



(MUDIMA)



Indonesia's Interests in the Pacific Region

Mariana Erny Buiney^{1*}, Meyland Sabinna Fenescha Wambrauw²

Cenderawasih University

Corresponding Author: Mariana Erny Buiney yanabuiney@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia is a country that is located close to each other and has established diplomatic relations and cooperation with countries in the Pacific region. This is done to maintain national and regional stability. Indonesia has an interest in maintaining a stable, prosperous and friendly environment in the Pacific region. On the other hand, Pacific countries view Indonesia as an archipelagic country that has experience and capacity in terms of cooperation and development. This research aims to analyze Indonesia's interests in countries in the Pacific Region. These interests include: strengthening sovereignty, increasing economic & trade cooperation and partners supporting each other in regional and multilateral forums. The research results show that the dynamics of Indonesia's cooperation with countries in the Pacific region have gone well in recent years. Indonesia carries out a lot of cooperation in the form of training and capacity development for Pacific countries. Apart from that, Indonesia is also active in organizing activities and discussion forums to encourage increased relations and cooperation

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's diplomatic relations with various countries and efforts to increase cooperation are always carried out by prioritizing national interests. Apart from that, the principle of free and active foreign policy of the Republic of Indonesia (RI) is the basis for establishing relations with countries. The Pacific region is one of the regions in the world that is close to Indonesia. This then became the reason for Indonesia to collaborate, apart from having similarities such as: being an archipelagic country, having a developing economy and similarities in development challenges. The eastern region of Indonesia also has similar cultural and racial roots with that region.

Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia are three (3) sub-regions in the Pacific consisting of 12 (twelve) island countries with diverse geographical characteristics and populations. Fiji, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Nauru, New Caledonia and Tuvalu are some of the twelve island countries. The total area of the countries in the Pacific, according to World Bank reports, is around 15% of the earth's surface area and that does not include Papua New Guinea, Nauru and dozens of other non-state regions or territories (Satriawan, 2016).

The history of Indonesia's foreign relations with the Pacific began in 1974, when Indonesia opened its diplomatic representation in Fiji. After that, 11 other countries in the Pacific region followed, such as Tuvalu, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, Marshall Islands, Samoa and others, including most recently in 2013 with Kiribati. Apart from diplomatic relations, Indonesia also strengthens cooperation with this region through its participation in regional forums, such as: Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), Pacific Islands Development Forum, Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), South West Pacific Dialogue and Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (Satriawan, 2016).

Since 2006, Indonesia, through the Directorate of Technical Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has made efforts to increase cooperation

with Pacific countries. This includes cooperation in the fields of agriculture, fisheries, education, disaster management, good governance and democracy. Various forms of activities are carried out such as capacity building, training, educational scholarships and grants for agricultural & police equipment (Kemlu.go.id, 2012). Furthermore, in 2015, Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno Marsudi said that countries in the Pacific Region are strategic areas so that Indonesia's participation in regional forums is an effort to establish and increase cooperation. He said that cooperation in the form of increasing the capacity of Pacific countries for the 2015-2019 period with funds amounting to USD 20 million covers the fields of youth & sports, fisheries, arts and culture and democracy.

Indonesia is also making efforts to increase participation and dialogue bilaterally/between two countries or regionally. This is done through mutual visits between senior officials, participation in regional forum sessions and exchange of people-to-people contacts. The opening of diplomatic relations, active participation in forums and organizations in the Pacific Region, technical cooperation, cooperation funding assistance are a series of efforts to approach Indonesia with this region. This effort is also to show Indonesia's existence in the Pacific.

Pacific countries also view RI as a partner who has the capacity and experience in handling various issues such as: sustainable development, economics, good governance, climate change, maritime affairs, and so on. Pacific leaders at the Leaders Retreat Pacific Islands Forum meeting in Suva on 11-14 July 2022 committed to collaborating with PIF dialogue partners including Indonesia to realize the 2050 Strategy for The Blue Pacific Continent (SBPC). The vision of this strategy is that the Blue Pacific Continent is a region of peace; harmony; security, social inclusion; and increased prosperity so that all Pacific people are leading free, healthy and productive lives (Kemlu.go.id, 2022).

In the same year, on December 7 2022, Indonesia will host the Indonesia Pacific Forum for Development (IPFD). This meeting is Indonesia's commitment to strengthening cooperation with

Pacific countries. IPFD discusses two main issues, namely: economic development and human resource development. This activity was attended by 17 countries and territories from the Pacific, 4 sub-regional, regional and multilateral organizations and 5 invited countries (Kemlu.go.id, 2022). This research aims to examine Indonesia's background in collaborating with countries in the Pacific Region and Indonesia's interests in this strategic region. Various collaborations carried out with Pacific countries are a manifestation of Indonesia's national interests in maintaining state sovereignty.

METHODS

The method used in this research is the Qualitative Research Method. David William in the book Moleong states that qualitative research is the process of collecting data in a natural setting, using natural methods and carried out by a person or researcher naturally. Furthermore, according to Creswell (2009), in his book entitled *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, qualitative methods position researchers as research instruments (researcher as key instrument). This means that researchers who use qualitative will collect data as a medium for analysis through various sources; through documentation, behavioral observations, or interviews with participants. This method was chosen by the author to provide a comprehensive picture or view (holistic account) of the complexity of the problems that occur.

