



## **ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Upgrade Focusing on the New Southern Policy of ROK**

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*Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to Republic of Korea*

First, I wish to thank and congratulate Mr. Teguh Santosa and his team at Kantor Berita Politik RMOL.ID for organizing this very timely webinar. I happen to know that Mr. Teguh Santosa has an enduring passion about Korea, since long before the popularity of KPop and KDrama. He is, and will always be, an active proponent of peace in the Korean Peninsula.

I should also like to pay my respect to my dear friend and mentor, Ambassador Lim Sungham, who knows the intimate details about the inception of the New Southern Policy launched by President Moon Jae-in in November 2017 in Jakarta. I am sure Ambassador Lim Sungham has also played a key role in updating the policy into the recently announced NSP Plus.

I wish to also greet another dear friend, Professor Amany Lubis, with whom I have had the pleasure of collaborating in organizing the International Conference of Islamic Scholars. She is a true intellectual and scholar, a community leader, and a champion of gender equality and international peace.

Allow me also to extend my highest appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Airlangga Hartarto, the Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, for his keynote speech on this auspicious occasion and also for his guidance in promoting Indonesia-Korea relations. My appreciation also goes to all distinguished speakers whose intellectual integrity are well respected at home and abroad.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On 7 July 1988, President Roh Tae Woo declared “To create an atmosphere conducive to durable peace on the Korean Peninsula, we are willing to cooperate with North Korea in its efforts to improve relations with countries friendly to us including the U.S. and Japan, and in parallel with this, we will continue to seek improved relations with the Soviet Union, China and other socialist countries.” This declaration, known as “the Northern Policy”, marked a radical change in South Korea’s foreign policy and thus accelerated its offensive economic diplomacy towards China. Thirty years later, China has become South Korea’s largest economic partner. Arguably, the Northern Policy also contributed greatly to South Korea’s economic progress.

On 9 November 2017, in Jakarta, President Moon Jae-in announced “It is my goal to elevate Korea’s relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to the level of its



relations with the four major powers around the Korean Peninsula.” He also underlined “With the New Southern Policy, I hope to achieve three objectives: a community of people that connects people to people and minds to minds; a community of peace that can contribute to peace across Asia; and, lastly, a community of co-existence and co-prosperity where ASEAN countries thrive together with reciprocal economic cooperation.”

The big question is: thirty years later, will ASEAN become South Korea’s largest economic partner? The answer is a resounding yes. Perhaps even sooner rather than later.

Why am I this optimistic? I have three reasons: three compatibilities.

First, compatibility in resources. Between ASEAN and South Korea, we have all the resources needed to create our own value chains; from natural resources, human resources, to capital and technology.

Second, compatibility in demography. We are in a good place to create solutions to issues related to aging society and, at the same time, job creation for young people.

And third, most importantly, compatibility in vision. During the last ASEAN-ROK Summit on 12 November 2020, it was clear that our leaders share the vision of transformation. Yes, transformation.

I believe the year 2020 will be remembered not only for the COVID 19 global pandemic and the sufferings it has brought to so many people, but, more importantly, as the dawn of the age of great transformation. Because we, humans, are striving for not merely survival but also propulsion, progress and better ways of living. Adaptation is good, transformation is better.

I think the 7 key areas of cooperation in the NSP Plus are all about transformation: comprehensive cooperation on health care, education and human resources development, interactive cultural exchange, reciprocal platform for business and investment, rural and city development, partnership on future industry, and cooperation in non-traditional security issues. Enhanced cooperation on those key areas will strengthen and accelerate our transformation individually, for example South Korea with its Korean New Deal or Indonesia with its Indonesia 4.0, as well as collectively.

I believe the primary catalyst for the age of transformation is innovation. Closer ROK-ASEAN cooperation shall create new powerhouses of innovation and technology. The NSP Plus will especially benefit from collaborations and joint developments in digital technology and bio-engineering.

Moreover, we should also collaborate on social and political innovation; at community, national and international levels. The ASEAN-ROK partnership has the potential to translate shared universal



values such as democracy and human rights into a just and durable peace. We can be a living proof that multilateralism works for the people's prosperity and welfare.

I have high hopes that our distinguished speakers today will provide us with more insights; and inspire us to think bigger, do more and move faster. Thank you very much. Khamsahamnida. Terima kasih. []