

THE INDONESIA-AUSTRALIA COOPERATION IN RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (2020)

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic began in Wuhan, China in late December 2019 and rapidly spread to all over the world. The COVID-19 caused by SARS-Cov-2 and more than one million people have been affected worldwide. The COVID-19 pandemic not only impacts the health sector, but the pandemic triggered to the economic crisis with expansive social effects. Due to the impact of COVID-19, the international cooperation needs to be taken to responding and control the pandemic. Indonesia and Australia as a close neighbour, have worked closely in disaster risk management and currently cooperate to response the COVID-19. This study aims to describe the cooperation between Indonesia and Australia in responding the impacts of COVID-19. This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive method. The data collection technique used based on secondary data in the form of literature review (library research) including books, journals, reports, organization's websites, online articles, and scientific papers that are related to the study. The author uses the concept of cooperation to support the idea of cooperation between Indonesia and Australia to responding the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic. This study provides that the cooperation between Indonesia and Australia in responding the impacts of COVID-19 are divided into three sectors, namely health security, stability, and economic recovery.

Keyword: Australia; Cooperation; COVID-19; Indonesia, Pandemic.

Pendahuluan

In 2020, the world is facing a health global issue of the COVID-19 outbreak. The outbreak began in Wuhan, China in late 2019 and rapidly spread to all over the world. The COVID-19 caused by the coronavirus identified as SARS-Cov-2 which attacks the respiratory system. The COVID-19 is the third serious Coronavirus outbreak in less than 20 years after Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2002 and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in 2012 (Yang et al., 2020). World Health Organization (WHO) declared on March 2020 that COVID-19 as a pandemic. As of 10 July 2020, a globally there have been 12,102,328 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 551,046 deaths (World Health Organization, 2020).

Many countries are already implementing the physical distancing policies with the health safety protocol as approaches that can be prevent the spread of SARS-Cov-2

(IDinsight, 2020). All of the world's population has experienced a physical distancing with a high level, beyond the impact of health and human tragedy, the pandemic triggered the most serious economic crisis in a century with expansive social effects. All economic sectors are affected by disrupted global supply chains, weaker demand for imported goods and services, a drop in international tourism, or a decline in business travel (OECD, 2020). In response to the impacts of COVID-19, an international cooperation in bilateral or multilateral approach needs to be taken to address the mitigation of the outbreak.

Indonesia as the fourth most populous nation in the world with total population in 2019 of 270,625,568 (World Bank, n.d.) is considered as lacking medical supply and need a support from other country. By 10 July 2020, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia announced 72,347 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 3,469 deaths and 33,329 recovered cases from 459 districts across all 34 provinces (Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia, 2020). It is indicating that Indonesia records the highest number of COVID-19 cases in Southeast Asia following Philippines with 51,754 confirmed cases and Singapore with 45,423 confirmed cases (World Health Organization, 2020).

Indonesian economic growth rate in the first quarter of 2020 grew only 2.97% which far below compare the same quarter in 2019 with an amount of 5.07% (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020). According to the Central Statistics Agency, the number of unemployed people increased by 1.84% to 9.7 million, with the open unemployment rate reaching 7.07 % in August 2020 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020). Besides the economic impact, the COVID-19 also trigger the social impact to all people. The Large-Scale Social Restriction (*Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar* or "PSBB") that announced by President Joko Widodo creates a school closure and workplaces, limitations on physical worship, public gatherings, social-cultural activities, modes of transportation, and other explicit defence and security-related activities (Andriani, 2020).

Australia with total population of 25,364,307 in 2019 (World Bank, n.d.), by 10 July 2020 the total confirmed cases was 9,059 with 106 deaths (World Health Organization, 2020). The Australian economy was contracted by 0.3 % in the first quarter of 2020, leaving annual growth at 1.4% (Ernst & Young, 2020). As reported by The Australian Bureau of Statistic, the full-time employment decreased by 220,500 and part-time by 373,800 in Australia. The unemployment increased by 104,500 people to 823,300 (The Guardian, 2020). In Australia, the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restriction causing a mental health issue to the people (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare).

Indonesia and Australia as a close neighbourhood country and as part of countries who signed a recommendation from G-Science and Medicine is committed to working together to overcome the challenge posed by COVID-19. The recommendation from G-Science and Medicine is that all country need to take an international

1. cooperation in responding the COVID-19. They stated that the cooperation must be working in several dimensions, such as:
2. Real-time sharing the detail of scientific information about the virus and disease, and coordinated activities to advance knowledge;
3. Share information about research and development of medical products;
4. Coordination and alignment of regulatory and manufacturing processes and quality standards required to accelerate availability of medical supplies;
5. Collaborative efforts to undertake rapid but evidence-based analysis of emerging concerns or discrete program and policy issues;
6. Coordinated development of consistent evidence-based guidance, messaging and communication for the public and policymakers (Akademi Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia, 2020).