Qualitative Research Methods are used to explain the reasons why Indonesia collaborates with countries in the Pacific Region. Then analyze RI's interests in the Pacific Region and describe the forms of cooperation carried out to realize national goals and interests. The technique used in collecting data is through library research by collecting secondary data through various mass media and online, using the internet. Data obtained through documentation from various sources will be processed, interpreted and described in the form of words and elaborated through data verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dynamics of Cooperation Between Indonesia and Countries in the Pacific Region

The opening of diplomatic relations and cooperation carried out by Indonesia, as explained above, is an implementation of Indonesia's "Free and Active" Foreign Policy, contained in the preamble to the 1945 Constitution and has been a principle applied since Indonesian independence until now. This principle also refers to the country's national interests by not placing restrictions on establishing cooperation and not taking sides with certain parties. Indonesia's cooperative relations with Pacific countries began with diplomatic ties, namely when in 1974 it opened a representative office in Fiji, which is located in the southern part of the Pacific Ocean and is often called the Oceania Region. Indonesia then expanded its foreign relations to other countries in the region, such as: Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu, Tonga, New Zealand, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Cook Islands, Samoa, Nauru, Palau, Niue, Kiribati.

According to Keohane, international cooperation can occur when international actors such as countries are in a situation where the policies that countries have in fulfilling their interests are considered as a form of obstacle to achieving the goals of other countries. Then cooperation has two essential components, namely: first, in cooperation the behavior of each state actor is greatly influenced by various goals of interest that are held and considered rational; second, the international cooperation that occurs will produce benefits for each state actor which do not have to be the same but are reciprocal.

Pacific countries have not only opened diplomatic relations with Indonesia, but also carried out cooperation covering various fields to encourage development and maintain stability in the region. This is because of its close strategic position, and at the same time they view Indonesia as a country that has the capacity and experience in handling various issues such as: sustainable development, good governance, economics, climate change, maritime affairs and so on. On the other hand, Indonesia considers countries in the Pacific as neighbors who have important meaning in maintaining a stable, prosperous and friendly region in development efforts. Apart from that, this region also faces several challenges in development that are more or less the

same as Indonesia, namely: limited land and natural resources, vulnerability to climate change and disasters and vulnerability to world economic turmoil (Satriawan, 2016). Another thing that is also the basis of the relationship with this region is that it borders directly on the easternmost region of Indonesia. Pacific residents share the same Melanesian race and culture with 10% of Indonesian Melanesian ethnicities spread across the provinces of East Nusa Tenggara, Maluku, North Maluku, West Papua and Papua.

Indonesia has provided assistance to countries in the Pacific region since 1999. Baiq Wardhani in her article entitled *What is the Impact of Indonesian Aid Diplomacy to the Pacific Region?* in *The Conversation.com* explained that from 1999 to 2016, Indonesia had run 182 programs for 1,457 participants from Pacific countries. Capacity building is a form of assistance and cooperation carried out by Indonesia for Pacific countries. The training held covers nine sectors, namely: marine and fisheries; small and medium enterprises, economy, finance and trade; energy; democracy and good governance. Then the capacity building sector increased again, such as: disaster risk management, tourism, women's empowerment, education, culture and training, and public works. This addition is in line with the increasing number of participants taking part in these programs (*TheConversation.com*, 2020).

After the establishment of the Directorate of Technical Cooperation of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2006, Indonesia began to carry out cooperative relations with countries in the Pacific. A year later, namely 2007, it started with technical assistance in making bamboo crafts and training for Fijian farmers. Furthermore, in 2008, international training on micro finance assistance where Papua New Guinea was one of the participants. In 2009, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs implemented the International Training Program on Renewable Energy: Micro Hydro Energy End-Use Productivity for Rural Economic Development for countries in the region Asia and the Pacific in June. Then from June to July of the same year, the International Training Program on Fishing Technology and Navigation was held for Pacific countries in Semarang City, Central Java. Asia-Pacific countries also took part in the International Workshop on Democratic Leadership: Building the Nation, Reforming the State and

Developing the Economy which was held in October 2010 in Bali (*Kemlu.go.id*, 2012). Furthermore, from 2011 to 2012, the Directorate of Technical Cooperation was still conducting training. Pacific countries were invited to participate in the International Training Program on Ecotourism in Yogyakarta in April and May 2011. In May 2012, the Directorate also held an International Training Program on Freshwater Aquaculture for countries in the Asia and Pacific Region (*Kemlu.go.id*, 2012).

The dynamics of Indonesia's cooperative relations with countries in the Pacific region are increasingly developing with the existence of Indonesia's foreign policy, namely, Look East Policy. This policy is part of the repositioning of foreign policy as well as to improve and enhance Indonesia's image in the eyes of countries in the Pacific Region. Look East Policy (Looking East) is focused on building development cooperation with South Pacific countries, such as: Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Tuvalu, Fiji and Papua New Guinea (*The Conversation*, 2020).

The 6th President of the Republic of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, also implemented the Looking East policy by participating in regional organizations in the region, namely: Pacific Island Development Forum (PIDF). Involvement in this regional forum concentrates on climate change which includes the public sector, private sector and civil society, through a green economy scheme. PIDF is a forum for Indonesia to distribute aid to Kiribati, Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands which are threatened with drowning due to climate change. These three countries are located in lowland areas so they are very vulnerable to negative impacts when sea levels rise.

