

Indonesia's South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC)

as the Future of Diplomacy for World Solidarity to Overcome

the COVID-19 Pandemic

Muhammad Ridha Iswardhana
International Relations Department
of Universitas Teknologi Yogyakarta
muhammad.ridha@staff.uty.ac.id

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The COVID-19 pandemic that started in China has expanded throughout the world. As a result, all countries have to face various challenges due to the Corona Virus. The worst conditions are faced by many developing countries that are unable to overcome the various adverse effects caused by the virus. Moreover, the treatment tends to be domestic and unilateral. To solve the pandemic, there is a south-south cooperation framework known as SSTC. Collaboration and partnerships between southern countries are important because more developing countries are facing the impact of the virus. Indonesia as one of the successful actors operating SSTC since 2010 can use this framework of cooperation as solidarity with other southern countries. In this article, a descriptive qualitative approach is used to explain and analyze the conditions that occur concerning the theoretical framework. The author uses the Concept of Soft Power and International Assistance, aims to explain how Indonesia's diplomacy policy through the SSTC and finding that Indonesia conducted a series of assistance and training to various developing countries during the Pandemic. This paper contributes to showing Indonesia's consistent policy and position to overcoming COVID-19 towards several developing countries. Also, Indonesia remains necessary to be constantly active in encouraging partnerships based on mutual interests in facing the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Keywords: Indonesia, SSTC, Diplomacy, Solidarity, COVID-19.

Introduction

The relations between developing countries are currently experiencing development and transformation. Previously a developing country received international assistance was common and developed countries as a source of donors often have hidden agendas (Niyokuru, 2016). However, now any country can help other developing countries. In line with Indonesia's existence as one of the main actors in the Asian-African

Conference (Konferensi Asia Afrika) 1955 which engender to the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961, Indonesia formulated an international relationship arrangement for fellow developing countries. In this case, diplomacy is necessary because it not only shows the influence on other countries but also results in cooperation with other developing countries (Snow, 2020). There are significant role of Indonesia's diplomacy in the development of developing countries as well as improve Indonesia's

influence in the world level through the framework of the South-South Triangular Cooperation (SSTC). Moreover, Indonesia already has the concept of Free and Active Politics (Politik Bebas Aktif) and participates in global goals through Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by contributing to other developing countries by combining economic, socio-cultural and environmental elements in a sustainable manner (Sony, 2002).

Indonesia has a foreign policy direction and basis called Free Active Politics (Politik Bebas Aktif). These politics was initiated by the First Vice President during the Cold War, that "Free" politics meant that Indonesia was not in both blocs and chose its own path to solve international problems. The term "Active" describes efforts to work harder to maintain peace and defuse tensions between the two blocs (Windiani, 2010).

The year 2020 is a historical point in the development of human development which has changed the order of life due to the Corona Virus. There has been a spread of disease caused by the Corona Virus which has resulted in respiratory problems and death. This disease does not only occur in certain areas but has spread throughout the world. Starting in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in November 2019 but not more than three months this virus has spread throughout the world. The existence of globalization and the ease of transportation technology has caused human mobility to be very high which has contributed to the pandemic around the world. Unlike other infectious diseases that are more manageable, the Corona Virus puts people around the world under threat because apart from spreading quickly, this virus

has a high risk of death. Even the World Health Organization (WHO) has also stated that this virus is different from other diseases.

Corona Virus or Novel Coronavirus (nCoV) is a new type of Corona Virus that causes a disease called Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Before being known as COVID-19, the disease was known as the New Corona Virus 2019 or 2019-nCoV. The new coronavirus is a new virus, but it is similar to the virus family that causes Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some common colds. The virus can pass directly through the droplets of coughs and breaths of infected people which healthy people breathe. Most people who have the Corona Virus will only experience mild symptoms, but in certain cases, the infection can cause pneumonia and difficulty of breathing. In some cases, Corona Virus infection can be fatal. The elderly and people with health problems such as high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes may experience more serious illness (Covid19, 2020).

