

Position Paper on Indonesia G20 Presidency

Recommendations from ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights

June 2022

Indonesia has made a long journey since the fall of President Suharto in 1998, from a military dictatorship to a vibrant democracy in which most of its citizens enjoy greater political freedoms. With an impressive economic growth, accompanied by a reduction of the poverty rate by more than half in the last twenty three years, Indonesia has become the largest economy in Southeast Asia and an increasingly influential actor in the region and beyond.

By holding the Presidency of the G20 in November this year, Indonesia, the only Southeast Asian member of the organization, has the opportunity to demonstrate at a global level the leadership that it has shown as a founder and host of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat.

Indonesia is not new to playing a central role in world affairs. As early as in 1955, it organized the Bandung Conference, a watershed moment that led to the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement. The world has changed enormously since, but Indonesia finds itself now in a position where it can give voice once again to the aspirations of the Global South.

For all these reasons we, Parliamentarians from Southeast Asia, are urging the Indonesian Government to use its preeminent position to promote at the G20 a form of collective and inclusive collaboration among nations to address challenges that, having a specific resonance to our region, affect humanity as a whole.

Among them are the need for stronger and more creative global responses to the devastation caused by conflicts as seen in Myanmar; substantially increased global financial support for a sustainable energy transition; mitigating the impact of the world's digital transformation on human rights and democracy.

Towards a global response to conflict devastation as in Myanmar

2022 is likely to be remembered as the year when Russia, one of the permanent five members of the UN Security Council, posed an unprecedented challenge to the international community by brutally invading Ukraine and bringing war to Europe's doorstep. APHR proposes that it also be the year that Indonesia uses its unique history, diversity and status to propose a new Working Group at the G20 to discuss judicious responses from the largest economies in the world, not only to the crisis in Ukraine, but also in Syria, Yemen, or, in our region, Myanmar.

All these wars are having devastating human, social, and economic consequences that are not confined within national borders: from rising prices, shortages of food and energy supplies, to increases in human trafficking and the production and trade of illicit drugs and weapons. In Myanmar alone poverty has rocketed to rates not seen in 20 years.

The community of nations is in dire need of alternative platforms where creative ways to prevent the human and economic costs of such crises can be discussed, serving as complementary channels to global organizations like the UN, or regional groups like ASEAN, which have often failed to prevent atrocities, or alleviate the worst consequences of these wars. The G20 should be one of them and Indonesia is uniquely suited to initiate the discussion.

Indonesia, like Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, has succeeded in sending its military back to the barracks. The country's recent history of dictatorship, turmoil, and democratization has given it an invaluable wealth of experience that can provide a distinct advantage in its perspective on conflicts and their consequences.

Therefore, Indonesia should use its Presidency to help identify innovative ways of rationalizing a coherent set of financial and economic consequences for governments that perpetrate atrocities, saving lives and livelihoods, and pursuing the stability necessary for inclusive and sustainable economic recovery and growth in the aftermath of conflicts.

In particular, as the only member of the G20 that is also a member of ASEAN, Indonesia finds itself in a unique position to ensure that the world's 20 largest economies do not neglect the economic catastrophe the Myanmar junta is inflicting on the 54 million inhabitants of the country. With its proximity to the G20 venue and its excruciating need for humanitarian aid, Myanmar is a natural starting point for such a discussion over forms of economic action in the face of widespread atrocities

Increased global financial support for sustainable energy transition

In prioritizing sustainable energy transition in its G20 agenda, Indonesia has acknowledged the importance of taking collective action to phase out fossil fuels and transition to renewable sources of energy.

Indeed, the stakes have never been higher. The [latest study](#) from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has confirmed that current pledges from states to reduce carbon emissions will not be sufficient to slow climate change. If the world stays on the current track, it could face a rise of more than 3° Celsius in the global average temperature, more than double the 1.5° Celsius target agreed to in the 2015 Paris Agreement.

All countries must cut global emissions by 43% and reach net-zero carbon emissions by the early 2050s to avoid a climate catastrophe, and the most critical reductions must be made in the energy sector. Implementing a sustainable energy transition is both the most efficient and cost-effective way to do that: with a dramatic drop in costs over the last decade, clean energy is now affordable and maintaining fossil-fuel dependent energy systems is becoming more expensive than transitioning to clean energy infrastructures.

As a vital step, Indonesia must lead the G20 to agree to accelerate the phasing out from coal and fossil fuels but it must also substantially increase global financial support for such a transition. This process will have serious impacts on coal-intensive economies including in countries like Indonesia, where [only 2% of its renewable energy potential](#) has been utilized. Indonesia in its Presidency is therefore in a unique position to push for G20 countries to increase their financial commitments and assistance to those facing major barriers in their energy transition

The IMF has also achieved consensus with the G20 to create new Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), worth \$650 billions, to tackle the COVID-19 epidemic and the climate crises. Those could offer a [viable financial mechanism](#) for countries in the Global South to address the fight against the climate crisis. However, progress will be curtailed if the SDRs are only reallocated as loans with favorable conditions attached. As a voice for the Global South at the G20, Indonesia should promote equitable investment towards the energy transition by ensuring that the SDRs are allocated as non-repayable grants rather than loans.

Mitigating the impact of the digital transformation on democracy and human rights

The transformation and development of digital economies have become even more relevant after the COVID-19 pandemic brought to a virtual standstill the world. As economies and societies at large increasingly moved towards digitalization, we can no longer afford to ignore the powerful role played by “tech giants”, or big technological companies, in particular Google, Amazon, Meta, and Apple, in shaping not only the economy, but the state of democracy and human rights globally.

The services these tech giants offer come at a huge cost. By harvesting and selling our personal data in order to predict and shape consumers’ behavior, they track our online behavior in every view, click, purchase, and interaction, in order to analyze and monetize it. The profits obtained by these enormous companies on the back of people’s personal data are [bigger than some of the world’s biggest GDPs](#).

Their unregulated money-making model is also allowing them to profit from the spread of disinformation, divisiveness, and hate. Globally, these phenomena are undermining democracy, stability, and social cohesion.

Disinformation in the upcoming elections is having a deleterious impact on democracy in the Philippines. In Myanmar, Facebook was used as a propaganda tool by ultra-nationalists to voice their anti-Muslim rhetoric, leading to extreme violence against the Rohingya and other Muslim minorities. The inroads made by the far-right in several European countries owe much to online propaganda and disinformation. More recently, these tactics have been used by the Russian government to justify its brutal invasion of Ukraine in the eyes of its population.

As [Indonesia leads](#) the streamlining of digital issues in the various working groups of the G20 and rallies for an inclusive, empowering, and sustainable digital transformation aimed at a resilient recovery, it must ensure that these discussions do not take place without addressing the damage that the Big Tech’s business models are having on people’s individual rights and democracy worldwide.

The G20 countries represent a significant market for these Big Tech companies, it is therefore a unique platform to discuss and identify measures that can be adopted to regulate the digital marketplace along democratic lines; put an end to invasive use of people’s personal data; hold online platforms accountable for their harmful business models, and protect our democracies.