Indonesia's diplomatic journey and cooperation with countries in the Pacific are becoming increasingly intense and extensive, not only influenced by the "Looking East" policy, but also due to the internationalization of Papua issues related to self-determination (the desire for independence/becoming one's own country). The movement of groups in Papua who wanted to separate from the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia or become independent then received a response from several countries in the Pacific region. The response emerged as a form of solidarity by looking at the historical background of Papua's

integration into Indonesia, the issue of human rights violations and also racial and cultural similarities.

Bekarekar in her article entitled "Reasons for Indonesia to Collaborate with the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG)" explains that countries in the Pacific region have an important role in maintaining the sovereignty of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. This is related to the issue of the Papuan separatist movement, because the Pacific countries that are members of the MSG support the existence of the Free Papua group which could be a threat to the integrity of the country (Bekarekar, 2016). Therefore, Indonesia joined this sub-regional organization. Through the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), Indonesia can carry out its national interests by approaching countries in the Pacific region that support the Papuan separatist movement. Furthermore, the approach is taken by actively participating in MSG forum meetings and also establishing collaboration with its members.

Apart from that, Sihaloho, et al in their article entitled "Indonesia's Geoeconomic Maneuver Strategy in Responding to the Support of South Pacific Countries for the Issue of Papuan Independence" stated that the support of South Pacific countries for Papuan independence is motivated by the view that Papuan land is the largest part of ethnic exploitation Melanesian race (Sihaloho, et al, 2021). The Pacific countries that provide the greatest support to the Free Papua Movement are: Vanuatu, Solomon Island. Meanwhile, Fiji and Papua New Guinea provided support to the Movement.

The United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP) is a Papuan organization for independence which has had an influence in pushing the Papua issue to the international world by seeking support from Pacific countries through the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG). ULMWP is trying to become a member of the MSG, but in accordance with the group's founding principle that group members are sovereign countries, ULMWP then only becomes an observer. ULMWP's actions prompted the Indonesian government to take follow-up action to maintain the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia. In 2011, at the 18th MSG Summit in Fiji, Indonesia became an observer country. This is a form of diplomacy to suppress the ULMWP movement & divert support from MSG member countries and other Pacific countries. Indonesia hopes that its

presence & involvement as an observer country can provide opportunities to establish cooperative relations and contribute to MSG member countries. (www.Liputan6.com, 2016). On the other hand, Indonesia wants to secure the sovereignty integrity of the Republic of Indonesia.

In 2014, when the 2nd Pacific Island Development Forum (PIDF) Leaders' Summit took place, the President of the Republic of Indonesia participated by providing technical and financial assistance for capacity development training for countries in the Pacific Region. This shows that Joko Widodo, as the elected President of the Republic of Indonesia at that time, continued the Look East Policy. The Indonesian representative through the Deputy for Asia, Pacific & Africa, Desra Believe, coordinated with PIDF for the preparation and implementation of training.

Several trainings to increase capacity were carried out, including: multimedia training, international training on coastal erosion and mangrove product development for member countries of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) and PIDF member countries. Then MSG/PIDF member countries also took part in International Training in Sustainable Tourism. Other training was also carried out in Suva, Fiji as part of the Technical Collaboration with Indonesia, namely: International Workshop on Seaweed and Fisheries Products Development. Workshop participants are Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Kanak National Liberation Front, Nauru, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Tonga, Marshall Islands, Micronesian countries and Tokelau (www.pidf.int). Foreign Policy has a major influence in realizing the country's national interests, maintaining cooperative relations and existence in the international world. According to Valerie Hudson, foreign policy is the approach and strategy carried out by a country's government to achieve its goals in its relations with external parties, including the decision not to take anything. The decisions taken will have an influence on external parties or actors but can also affect internal/domestic parties whose impact will reach external parties as well (Vrameswari, et.al, 2021). Apart from that, Hill stated that foreign policy is all external activities carried out by independent actors, in this case it is not limited to the state alone as the actor (Vrameswari, et.al, 2021). The two descriptions of foreign policy theory mentioned

above have been applied by the Indonesian Government in relation to the Pacific region.

After the leadership of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and continued with the 7th President of the Republic of Indonesia Joko Widodo for the past 2 periods, efforts to establish and maintain the stability of cooperative relations in the Pacific Region have continued. The differences in leadership styles of the 6th and 7th Presidents of the Republic of Indonesia also had an effect on the sustainability of relations between countries. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) is synonymous with High Profile foreign policy by encouraging Indonesia's involvement in various multilateral forums and international activities. This is to show its capabilities as a middle power country. At this time, Indonesia was seen by the international community as a regional power with global interests and concerns. President Joko Widodo has a different character in carrying out foreign policy. Economic diplomacy and pro-people diplomacy are the focus by providing greater contributions to Indonesian society (Vrameswari, et.al, 2021).⁹

President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) carried out various intense and proactive diplomacy and cooperation, both multilaterally and bilaterally. This is demonstrated by Indonesia's participation in Pacific regional forums, such as: Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), South West Pacific Dialogue (SWPD), Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF), Southwest Pacific Dialogue and also involved in the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral, Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security. The areas of cooperation carried out by Indonesia with Pacific countries are also increasing, namely: disaster management, good governance, environment, education, food security and social culture.