The author has a problem formulation in the form of what efforts have been made by Indonesia to SSTC in handling COVID-19 for many developing countries. This article aims to explain how Indonesia's Soft-Power diplomacy policy through the South-South Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) contributes to overcoming the COVID-19 Pandemic in various developing countries. Furthermore, the writer aims to determine the contribution of the Indonesian government to the implementation of SSTC in other countries and to understand the opportunities and benefits that not only Indonesia but also the recipient countries will get through the existence of SSTC. Indonesia

has conducted various assistance and training through SSTC towards several developing countries related to social, economic, and health aspects as the responses to overcome the impact of Pandemic COVID-19.

Methodology

The research use qualitative research that seeks to provide descriptive explanations, specificities, and understanding of the problems to be studied. Qualitative research refers more to the meaning, concept, definition, characteristics, metaphor, symbol, and description of something. Qualitative research is carried out through the search for an answer by examining various social settings and groups or individuals in a social setting.

Qualitative techniques allow researchers to share in the understandings and perceptions of others and explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives (Berg and Lune, 2017). However, no qualitative study starts from pure observation because the previous conceptual structure is used as a starting point for theories and methods in an observation (Cresswell, 2014). One of the reasons why using a qualitative approach is the experience of researchers where this method can find and understand what is hidden behind a phenomenon that is sometimes difficult to understand. This type of qualitative research used by researchers in this study is a case study. A case study is a study that explores a case in depth, collects complete information using various data collection procedures based on a predetermined time. This case can be an event, activity, process, and program (Creswell, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

Soft Power Concept

Soft power is known since the Marshall Plan, as was America's domination in Europe at that time. Power is defined as mastery that makes the other party influenced and follows the desire to follow the desired result (Nye, 2004). Power is divided into two, namely: Hard Power a way to defeat, capture, and even kill enemies (Guerrilla Diplomacy, 2010). Soft Power is influencing parties to follow our wishes with friendly and attractive efforts to achieve a common goal/value (Nye, 2004).

Soft power can take advantage of political, economic and humanitarian aid. It is not carried out through coercion or payment, but rather superior international methods and policies (Trunkos, 2013). Soft power rests on three areas: culture, political values, and international policy. Hard and soft power are interrelated because they are used to influence other nations (Figure 1).

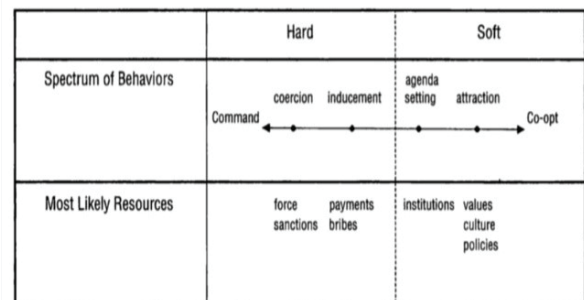


Figure 1. The Difference between Hard and Soft Power

International Assistance Concept

International assistance was initially developed by OXFAM, Care, IBRD, and the Marshall Plan. The international assistance is a political innovation in the 20th century that has succeeded in connecting North-South so that it

is included as an integral part of international relations phenomenon.

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and OECD define international assistance as official development assistance with two fundamental differences: assistance with transfers to low-income countries only, and official assistance that promotes economic and social progress in others. International assistance takes the form of providing and lending capital by other countries / international organizations (World Bank and IMF). International assistance also takes the form of military, medical, technical, imported commodity programs, and development loans. International assistance as an evolution due to changes in the structure of the international system: decolonization, international economic failure, and globalization (Jean & O, Therien, 2002) (Hjertholm, 2000) (Figure 2).

	Dominant or Rising Institutions	Donor Ideology	Donor Focus	Types of Aid
1940s	Marshall Plan and UN system (including World Bank).	Planning	Reconstruction	Marshall Plan was largely program aid.
1950s	United States, with Soviet Union gaining importance from 1956.	Anti-communist, but with role for the state.	Community Development Movement.	Food aid and projects.
1960s	Establishment of bilateral program.	As for the 1950s, with support for state in productive sector.	Productive sector (e.g. support to the green revolution) and infrastructure.	Bilateral gave technical assistance (TA) and budget support; multilateral supported projects.
1970s	Expansion of multi laterals especially World Bank, IMF, and Arab funded agencies.	Continued support for state activities in productive activities and meeting basic needs.	Poverty, taken as agriculture and basic needs (social sectors).	Fall in food aid and start of import support.
1980s	Rise of NGOs from mid-1980s	Market-based adjustment (rolling back the state)	Macroeconomic reform.	Financial program aid and debt relief.
1990s	Eastern Europe and FSU become recipients rather than donors; emergence of corresponding institutions.	Move back to the state toward end of the decade.	Poverty and then governance (environment and gender passed more quickly).	Move toward sectors, support at end of the decade.