This study aims to describe the bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and Australia in response to the impacts of COVID-19. This paper will be divided into several sections, namely 1) Introduction about conceptual framework of cooperation in international relations including with the research method, 2) Description and analysis about the cooperation between Indonesia and Australia in responding the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, and 3) Conclusion of this paper.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

International Cooperation

In a current global situation, cooperation among nations needs to be carried out to achieve their national interests since there are no country who able to work alone to develop their country and achieve their national interests. The cooperation between countries can happen due to the interdependence between countries. In international relations, there is several forms of international cooperation, namely bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Bilateral is a cooperation between two countries and multilateral is a cooperation between two more countries. The cooperation does not only happen between countries, but also international organization or institutions.

K.J. Holsti (1988) defined international cooperation as follows:

1. View that two or more interest, value, and the purpose of meeting each other and could result in something, promoted or fulfilled by all parties.
2. Agreement of a certain problem between two or more countries in order to utilize the equality or the difference is an interest.
3. A view or expectation of a country that the policy of a country could help achieve the goals of another country, and 4) transaction between countries to fulfil their agreement.

Based on the explanation as above, this study uses a form of bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and Australia in responding the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic. As a close neighbourhood country, Indonesia and Australia realized that both countries should work together to tackle the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic and to minimize the impacts in the future.

This study uses a qualitative research approach with a descriptive method. The data collection technique used based on secondary data in the form of literature review (library research) including books, journals, reports, organization's websites, agreements, online articles, and scientific papers that are related to the study. The collected data then elaborated to analyse the study. Author seek to portray about the bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and Australia in responding the impacts of COVID-19 in 2020.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) is a new type of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that was discovered in Wuhan, China and rapidly spread to all countries in the world. As 10th July 2020, the COVID-19 in Indonesia already infected 72,347 people and caused 3,469 people died (Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia, 2020). Indonesia's first COVID-19 case was recorded in March 2020 when the two Indonesian citizens have tested positive for COVID-19 after being contact with an infected Japanese national (The Guardian, 2020).

In Australia, the first confirmed cases of COVID-19 were reported by 25th January 2020. It was beginning when Australia screening passengers on flights between Wuhan and Sydney on 23 January 2020 (O'Sullivan, Rahamathulla, & Pawar, 2020). Most of all the country in the world were caught unprepared to face the COVID-19 and health equipment such as masks, especially for health workers. Furthermore, the lack of medicine and health equipment like ventilators make the death rate much higher. Besides that, the economic and social impact also attacked the both countries due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Especially in Indonesia as the fourth most populous nation in the world with a high mobility, make the impacts of COVID-19 are much higher. Low testing rates and coordination challenges across Indonesia's decentralised government pose difficulties in implementing a response that supports health outcomes and safe and sustainable economic activity (Australian Embassy, 2020). To respond this situation, Indonesia calling an international cooperation. Indonesia and Australia as a close neighbourhood country are committed to combatting the COVID-19 together.

In response to the impacts of COVID-19, the government should be considered to three points. First, rapidly increase the test of COVID-19. Second flattening the curve of COVID-19 cases through social or physical distancing in crucial measure. Third, the government must protect the most vulnerable people and vulnerable sectors (Apresian, 2020). Indonesia and Australia have shared interest in managing COVID-19 transmission in the region. The cooperation between Indonesia and Australia is divided into three pillars: health security, stability, and economic recovery.

Health Security

Indonesia as the fourth most populous and the largest archipelago country in the world is facing a difficult challenge from COVID-19. The low testing rate and lack of medical equipment supply make the confirmed cases and death by COVID-19 get higher day by day in Indonesia. On 24 June 2020, Australia has provided essential medical supplies including 100 non-invasive ventilators, personal protective equipment and laboratory supplies to support front-line medical staff and laboratory staff (Australian Embassy, 2020).

WHO as an international organization who plays an important role in coordinating the global response to the COVID-19 are involved to the Indonesia and Australia cooperation. Australia set to disburse aid totalling AUD 6.2 million (IDR 61 billion) to WHO to strengthen Indonesia's laboratories, improve the way of Indonesia collects and uses health information, and help to protect patients and health workers at health facilities. The funding also to ensure essential support to provide towards the preparedness of the health system, including enhancing the national surveillance and case detection system and strengthening infection prevention and control activities (WHO, 2020).

As Australia's commitment to working with Indonesia to face the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesia and Australia are working with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). UNICEF in Indonesia is working to maintain essential health services in communities, strengthen the health system, improve basic water, sanitation and hygiene practices, supply critical goods and ensuring that women, children, and vulnerable communities have access to nutrition interventions (UNICEF, 2020).

Through the Australia-Indonesia Partnership in Disaster Risk Management (AIP-DRM/SIAP SIAGA), Australia support Indonesia with providing expert advisors to Indonesia's COVID-19 Committee and to agencies with a vital role in managing the pandemic (Australian Embassy, 2020). SIAP SIAGA is a five-year cooperation between Indonesia and Australia that to strengthen Indonesia's management of disaster risk and engagement between both countries.

In COVID-19 response, SIAP SIAGA providing advisory support to the Ministry of Home Affairs of Indonesia and the Ministry of Social Affairs of Indonesia. SIAPA SIAGA work with the provincial government in Bali, East Nusa Tenggara, and East Java to support sub-national efforts to manage the crisis. As part of its response, SIAP SIAGA work with Indonesian civil society organizations such as the Indonesian Red Cross, Nahdlatul Ulama, and Muhammadiyah to support COVID-19 community awareness and preparedness (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Government).