In 2016, Fiji experienced a natural disaster, namely Hurricane Winston which occurred in February. After the disaster, Indonesia encouraged Fiji to collaborate in post-disaster management through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU includes humanitarian assistance, strengthening capabilities in disaster management and prevention, climate change adaptation & recovery, training and workshops. In previous years, Fiji and Indonesia have carried out various collaborations in the defense sector, such as in 2009 an MoU was agreed on

cooperation on anti-money laundering, cooperation on preventing and eradicating cross-border crimes and increasing capacity between the Indonesian Police and the Ministry of Defense. Fiji's National Security and Immigration in 2011. Then in 2016 the two countries agreed on cooperation related to transnational crimes such as: terrorism, migrant trafficking & smuggling, trafficking in illegal drugs, psychotropics and precursors, cybercrime, trafficking in prohibited weapons and explosives and corruption crimes (Maula, 2018).

A year later, namely 2017, Indonesia also established defense cooperation with this country. Indonesia was represented by Ryamizard Ryacudu who was the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia at that time with the Minister of Defense and Security of Fiji, Ratu Inoke Kubuabola signing the "Agreement between the Republic of Indonesia and the Republic of Fiji on Cooperation in the Field of Defense" (Maula, 2018). This agreement on defense and security cooperation between Indonesia and Fiji is a form of diplomacy to maintain the country's sovereignty along with the strengthening issue of an independent Papua in the Pacific Region.

In 2019 Indonesia opened diplomatic relations with the Cook Islands and Niue which further expanded cooperation in the Pacific region, a total of around 16 partner countries including Australia and New Zealand. Indonesia has four (4) Embassies (KBRI), namely in Canberra, Wellington, Port Moresby and Suva, as well as Consulates General (Consulate General) in Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, Noumea, Vanimo and Darwin and all of them are representatives of the Republic of Indonesia in the Pacific.

Apart from opening additional diplomatic representative offices, the Indonesian Government also carried out several activities involving countries in the Pacific region. In 2019, Indonesia launched the Pacific Elevation program in Auckland, New Zealand. This program aims to realize the state's mission, namely Pacific engagement, and also realize Indonesia's vision of improving relations with the Pacific Region, namely: first, focus on economic cooperation and development; second, increasing Indonesia's influence in the Pacific. New Zealand was chosen as the location for the launch of Pacific Elevation and Auckland as the implementation city because symbolically this country represents the largest multiracial Pacific community (Pacific) that

fully recognizes the rights of indigenous people. Apart from that, the largest Pacific community in the world is in this city, so Indonesia chose it to be the location to strengthen relations with the Pacific community (ToT Material of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Ministry of Law and Human Rights, 2022).

The Pacific Elevation program is implemented in the form of holding the Indonesia South Pacific Forum in 2019 and 2021 at the Pacific Exposition. The Indonesia and South Pacific Forum was attended by 18 countries from the Pacific Region and Asia (8 ASEAN member countries) and also representatives from 10 partner countries, namely New Zealand,

Australia, South Korea, Japan, India, the United States and Russia. The big theme in this dialogue is "Towards a Peaceful, Prosperous and Inclusive Region," with a focus on maritime cooperation, connectivity and infrastructure development and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals initiated by the United Nations (JakartaGlobe.id, 2019). At this meeting, a business dialogue was also held between countries in the Pacific Region and 2 territories also joined in, namely: New Caledonia and Niue. In the same year the first Pacific Exposition was also held.



Figure 1. Business Dialogue

Source: <https://jakartaglobe.id/context/indonesia-hosts-indopacific-forum-to-boost-cooperation-between-regional-stakeholders>

The Indonesia South Pacific Forum mentioned above, apart from discussing cooperation to create a prosperous and peaceful region, also plans to hold the second Pacific Exposition (PE). The second PE exhibition was held virtually from 27 to 30 October 2021. The transaction value at this exhibition increased by 30% compared to the first PE, namely 1.48 trillion dollars or 104.1 million US dollars. This PE includes trade, investment and tourism exhibitions (national.kompas.com, 2021).

Furthermore, in 2022 Indonesia will hold the Indonesia Pacific Forum for Development (IPFD) in Bali on December 7. This forum was attended by 17 countries and territories from the Pacific, 4 sub-regional, regional and multilateral organizations and 5 invited countries. There are 2 main issues discussed, namely: Economic development and Human Resources development. In this activity, meetings were also held between Indonesian business circles and business circles in Pacific

countries (Pacific Business Engagement). Apart from discussing the two main issues and meeting business people, workshops were also held, including: disaster risk reduction, capacity development for MSMEs and women's empowerment (Kemlu.go.id, 2022).

The Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Retno Marsudi, at the Indonesia Pacific Forum for Development (IPFD) above conveyed several important things related to strengthening Indonesia's foreign policy in the Pacific region. He stated that as a fellow country in the Pacific region, Indonesia shares the same challenges as other countries in the Pacific. Countries in the Pacific Region have become a priority for Indonesia's foreign policy in the last 8 years. In connection with this, Indonesia is committed to maintaining the Pacific Region as a peaceful, stable and prosperous region. Then build concrete cooperation and create a comprehensive

and inclusive development platform (Kemlu.go.id, IPFD, 2022).

