

## Strengthen the International Relations of Indonesia in The Post Covid-19 Pandemic Era: Public Policy Perspective

Dian Herdiana<sup>a</sup>, Jona Bungaran Basuki Sinaga<sup>b</sup>, Faizal Madya<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung

<sup>b</sup>Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri

<sup>c</sup>Universitas Terbuka

e-mail : <sup>a</sup>dianherdiana@uinsgd.ac.id, <sup>b</sup>nagajo68@gmail.com, <sup>c</sup>abang.icang@gmail.com

### Abstract

*Covid-19 has hurt various aspects of the country, including international relations between Indonesia and other countries. Various agendas, both bilateral and multilateral, from trade to tourism have decreased due to the Covid-19 pandemic, so efforts are needed to improve international relations in the post of the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on this understanding, this article analyzes what efforts should be taken by the Indonesian government to improve international relations in the post-Covid-19 era from a public policy perspective. The research method used in this article is a descriptive research method with a qualitative approach. The data source comes from secondary data from books, journal articles, regulations and other relevant secondary sources. The results of the analysis revealed that there are at least three policy instruments that need to be taken by the Indonesian government in strengthening the international relations, namely: First, the renormalization of various international agreements which during the Covid-19 pandemic experienced a decline or even had to stop. Second, intensification of bilateral relations with partner countries based on multi-sector recovery from Covid-19. Third, play an active role in an international forum to voice the interests of Indonesia and other countries as countries affected by Covid-19, where multinational relations is needed to restore international conditions after Covid-19. It is hoped that these three policy instruments will not only be able to encourage the recovery of Indonesia's national condition in the post-Covid-19 era but also be able to strengthen Indonesia's international relations with various countries.*

**Keywords:** International Relations, Post Covid-19, Public Policy.

### A. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has hit the world since the end of 2019 and has hurt almost all aspects ranging from health, education to the economy, Covid-19 which was initially found in the Chinese city of Wuhan, spread rapidly to almost all countries in the world, the implication is that Covid-19 is not only a domestic problem in China but also an international problem where various countries should be able to collaborate to be able to tackle Covid-19 (Arbar, 2020; World Health Organization, 2020b). Various countries in the world have experienced the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, in which each country has made various policy instruments to tackle Covid-19 which are expected to be able to suppress the spread of Covid-19 and reduce the negative

impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020a).

The Covid-19 pandemic which has become an international issue should be resolved with international relations, this is at least based on the following three reasons: First, the mobility of the population travelling from one country to another cannot be avoided, so that the spread of Covid-19 between countries be a logical consequence that should be addressed by various countries. Second, in the effort to tackle Covid-19, starting from the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) to the provision of the Covid-19 vaccine, no country is independently able to provide various needs for the prevention of Covid-19, therefore international relations efforts are essential to be able to do. Third, efforts to tackle Covid-19 will

not be successfully carried out by one country independently, but require comprehensive and sustainable relations to ensure that the spread of Covid-19 in one country would not risk the spread of Covid-19 in other countries. Furthermore, the success of dealing with Covid-19 in one country should also be emulated by other countries by conducting international relations.

These three reasons encourage the understanding that there would not be a single country in the world that be able to cope with Covid-19 and be able to minimize its impact without conducting international relations. Indonesia as one of the countries that have the most cases of Covid-19 in the ASEAN region should carry out international relations which is based on two main reasons, namely: First, various international collaborations have experienced a lot of delays or cannot be carried out optimally during the Covid-pandemic. 19, so that the Indonesian government needs to intensify international relations both during the Covid-19 pandemic and after the Covid-19 pandemic period.

Second, the increase in international relations carried out by the Indonesian government can provide benefits for Indonesia both internally and externally. Internal advantages include certainty of domestic needs in efforts to tackle Covid-19 such as the availability of drugs and Covid-19 vaccines imported from other countries, the certainty of marketing domestic products exported to countries that have established trade agreements so that export activities can be carried out in a state of the Covid-19 pandemic. External benefits include accommodating Indonesia's interests in various international relations forums, both bilateral, regional and international as well as increasing Indonesia's bargaining power which aims to build collective action between countries after the Covid-19 pandemic.

On this basis, Indonesia's international relations after the Covid-19 pandemic need to be improved which is expected to provide various benefits for Indonesia. This article examines what efforts should be taken by the Indonesian government to improve and strengthen international relations after the Covid-19 pandemic, the study is focused on a public policy perspective which examines what policy instruments the government should make to improve international relations. in order to make Indonesia's international relations better after the Covid-19 pandemic.