Figure 2. Schemes and History of International Assistance

SSTC Concept

South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) consists of two parts, First South-South Cooperation can be understood as a relationship between two or more developing countries in enhancing partnerships to pursue collective development goals through cooperation in the form of exchange of knowledge, skills, resources and technical skills. Second, Triangular Cooperation can involve three countries, one of which is developed countries or international organizations or donor institutions, but the initiative and implementation are still carried out by developing countries (Kakonge, 2014).

Result and Discussion

Current World Conditions

The Corona Virus has several consequences of threatening human life, business activities, the global economy and relations between world communities. Because of this virus, many countries have experienced losses both domestically and internationally, which have resulted in a slowdown in Indonesia's domestic economic growth year on year from 4.97 % to 2.97% (IDN Financials, 2020). Not only causes a decrease in state revenue but also burdens state expenditures for medical treatment and subsidies to the public. Furthermore, this virus has caused various crises, including economic, health, and trust in the government. These crises can show that the economy is no longer everything, but that health can affect various other factors, such as education, tourism, business, export-import, community interaction, and the increasing number of poverty.

For almost one year, the efforts to

overcome with COVID-19 have tended to be limited domestically and unilaterally. There is no concrete global initiative that can help developing countries, especially to mobilize resources. If developed countries can help their people, both in terms of handling health and economic problems, then developing countries are not fully capable. Developing countries that have large populations and large territories face major challenges because they have only limited financial capacity. On the other hand, global leadership tends to make this outbreak a global issue and priority, because almost all developed countries are unable to handle this pandemic which results in focused handling on each country. International organizations also seem to be overwhelmed to solve the problems that affect the economy, social life and other fields. Although the quantity of health services has been the focus historically in developing countries, the quality of care and or the lack of it must be at the centre of better health (Jaminson et. all, 2016). Due to the inability to handle the Corona Virus in each country as the impact of the handling capacity is not yet optimal, this disease can continue to spread and increase every day.

The world needs a new paradigm of state responsibility, not only focuses on interests and power. Developing countries need partnerships and joint cooperation to solve this pandemic. Almost all countries as the main actors and major powers are unable to handle the consequences of the emergence of the crisis due to Corona. Moreover, if there is a country that only focuses on its domestic, it is dangerous because it cannot be handled alone by one state.

This pandemic can show the reality of a weak health system and poverty management not only in every country but also at global. It is necessary to develop development cooperation, especially to strengthen systems in developing countries that are more vulnerable. However, the COVID-19 Pandemic offers the opportunity to promote the 2030 Development Agenda to achieve the Sustainable Development Agenda and enhance international cooperation, especially on the third agenda, specifically health and welfare. Furthermore, to support the handling of COVID-19, it is necessary to implement the seventeenth agenda (Partnerships for Goals), particularly international partnership and cooperation.

Although several developing countries that are members of the G20 have policies to overcome the disease, however, it is limited in economic sectors. While in the G20 Action Plan and the Riyadh Infratech Agenda encourage the participation of various parties in finance, development and the economy (Global Infrastructure Hub, 2020). They tend to only overcome the impact of this virus on the macroeconomic field. The lives of people in various developing countries are threatened with hunger, loss of jobs, unable to continue their education, being poor, and lead to death.

Also, there are still many challenges for the welfare of refugees, various conflicts around the world, serious threat of natural disasters, political unrest, and global geopolitical changes, adding to the problem of handling COVID-19 to be even more severe. The COVID-19 Pandemic requires synergy among all world parties, including government, private sector, international organizations and civil society. If

it only depends on the state government, it tends not to be able to overcome the problems around the world. Companies and public sector actors can mutually help each other. Not only health workers and pharmaceutical companies have an important role, but all parties can participate in helping solve the COVID-19 Pandemic.