Strengthening Indonesia's diplomatic relations and cooperation with Pacific countries continues to be carried out while maintaining and respecting the sovereignty of each country. This also continues to be expressed in meetings between Indonesia and the Pacific. A number of assistances in the form of training, financial assistance, development of human resources, infrastructure, economy and so on were provided by the Indonesian Government and responded positively by Pacific countries so far. The existence of mutually dependent relationships will guarantee good relations between Indonesia and Pacific countries.

Indonesia's Role in the Pacific Region

The concept of national interest shows the state's efforts or strategies to protect and maintain its physical, political and cultural identity from interference from other countries (Morgenthau, 1978). Apart from Morgenthau, Felix E. Oppenheim (1987) defines the concept of national interest as the welfare goal of national government at the international level. This indicates that the national interest of a country is to maintain its political autonomy and national integration for the sake of continuing the welfare of its people at the international stage.

In general, national interests are the goals, ideals and hopes that a country wants to achieve. Hans Morgenthau equates national interests with the power that a country wants to pursue in international relations. His thinking is based on the premise that diplomatic strategy must be based on national interests. Morgenthau emphasized that the national interest of every country in international relations is the pursuit of power, as anything that establishes and maintains control of a country over other countries (Bakry, 2017).

National interest is conceptually used to explain the foreign policy behavior of a country, as explained by Kindleberger regarding national interest. Relations between countries are created because of the different advantages each country has in

production. This comparative advantage opens up opportunities for specializations chosen by each country to support national development in accordance with national interests (Bakry, 2017). By achieving national interests, the country will run stably both in terms of politics, economics, social and defense and security. National interests are the fundamental goal and most determining factor that guides decision makers in formulating foreign policy. This is reflected in making agreements and all agreements, conventions, customs, rules, laws, and so on. The only fundamental responsibility of citizens is to advance and defend national interests (Jackson & Sorensen, 2013). Indonesia's interests in Pacific countries include strengthening sovereignty, increasing trade, investment and tourism. Apart from that, expanding the market for Indonesian products in the Pacific region, as well as partners supporting each other in regional and multilateral forums. These interests require a diplomatic strategy, one of which is Indonesia's active involvement in several regional forums in the Pacific region such as MSF, PIF, APEC, PIDF and SWPD.

A. Indonesian Diplomacy in the Regional Forum of Pacific Countries

The Pacific region is the region with the most dynamic economic growth. This strategic position makes the region an important center of activity at the center of the global political arena. This strategic position will certainly result in a constellation of conflict and cooperation that not only involves countries in the region but also involves superpower states outside the region. The Pacific region is one of the areas that is very close to Indonesia. If you look at the historical traces of the South Pacific region, there are records of colonization which are very vulnerable because the geographical location is very strategic for large countries to build military bases and sea routes during the world war. Likewise, natural resources are very helpful for large consuming countries such as England, America and Australia.

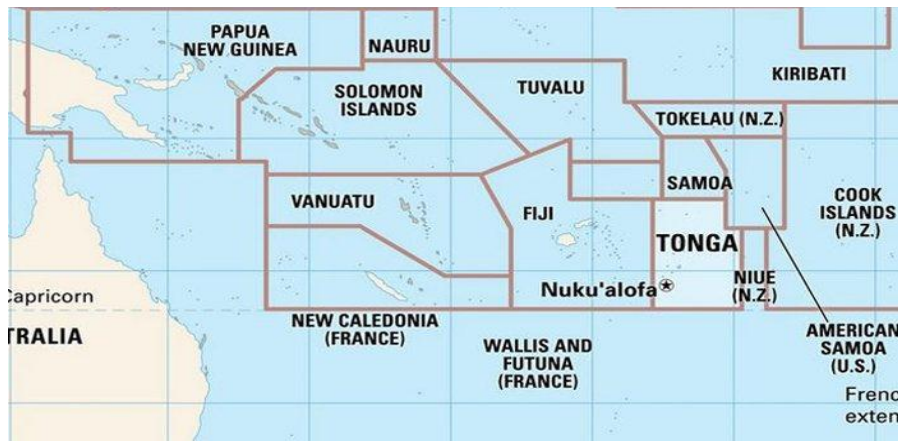


Figure 2. Map of the Pacific Region

Source: Britannica.com

The South Pacific region is a change in the term from the Southwest Pacific given by the allied troops. Until 1983 and 1988, based on the Outline of State Policy or GBHN Indonesia, the South Pacific region was one of the priority areas for maintaining state stability. Meanwhile, the mention of the Southwest Pacific is equated with the Pacific Triangle area on the coast of Southeast Asia and South Antarctica (Hamid, 1996). Meanwhile, the term South Pacific was used in 1971 at the South Pacific Forum (SPF) meeting and was member by 16 countries consisting of Australia, New Zealand, Cook Island, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Tokelau, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Island, Tonga, Tuvalu, Timor Leste and US territory (American Samoa) (Saripudin, 2013). The countries in the Pacific region consist of several countries, namely Nauru, Cook Islands, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Fiji, Tonga, Marshall Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Each country has different geopolitics even within one region. In its current development, changes in the economy and the flow of globalization require a country to be able to move according to the pattern of changes that occur by building communication with other countries in order to fulfill the interests of the country. As stated by Douherty and Pfaltgraff, the development of international relations will be greatly influenced by international communication and business transactions or conferences (Saripudin, 2013).

