
Indonesia and South-South Cooperation



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Beyond personal interest, as Indonesia's Ambassador to India, I am very conscious of the fact that cooperation among us – between India and Indonesia – is among the earliest of South-South cooperation in the broadest sense in modern history.

- You may recall that in 1946, during a famine, India and Indonesia contracted an agreement in which half a million tons of rice from Indonesia was exchanged with an assortment of textiles, electrical goods, and pharmaceuticals from India. This was done in spite of obstacles and blockade placed by the Dutch and before India itself had achieved independence.
- The Asian Relations Conference of 1947 was a crucial platform for Indonesia to promote international recognition of its independence, proclaimed in 1945. It is worth recalling what Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's had said of cooperation among former colonies. He said: "We propose to stand on our own feet and cooperate with all others who are prepared to cooperate with us."
- Our two countries subsequently collaborated for the 1955 Asia Africa Conference and 1961 First Non-Aligned Movement Summit.

These were South-South Cooperation that was mainly in the political sphere. But they had nonetheless laid the foundation for cooperation across all development sectors.

Since that time, South-South Cooperation has evolved significantly, as the South itself has become more advanced. The developing south are not only recipient but also providers of assistance. An example of this was the Initiative for ASEAN Integration, through which ASEAN sought to integrate its newer members in the 1990s.

India has recently overtaken the UK, France and Italy as the fifth largest economy in the world. It has sent its spacecraft to Mars. Measured by Purchasing Power Parity, five of ten of the

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largest economies of the world today are of the South. Today, the Emerging Economies have become poles of growth.

The challenges that we all face today have also evolved in significant ways. This requires developing countries to cooperate even closer. Today, we have to address not only poverty, economic development, ignorance and hopelessness, but also new challenges such as:

Economic nationalism;

- Political uncertainties among the world's major powers that have caused uncertainties to the international system;
- Climate change that is hitting developing countries the hardest; and
- Population growth, especially in Developing South, that is stretching earth's resources and capacity to the breaking point.

The principles and hopes that have guided the South, however, should remain. They include the wish to be independent,

to show solidarity among developing countries, and to share experiences in addressing similar problems emanating from development.

Indonesia's vision of South-South Cooperation is to create a better partnership for prosperity, in order for all of us to progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ours is based on principles of equality, mutual respect, non-conditionality, sharing of experiences, knowledge and comparative advantages, demand driven and striving for mutual benefits, opportunities and sustainability.

Our programs for South-South Technical Cooperation are focused on development issues, good governance and peace building, and economic issues. We have done work that include food security and artificial insemination for cattle, disaster risk reduction programs, infrastructure, democracy, family planning programs, capacity building and training in agriculture, health, and scholarship in education.

NEDA ApproVES LoNg Aw AitED LoAN for iNfrAstruCTurE

The Neighbouring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency (NEDA) is about to approve a long-awaited road construction project linking Thailand and the Dawei deep-sea port in Myanmar. The move came after the Myanmar government finally approved borrowing of up to 4.5 billion baht in credit facility from NEDA, the biggest loan the Thai agency has ever extended, to finance building the road with a length of more than 100 kilometres. Myanmar and Thailand first signed a memorandum of understanding to develop the area in 2008, with the aim of transforming Dawei into Southeast Asia's largest industrial and trade zone. The road, worth almost 2 billion baht, would shorten the distance between Thailand and Vientiane by 200km, reducing travel time by two hours. NEDA focuses on providing credit facilities to neighbouring countries' projects that accommodate Thai travel.

Source: Dawei Road Loans Nears. The Bangkok Post, 13 April, 2018