Beside the social distancing and the implementation of health protocols, vaccination is an important tool to stop the spread of COVID-19. To develop the COVID-19 vaccine, the cooperation between countries and institution is needed. Australia's national science agency, CSIRO, are working with the Indonesian research partners to strengthen Indonesia's pandemic preparedness and response and accelerate

joint research outcomes related to COVID-19 (CSIRO). CSIRO is supporting Indonesian Government efforts to create a local vaccine development platform. Australia supports equitable access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines in Indonesia through multilateral and regional initiatives to finance, assess, deliver, and monitor COVID-19 vaccines (Australian Embassy, 2020).

Stability

As a close neighbourhood country, Indonesia and Australia are already have a bilateral cooperation in many programs before the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic began, the cooperation between two countries has reshaped from development cooperation to COVID-19 response. Australia working with Indonesian Government to respond the challenges of COVID-19 in social protection, education, and food security in Indonesia. Australia also working with Indonesian civil society partners to ensure the most vulnerable groups, including women and people with disabilities can access essential service throughout COVID-19 (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Government).

In education sector, Indonesia and Australia working through Innovation for Indonesia's School Children (INOVASI) program. The purpose of its program is to improve learning outcomes for all children in Indonesia's basic education sector. During COVID-19 pandemic, INOVASI supporting Indonesia in COVID-19 response and recovery in education sector including provide an assistance in expert technical advice, continuous policy engagement, responsive research, knowledge-sharing and partnership brokering. Moreover, this program also supports Indonesian government to pilot new approaches in the establishment of learning from home guidelines and monitoring remote learning practice to inform government policy and funding decision (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Government).

A joint study by the Demographic Institute of Faculty of Economics and Business of the University of Indonesia (FEB UI) and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), it shows that women are more vulnerable to COVID-19 impacts. Women workers are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 (Samudra & Setyonaluri, 2020). MAMPU Program as a partnership between Australian Government (DFAT) and Government of Indonesia (BAPPENAS) is working with government and civil society partners to ensure poor and vulnerable women can access new social assistance measures and sexual and reproductive healthcare, support alternative livelihoods for informal workers who have lost their jobs; and address the increased risk of violence against women as a result of the pandemic (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Government).

Economic Recovery

COVID-19 creates economic impact that can lead to the global recession. The Large-Scale Social Restriction as the only way to slow the spread of SARS-CoV-2 virus has impacted to slower economic growth and higher unemployment rate (Samudra &

Setyonaluri, 2020). To minimize the economic impacts of COVID-19, Indonesia and Australia cooperate to face the impacts of this sector.

Since the COVID-19 attacked Indonesia in March 2020, Australian Government has actively responded with three steps of economic assistance package in amount of AUD 260 billion or 13.3% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). The first package is prepared to support business investment and stimulate the economy in Indonesia. The second package of household assistance packages and preparatory steps to ensure a sustainable loan flow. The last package is towards programs aimed at supporting businesses and reducing layoffs (Marjan, Setiawati, & Lubis, 2020).

Australia also supported Indonesia to develop fiscal policy responses to COVID-19 by providing expert policy advice on the design of stimulus measures to promote economic stability and investment, helping to identify new sources of budget finance, increasing government revenue through tax reform, and assisting with budget prioritisation to fund health expenditure (Australian Embassy, 2020). Australia providing policy advice to key Indonesian decision-makers on restoring economic foundations and advising on measures to address risks to the stability of the financial sector. Both countries formulating policy options to support the recovery of informal and formal businesses and State-Owned Enterprises. (Australian Embassy, 2020).

Australia working with Indonesian Government to prioritise the Indonesian infrastructure spend to deliver the most productivity enhancing outcomes while boosting employment in areas hard hit by the pandemic. Moreover, both countries working in mobilise additional financial institution and private sector financing for infrastructure, including by supporting the Indonesian Government to develop quality infrastructure proposals (Australian Embassy, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered to the impacts in health, economic, and social issues. The purpose of this study is to describe the Indonesia and Australia cooperation to work together to respond and handle the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic. Before the pandemic, Indonesia and Australia has development cooperation in many sectors but it is reshaped to the COVID-19 response. Based on the explanation above, author can conclude that the Indonesia and Australia cooperation in responding the impacts of COVID-19 in 2020 was divided into three sectors.

First, cooperation in health security that Australia prioritized to providing medical supplies and health equipment for the front-line health workers in Indonesia. Through SIAP-SIAGA program, the Australia Government providing advisory support to the Ministry of Home Affairs of Indonesia and the Ministry of Social Affairs of Indonesia. SIAPA SIAGA work with the provincial government in Bali, East Nusa Tenggara, and East Java to support sub-national efforts to manage the crisis. Second, cooperation to enhance stability in social protection, education, and food security in Indonesia. Third, cooperation in economic sector which more focusing on giving

advisory expert in investment, stability in financial sector, and economic policy in Indonesia.

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