Indonesia has diplomatic relations with 12 Pacific countries, namely: Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands,

Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu (Satriawan, 2016). Likewise with Indonesia's involvement in regional forums in the Pacific.

a) APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation)

Indonesia is an active member of APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) along with 21 other countries. Indonesia's membership shows support for APEC's important role in enhancing APEC cooperation in the future. Becoming a member of APEC is one of Indonesia's roles within ASEAN in the economic field. Indonesia's role in APEC is based on the need to anticipate and secure national interests in the era of free trade and investment in the Asia Pacific.

Indonesia has become one of the investment destinations in the Asia Pacific region. Indonesia's membership in the G-20 makes Indonesia a market for imported products from APEC member countries. Increasingly open regional markets increase opportunities for national products to be exported. If we look at the history of Indonesia's involvement in APEC, we can see the role of the state in safeguarding its interests. For example, at the second Economic Leaders Meeting (AELM) which was held in 1994 in Indonesia, specifically in the city of Bogor. Indonesia was the leader of APEC for one year in 1994. Indonesia was chosen to be the leader of APEC at that time because of Indonesia's ability to survive in the midst of a crisis. Indonesia's economic growth is the highest among countries in the Asia Pacific region.

The result of the AELM meeting in Bogor was the formulation of targets and commitments that were in line with the APEC vision formulated on Blake Island. Agree on the Bogor Goals which

contain a time frame for implementing full trade and investment liberalization in 2010 in developed countries and 2020 in developing countries. The three points of the APEC cooperation agreement in the Bogor Goals are: Strengthening the open and multi-lateral trading system. Advancing Asia Pacific trade and investment liberalization. Investing in Asia Pacific development cooperation. The third point is an Indonesian initiative. Indonesia intends to encourage APEC members to develop natural and human resources in the Asia Pacific region. The aim is to achieve sustainable economic growth and equitable development. One of them is by eroding economic inequality between APEC member countries (Suhardi, 2010).

Indonesia also hosted the 1994 APEC Summit. A total of 18 leaders of APEC member countries attended the High-Level Conference. One of the positive impacts for Indonesia is the expansion of Indonesia's tourism potential. Indonesia is the second country to successfully conduct a photo session wearing its country's typical clothing, namely Batik. Indonesia again hosted the APEC Summit in 2013 in Bali. The big theme of the APEC Summit in Bali is Resilient Asia Pacific: The Global Engine Growth. This puts Indonesia in a strategic position on the international stage (Monica, 2022). Joining APEC is one of Indonesia's economic diplomacy strategies to be able to make a major contribution to improving the national economy, by establishing bilateral, regional and global relations.

b) Pacific Island Forum (PIF)

Originally called the South Pacific Forum, it was formed in 1971 at the initiative of New Zealand. The name changes in 2000 was intended to reflect the geographical location of the countries in the North and South Pacific. The aim of establishing PIF is to strengthen cooperation and integration, by uniting local resources and unifying policies to achieve economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security (Kemlu.go.id, PIF, 2019).

Indonesia has been one of 21 Post-Forum Dialogue Partners since 2001. PIF has an important meaning for Indonesia, especially because it is the only forum for engaging with all countries from the Pacific sub-region and have the same interests, especially change. climate, natural disasters and maritime affairs. During the G-20 presidency, 10 concrete collaborations were carried out, namely in the energy, environment, climate, maritime, disaster

mitigation and direct funding sectors related to the activities and interests of small island countries. Indonesia, through the foreign minister, conveyed a cooperation plan to bring ASEAN and PIF relations closer when Indonesia becomes chairman of ASEAN in 2023 (www.antaraneews.com, 2022). Indonesia in the PIF emphasized its commitment regarding cooperation on maritime issues, on the other hand, the PIF also has high hopes for Indonesia to be able to bring the agreed issues to the COP meeting. Indonesia is committed to connecting countries in the Pacific with related institutions in Indonesia and other potential development partners. This was done because strengthening cooperative relations with countries in the Pacific is one of the priorities of Indonesia's foreign policy.

Apart from that, the exchange of military personnel in the context of maritime defense was also carried out following an initiative carried out by Indonesia through the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF). The exchange of maritime military personnel will be carried out in order to maintain the territorial stability of Indonesia and countries in the Pacific region which are archipelagic countries. Of course, if this initiative is developed, it will be a trigger for other countries in the South Pacific region to contribute to maintaining regional stability in that country. This then refers to the implementation of Indonesian policy in reducing actions taken by countries in the South Pacific region regarding the issue of the internationalization of Papuan separatism.

c) Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG)

Indonesia is a partner (associate member) in this forum, since March 2011 Indonesia has been a monitor. Furthermore, in 2015, Indonesia's status was raised to associate member. Indonesia became a member of the MSG, 25 years after the organization was formed as a forum to fight for the interests of Melanesian nations. Despite its associate member status, Indonesia is the country with the largest Melanesian population spread across Papua, Maluku and Nusa Tenggara.

The Papua problem, which has become an international issue and has been discussed at Nations meetings, is a problem that is very difficult to resolve. The existence of resistance from Papuan separatist groups or the Free Papua Organization (OPM) and other pro-independence movements means that Indonesia needs to respond to this issue with wise.



