nigeria's export volume to Indonesia in 2017 reached nearly US \$ 1.5 billion or 3.3 percent of all Nigerian exports. Meanwhile, Nigeria's trade value from Indonesia in 2017 reached more than 400 million US dollars or 1.28 percent of all Nigerian imports. The data shows Indonesia is in eighth position for Nigeria's export destinations, after India, the United States, Spain, the Netherlands, France, South Africa and Canada. In addition, the country of origin for imports, Indonesia is in eleventh position after China, Belgium, the Netherlands, the United States, India, Germany, England, France, Italy and Brazil (World Integrated Trade Solution, n.d.).

In 2017, 98% of the products Nigeria exported to Indonesia were fuel oil valued at US \$ 1.46 billion. Meanwhile, the remaining two percent are agricultural and aluminum products. The strong form of cooperation between the two countries is the establishment of the Nigerian-Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NICCI) in 2017 as a forum for Indonesian business in Nigeria. NICCI helps companies large and small to explore and develop trade, investment and business in Nigeria and Indonesia. NICCI Nigeria is a private sector,

member-driven, non-profit national business association dedicated to the growth of trade, investment and sustainable services between Nigerian companies and Indonesian companies. The aim of this institution is to provide the best platform for their members to stay informed and connected to Nigeria and Indonesia (Nigerian-Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, n.d.).

The trade volume of Nigeria and Indonesia in 2019 reached nearly US \$ 1.5 billion. This condition shows a significant decrease of 64% of trade in 2014. The trend of trade in Indonesia and Nigeria has decreased from year to year -6.28 percent. Indonesia also experienced a trade deficit of minus 965 million US dollars. Trade between Indonesia and Nigeria is still dominated by the crude sector in the form of natural products such as oil, gas, aluminum, pulp and vegetable oil. Nigeria experienced a surplus due to exporting products of a much higher value in the form of energy, compared to Indonesia, which exported products of lower value such as household consumption goods (Kementerian Perdagangan Republik Indonesia, 2019).

There are more than fifteen Indonesian companies operating in Nigeria at present. The leading companies are *Indorama*, *Indofood*, *Kalbe Farma* and *Sayap Mas Utama*. *Indofood*

established an instant noodle factory in 1995 and the Indomie brand has become popular in Nigeria. *Indofood* has the largest instant noodle production facility in Africa. The two countries are planning a gas and methanol fertilizer plant worth US \$ 2.5 billion in Nigeria, a collaboration between Pertamina, Indonesia and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation with Eurochem Indonesia and Viva Methanol Nigeria. It shows that the cooperation between the two countries is strategic, although in some parts, Indonesia has lost to the products of the country (Merwe et al., 2016).

Indonesia Africa Forum (IAF) As a Catalysator

The Indonesia Africa Forum (IAF) was formed in April 2018 in Nusa Dua Bali as part of Indonesia's seriousness in strengthening its relationship with Africa. The IAF represents a new chapter in relations between Indonesia and Africa under President Joko Widodo (Kementerian Keuangan RI, 2018). Indonesia's goal of forming the IAAF is to realize the political closeness between Indonesia and the African region that was built in the Asia-Africa Conference into real economic closeness. Indonesia's economic diplomacy will be focused on supporting the elimination of non-tariff barriers in trade with major

markets and opening up prospective markets through the IAF. Africa becomes a profitable target market for Indonesia in the future, with Nigeria as the entry point (Kementerian Luar Negeri Republik Indonesia, 2015).

The Indonesia-Africa Forum (IAF) is the first historic forum held by Indonesia to bring together governments, business people and stakeholders from Indonesia and African countries. More than 550 people from 53 African countries, both private and government, were invited to the IAF meeting to explore potential economic cooperation, strengthen technical cooperation and enhance long-standing cooperation (Tempo, 2018). Through the IAF forum, a business agreement was formed worth US \$ 586.56 million, and Indonesia also stated its commitment to strengthen cooperation with Africa (Tralac, 2018).

Strengthening cooperation, among others, through increasing cooperation in the field, technical and capacity building, developing competitive export credit facilities, increasing connectivity cooperation, and exploring trade agreements through the formation of preferential trade agreements (Tralac, 2018).

In the investment sector, more than 30 Indonesian companies in the pharmaceutical, textile and energy

sectors operate in Africa. Infrastructure is one of the most highlighted issues within the IAF, Indonesia and Africa consider this sector a high priority for future development (Ministry of Foreign Affairs). According to the Global Infrastructure Outlook from the Global Infrastructure Hub, investment needs for various infrastructure projects in Africa from 2016 to 2040 amount to USD 6 trillion, equivalent to 5.9% of GDP dedicated to infrastructure in this period (Global Infrastructure Hub, 2017).

Furthermore, Indonesia estimates a need for USD 1.7 trillion in the same period. The Indonesian government is committed to developing the country's infrastructure by allocating its national expenditure of up to USD 28 billion for infrastructure in 2019. Compared to 2015, the 2019 budget received an increase of 61.6%. Reflecting on the need and potential for such cooperation, Indonesia believes that this will be the right momentum to increase collaboration in infrastructure development between Indonesia and Africa. Indonesia believes that the infrastructure sector will not only promote mobility in trade in goods and services, but also encourage investment and support broad economic growth in the medium and long term.

CONCLUSION

The strategic cooperation between Indonesia and Nigeria is moving towards constructive and sustainable cooperation. Indonesia's challenge in this framework of cooperation is to encourage and increase the export value of more competitive products. Indonesia must encourage more private parties to penetrate the potential African market, so that the policy of strengthening relations with Africa is appropriate. The IAF is a new platform that is expected to be able to support various cooperation frameworks that have been agreed upon by Indonesia-Nigeria.

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