South-South and Triangular Cooperation as the Solution

To overcome this, there is SSTC that allows any developing country to help other developing countries by providing international assistance, not in the form of loans or grants, but in the form of training, assistance and capacity building without burdening the recipient country. SSTC can be one of the responses to the tendency of international assistance terminology that is usually in the form of loans, debts and grants full of flowers by developed countries to developing countries. In this regard, Indonesia has implemented SSTC since 2010 with the establishment of the National Coordinating Agency for the Cooperation of South-South and Triangular has succeeded in assisting dozens of developing countries in various regions, from Asia, Africa, the Pacific, to South America (Kominfo RI, 2015).

The Corona outbreak has forced the international community to reconsider health issues amid rapid globalization. Middle power developing countries are expected to be able to do more to help other developing countries. The efforts of developing countries with middle power could be the anchor for the handling of collective, especially the interests of humanity are preferred where the challenges of the pandemic as mutual collaboration and

dismissed the nationalistic policy trends. Referring to Indonesia's successful experience in dealing with Bird Flu, Swine Flu and SARS, it could be taken into consideration in handling both domestically and in response to the international world.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic that occurred throughout 2020, Indonesia has provided various assistance and assistance to various developing countries, both related to health and other matters. In January 2020, Indonesia encouraged the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to maximize the Agriculture War Room (AWR) in Indonesia, which serves as a control centre for monitoring and evaluating the mobilization of agricultural resources and for several Pacific and African countries (Kementan RI, 2020). In April, Indonesia held an International Training Strategic Partnership with Muslim Religious Leaders (MRLs) in Family Planning for various Asian and African countries (UNFPA, 2020). Indonesia held the Triangular Cooperation Afghanistan-Indonesia-Germany for the Economic Empowerment of Women activities in various cities in June (Indonesia South-South Technical Cooperation, 2020).

In July, Indonesia provided USD 1 million to the Palestinian Authority and USD 500,000 to The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the context of humanitarian assistance in Palestine during the Pandemic era (Warta Ekonomi, 2020). From September to October, Indonesia initiated public kitchens in Argentina to help people of the Buenos Aires Province (Kemlu RI, 2020). Indonesia also organized a Knowledge Sharing Program on

Maternal and Child Health which was attended by ten Asian countries in November (Bengkulu Interaktif, 2020). And then, in December, Indonesia provided assistance to Fiji, Timor Leste, and Solomon Island for handling COVID-19 (Kemlu RI, 2020).

This various assistance and training that conduct by Indonesia through the SSTC framework as a form of a contribution to other developing countries in overcoming the various impacts of COVID-19. The implementation of cooperation through SSTC has received many positive responses expressed by the training participants that the results and knowledge taught by Indonesia to various developing countries are in accordance with the needs of their recipient countries and can be developed well. In addition, the social assistance provided by Indonesia can help alleviate the suffering of other developing countries due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Various things that Indonesia has done can encourage the independence of developing countries by increasing their creative capacity to find solutions to their development problems according to their own specific aspirations, values and needs. Increasing the competence of human resources is needed by many developing countries to achieve effective governance and face various social problems. Besides, recipient countries can also create and strengthen existing technological capacities in every country to increase effectiveness and the capacity to adapt technology and skills to meet food, population, gender equality, social and health needs.

Indonesia's position in SSTC in Pandemic Era

The existence of SSTC can improve Indonesia's position as a middle power

developing country to further contribute as solidarity in handling the Covid-19 Pandemic towards other southern countries. Indonesia does not need to struggle to influence because it has a long history of helping developing countries since the Asian-African Conference 1955 and the Non-Aligned Movement 1961.