Figure 3. TPN-OPM Group
Source: Nasional Tempo.com

This issue has become difficult to resolve due to intervention from several countries in the Pacific such as Fiji, Vanuatu and PNG which have brought this issue to international meetings. This becomes an intervention in domestic problems and makes it difficult for the country to build diplomatic relations with other countries in the Pacific region, because of interference from Pacific countries who are members of the MSG or Melanesian Spearhead Group (Pebrianto, 2017). Several member countries that support Papua, such as Fiji, Vanuatu, PNG and New Caledonia, are one of the challenges for the country in resolving this problem. Human rights attention from 2015 to 2019 is currently facing a difficult situation.

The Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) Papua study team explained that the state took the wrong steps in responding to this issue (Utama, 2017). The state's concern is highly emphasized by Pacific countries who assess the state's lack of attention to the existing humanitarian conditions. This situation provides a note for the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) and the Pacific Island Forum (PIF) so that it requires a good approach and interaction by attracting participation from South Pacific countries (CNNIndonesia, 2020). Furthermore, based on this situation, the world's view of Indonesia's image, which has received cases of human rights violations in Papua, is in the country's own interests to restore this image. This problem does not only occur in one region but has been faced by several other regions in Papua so that countries in the South Pacific region are reluctant to have good relations with Indonesia.

Therefore, there is a need for action by the state to address this issue. If seen from Indonesia's perspective, the Pacific region is an important key for the country to develop its territorial relations and create regional stability. Furthermore, the Pacific Exposition has become one of the most successful activities in the region and has been accepted by many Pacific countries and the form of cooperation taken by Pacific countries is intended to build the capacity of their countries and society in facing the crisis that has hit (Anshari, 2016). This is strongly supported by the good response from several countries in the Pacific such as Fiji and Vanuatu which have formed bilateral cooperation with Indonesia in several fields such as health, economics and education. As stated in the ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific (AOIP), Indonesia and the Southeast Asian nations prioritize economic cooperation in the region. Indonesia calls for avoiding rivalry, especially military competition, in the region. In general, the policy of utilizing regional cooperation in the Asia and Pacific region still needs to be directed at building Indonesia's self-confidence to become one of the most influential countries in the Pacific region.

d) Pacific Island Development Forum (PIDF)

IPFD is part of Indonesia's efforts to promote development in the Pacific, this forum is a form of Indonesia's commitment to increasing involvement in the Pacific region. IPFD will discuss Indonesia's development cooperation with the Pacific. In 2022, the focus of cooperation will be issues of recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic, mitigating the impacts of climate change, and food security. Apart from

meetings with government representatives, the IPFD will include meetings between Indonesian business people and Pacific business people. There are also workshops on disaster management, small business development, and women's empowerment (Mada, 2022). Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno LP Marsudi said that Indonesia's commitment to the Pacific region has never slackened. Indonesia considers the Pacific as its family. The Indonesia-Pacific Forum for Development (IPFD) is a form of Indonesia's efforts to continue to improve relations with the Pacific (Mada, 2022).

e) Southwest Pacific Dialogue (SwPD)

SwPD has become a dialogue forum for Australia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and Timor Leste to exchange views and information on various important issues in the region. People-to-people contact between SwPD countries is the main area of cooperation focused by Indonesia. Through Cultural and Educational Cooperation activities and also Interfaith Dialogue, Indonesia is trying to carry out Confidence Building Measures (CBM) with the people of SwPD member countries (Kemlu.go.id Swpd, 2022).

Indonesia participated in the formation of the Southwest Pacific Dialogue in 2002, apart from domestic interests, Indonesia also provided assistance abroad by providing support for economic development and improving the welfare of Pacific people through the Pacific Elevation policy (setkab.go.id, 2021). Currently, the use of regional cooperation is carried out as directed in the National Development Vision for the 2005-2024 period, namely realizing an independent, advanced, just and prosperous Indonesia. The details in the form of a vision in the field of international relations are to create an Indonesia that can play an active role in international relations. In more detail, Indonesia's foreign policy in the 2020-2024 period prioritizes strengthening economic diplomacy, protection diplomacy, and sovereignty and national diplomacy, as well as increasing Indonesia's leadership contribution in the region and the world.

Furthermore, supporting strategies in achieving these policy directions specifically for regional cooperation in the Asia and Pacific region include: (1) encouraging the formulation of recommendations related to economic cooperation such as the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), Free Trade Agreement (FTA), and Comprehensive Economic

Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with non-traditional market countries in various regions, including the South Pacific; (2) increasing Indonesia's role in maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea through the ASEAN mechanism; and (3) encourage the finalization and implementation of multisectoral national strategies related to handling non-communicable diseases (NCD) in the Asia and Pacific region. Indonesia's initiative and leadership in the ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific (AOIP) can play an important role in strengthening regional relations. AOIP's four cooperation priorities are in line with Indonesia's national interests, namely maritime cooperation, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), connectivity and the economy.

B. Pacific Countries' Response to Indonesia's Cooperation and Existence in the Pacific

The Pacific region is one of the regions with average criteria for developing countries. The basis for concern for the South Pacific Region is given because of Indonesia's policy, namely "Indonesia look east policy" or "looking east", one of the activities of which is a trade show with countries in the Pacific region entitled the Pacific Exposition. This activity should be launched to support economic recovery by involving Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and also several companies in providing wider exposure to the culture and involvement of countries in the Pacific region. This is strongly supported by the involvement of regional countries, in order to improve the country's economy. The Pacific Exposition is a concrete form of establishing cooperative relations between the Pacific region. This activity is more directed towards a trade, investment and tourism exhibition for Pacific countries, entitled the Pacific Exposition. In 2019, it was held for the first time at the Sky City Convention Center, Auckland, New Zealand on 12-14 July 2019 (PFN public relations, 2019). Meanwhile, in 2021 it will be held virtually, this activity involves at least 20 countries with the aim of increasing connectivity between Indonesia and the Pacific, as well as strengthening Indonesia's Pacific identity and cooperation with joining companies.

This event can improve relations or interactions between Indonesia and several countries in the South Pacific region and create new spaces for Indonesia to demonstrate its national interests. Apart from having a huge impact on the regional economy for the countries involved, Indonesia also has interests that

are used to overcome several internal problems such as human rights issues in Papua, then the interests of the Indonesian state as the presidency of the G20 and improving Indonesian maritime affairs. as the world's maritime axis.

The impact of the Pacific Exposition on the Indonesian economy shows good results in 2019 to 2021. This can be seen from cooperation and also Indonesia's increasing export-import results and obtaining cooperation agreements with several countries such as Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and also New Caledonia. By holding PE, Indonesia is also providing the most important access to national interests owned by the country, such as first, showing Indonesia's readiness in preparation for the G20 presidency in 2022, secondly improving Indonesia's image towards countries in the Pacific and the world regarding human rights issues in Papua. Third, Indonesia also invites cooperation in protecting the administrative or territorial area of the country with the largest maritime position in the region.

Several countries such as Fiji, New Zealand and also the Cook Islands which have a record of good diplomatic relations with Indonesia have established collaborations such as the Indonesia South Pacific Forum (ISPF) which opens up space for investment and trade to be more advanced. Indonesia carries out a lot of bilateral cooperation with countries in the Pacific region, one of which is Fiji, which started in 1947. The presence of the Indonesian Embassy in Suva, which is the capital of Fiji, in 2002. Fiji is one of the largest countries in the South Pacific region, a strategic region, sea transportation has become a tool to improve the economy, the largest economic center in the Pacific. Apart from that, in the fields of education and tourism. Even though tourism in Fiji is good, souvenirs are not yet produced themselves so this is an opportunity for Indonesia. Still in the context of defense, Indonesia is currently intensively strengthening bilateral relations with Fiji. This is proven through several collaborations that have been built, such as peacekeeping operation training and exchanges of Naval officers.

Several countries in the Pacific often have problems with Indonesia regarding human rights issues in Papua, for example Vanuatu at the 76th UN General Assembly session, PM Bob Loughman, said that local and indigenous Papuan communities continue to suffer from human rights violations under the Indonesian government

(www.cnnindonesia.com, 2021). Likewise, Palau actively urged the international community to act on the West Papua issue in 2016. Apart from that, there are Tuvalu, Solomon, the Marshal Islands and Nauru who are urging the role of the international community on the Papua issue. If you look at Vanuatu's response, which always mentions the Papua issue at the UN Session, it has been repeated, starting from 2016-2021 (Sadeli, 2021). Apart from Indonesian diplomats who well dismissed the response of Pacific countries to the issue of human rights violations in Papua, various cooperation efforts continue to be increased by the government. This also received a response from other Pacific countries which were no longer aggressive in highlighting Indonesia. Indonesia continues to increase cooperative visits to the Pacific region. On that occasion, Indonesia attempted to collaborate in the field of culture with countries in the South Pacific. Apart from that, Indonesia also initiated a program called Technical Cooperation with Developing Countries (KTNB). It is hoped that this collaboration will foster an attitude of mutual respect and mutual trust between countries in the South Pacific towards Indonesia.

There are not many positive responses from Pacific countries towards Indonesia. Currently, Fiji is expressing its full support for Indonesia as a result of the cooperation carried out by Indonesia and Fiji both in the fields of education and defense cooperation. The context of defense diplomacy offered by Cottey has become a reference which is now being applied by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the TNI, such as cooperation in sending Defense Attachés to several countries in the South Pacific region such as what happened in Fiji in 2018, peacekeeping exercises by Indonesia and countries in the South Pacific region such as PNG and Fiji, as well as the exchange of Naval officers negotiated through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nauru (Felani, et.al, 2019). This is progress in the Indonesian defense system which prioritizes cooperation. Especially if it is related to the geographical conditions of Indonesia, which is an archipelagic country, the same as countries in the South Pacific region. So, cooperation needs to be increased to a higher level.

CONCLUSION

Indonesia carries out diplomatic relations and cooperation with countries in the Pacific Region as an effort to maintain peace, stability and prosperity in the region. Indonesia's foreign policy, namely Look East Policy, is a policy aimed at strengthening relations and cooperation with Pacific countries. This is because this area has geostrategic importance. Indonesia has carried out various training activities, human resource capacity development, technical and financial assistance quite intensively in recent years.

The Indonesian Government's participation in regional meetings in the Pacific Region is also a forum for establishing good relations, increasing trust and improving Indonesia's image. Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), South West Pacific Dialogue (SwPD), Indonesia South Pacific Forum (ISPF) are influential regional organizations in the Pacific and Indonesia is also involved in them. Look East Policy and Indonesia's activities in Pacific regional forums are part of Indonesia's foreign policy, in order to carry out national interests, namely maintaining the integrity or sovereignty of the country and strengthening relations & influence in the region.

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