Indonesia has several reasons and national interests behind the implementation of SSTC, such as: increasing Indonesia's positive impress, increasing the economic potential to encourage the national economy, as a form of Indonesia's contribution to the world, being an impetus for the interests of developing countries in world forums, forging partnerships with various countries and international organizations, to get the recognition of science and the university from Indonesia, and implementing collaborative technology research. SSTC can be used as a form of Soft Power which shows that Indonesia does an important role in world development. The existence of SSTC also exposes Indonesia's great power and capacity to promote mutually beneficial cooperation and partnerships. If Indonesia increasingly provides international assistance through SSTC, then Indonesia's position in the world will be stronger and more heard. Indonesia is not only a recipient of aid but also can provide assistance in solidarity with other southern countries.

Therefore, SSTC can provide opportunities for national interests, in the form of a positive perception internationally, constitutional orders, and national interests. With the SSTC, Indonesia can introduce tools, experts and knowledge that open up opportunities for national economic and social

interests. The countries that receiving from SSTC assistance can also become strategic partners for Indonesia, especially in the Africa, Pacific and Latin America regions in the future. Through SSTC, Indonesia can also establish bilateral and multilateral relations at the same time with developed, developing countries and international institutions.

As the mandate of the constitution to participate in implementing world order based on independence, the implementation of SSTC can be a clear proof to the people and the world community that Indonesia has strong solidarity with other developing countries. Furthermore, Indonesia's SSTC can be a benchmark and a concrete form of successful South-South Cooperation that inspires the world (Bappenas, 2014). As previously explained, Indonesia's experience in SSTC since 2010 can be the way to promote the implementation of SDG's with an easing approach which resulted in gain appreciation from other countries, especially in Pandemic era. As it is known, the terminology of international assistance, which is mostly carried out by northern countries towards the south with many requirements and interest, needs a reform of international governance. The existence of SSTC can show how developing countries can help each other.

Even though, it involves international organizations or developed countries in SSTC, the main actor and determinant of implementation is still Indonesia. The existence of northern countries as mentors and supporters, both in research, funding, assessment, and technology. Meanwhile, Indonesia as the executor, instructor, the location of the event, origin of knowledge,

sharing the experiences and successes, and supporting laboratory facilities. Although the assistance provided is not in the form of capital, but education, experience, training, equipment, and knowledge transfer, which in the end can still help other developing countries in increasing their national capacity (Dzikri, 2020). International assistance provided by Indonesia through SSTC can support global development by prioritizing cooperation and partnerships which in turn provide mutual benefits for all parties.

The Indonesian government does not only focus on overcoming the pandemic at the domestic level and helping the Indonesian diaspora in several countries but also Indonesia consistently contributes in the form of training and assistance to other developing countries. However, the Government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, both in SSTC, bilateral and multilateral cooperation, urged for international cooperation and partnerships, especially in vaccine ownership for all countries, especially developing countries. All of the international community needs to have the COVID-19 Vaccine to make this Pandemic ends soon. Moreover, currently many pharmaceutical companies produce vaccines in developed countries, but this is not an obstacle especially in the fact that China, Indonesia, and India can produce these vaccines.

Indonesia remains necessary to be constantly active in encouraging partnerships based on mutual interests in this pandemic situation by conducting several activities of training and providing assistance that can help ease the burden on other developing

countries. Compared to other countries, Turkey has delivered health protective equipment to more than 55 countries, including China, Pakistan, Israel, Palestine and various African countries (Financial Times, 2020). Besides, the Government and the people of China have assisted in several Southeast Asia countries in the form of medical devices during 2020 which called Mask Diplomacy.

Conclusion

The existence of COVID-19 has changed the order of life and human civilization. Globalization and technological advances caused the spread of the virus throughout the world which has an impact on the Corona Virus Pandemic. This condition makes it more difficult for developing countries to overcome this virus because it has an impact on the economy, social, culture and politics. Many developing countries around the world are unable to handle it, which need help from other actors. The existence of SSTC carried out by Indonesia can be a role model as a solidarity in handling the impact of the virus. Throughout 2020, Indonesia has provided a number of assistance through the SSTC mechanism which helped several developing countries during the COVID-19 Pandemic. However, this is not enough, Indonesia still needs to remain active in overcome with the Corona Virus in other developing countries by emphasizing on partnerships based on mutual interest.

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