**B. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic in Aspects of International Relations**

The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on how Indonesia carries out its international relations with many countries. These impacts are not only positive but also negative. A more detailed description of the positive and negative impacts can be explained through the following figure:

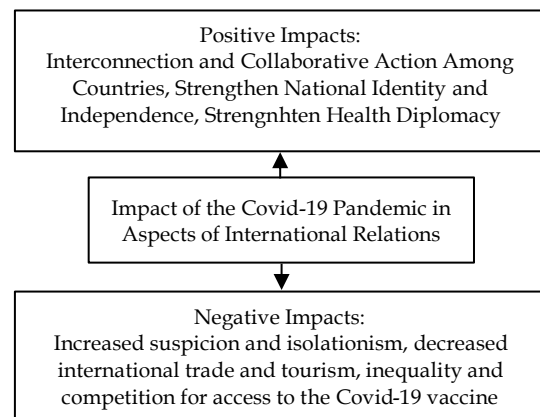


Figure 1. Impact of Covid-19  
(Sources: Researcher Analysis, 2021)

Based on Figure 1 above, it can be explained that the positive impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic include: First, interconnection and collaborative action among countries, this is aimed at relations between countries to jointly tackle COVID-19, interconnection efforts and collaborative action is based on the understanding that no single country is capable of tackling Covid-19 alone but requires good relations. Empirically, many countries have built interconnections to tackle Covid-19, so that these countries can reduce the spread of Covid-19 in their countries, including in the context of Indonesia, various interconnection and collaboration efforts are carried out with various countries in the world to tackle the spread of Covid-19.

Second, strengthen national identity and independence. The Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia has built awareness that strong national resources are needed. At the beginning of the spread of Covid-19, Indonesia was faced with difficulties in producing mouth masks, a shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) and also difficulties in obtaining medicines used for Covid-19 healing therapy, this was due to raw materials that had to be imported from other countries (Fachriansyah, Gunawan, & Hasani, 2020; Jatmiko,

2020). Meanwhile, exporting countries also need these raw materials to cope with Covid-19 in their country. This condition shows that national identity and independence is very much needed, so that in various disease conditions, Indonesia can independently produce various equipment needed in tackling the disease.

Third, health diplomacy. During the Covid-19 pandemic, one of the efforts to reduce the spread of Covid-19 is by vaccinating as many citizens as possible, the problem is that the availability of vaccines is limited. Various countries want vaccines in large quantities, but vaccine production is not proportional to the number of requests, this is experienced by Indonesia as one of the countries with the largest population in the world requiring vaccines in large quantities (Rahayu, 2020). On this basis, awareness of the importance of health diplomacy is part of efforts to tackle Covid-19, so that in the future strengthening of health diplomacy is necessary to deal with the spread of various diseases and viruses.

The negative impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of international relations include: First, Increased suspicion and isolationism. Fears of the spread of Covid-19 have resulted in various countries isolating international activities, not a few international airports are closed to foreign tourist arrivals, this condition has caused many countries to close the international movement of people (Fang, Weedon, & Handley, 2020). Indonesia as a country affected by Covid-19 has closed its airports several times from the arrival of foreign tourists and forbids foreigners to come to Indonesia, this condition on the one hand is a good attitude to suppress the spread of Covid-19 between countries, but this policy should be carried out wisely to maintain the economy.

Protectionism efforts carried out by countries infected with Covid-19 are not only about drugs and Covid-19 vaccines, but also food protectionism and trade protectionism, which are shown to provide a sense of security to citizens who are experiencing a crisis. This protectionism directly adds to the problems in international relations, especially for countries that rely on imports to meet the basic needs of their citizens (Espitia, Rocha, & Ruta, 2020).

Second, the decline in international trade and tourism. The logical consequence of the restriction of human movement between one country to another is a decrease in the number of tourists, this

is experienced by Indonesia where the number of foreign tourists coming to Indonesia has decreased, this also happened in Indonesia's international trade where the number of Indonesian exports decreased during the pandemic (Tambun, 2020). This is a bad thing when the government needs a large budget (both national and regional budget) to deal with Covid-19 but state revenues have decreased.

Third, inequality and competition for access to the Covid-19 vaccine. The limited number of Covid-19 vaccine productions while the high demand from various countries has resulted in countries competing to obtain vaccines in sufficient quantities, this has implications for the competition from various countries to get Covid-19 vaccines, so that countries that have poor diplomacy with countries that produce vaccines will have difficulties in meeting vaccine needs in their countries, on the other hand, the existence of countries that are economically classified as underdeveloped and developing countries has implications for these countries' extra efforts to obtain vaccines. Covid-19 in sufficient numbers. This implies that on the one hand there are countries that have sufficient Covid-19 vaccines, but on the other hand, there are also countries that lack Covid-19 vaccines.

The disparity in ownership of the Covid-1 vaccine is a global issue that should be resolved through international relations (Borrel, 2021; Maxmen, 2021) so that justice and equality in access to the Covid-19 vaccine will emerge, where every country has the right to protect its citizens from Covid-19 through justice in Covid-19 vaccination. It is hoped that there will be similarities in the efforts made by each country in tackling the spread of Covid-19, which is expected that Covid-19 will no longer become a global pandemic.

#### **Policy Instruments Need to be Taken by The Indonesian Government**

The improvement of Indonesia's international relations in a post of the Covid-19 pandemic era should be pursued, these various efforts include: First, Indonesia has carried out various international relations with many other countries, both bilaterally and multilaterally before the Covid-19 outbreak. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the relationship has undergone many changes, such as international trade and tourism. Based on this understanding, Indonesia should review or



even renegotiate the agreement in order to accommodate Indonesia's interests, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, where Indonesia needs various improvements, one of which needs to increase the international trade balance, this is shown to finance efforts to overcome national conditions in the post Covid-19 pandemic era. With these policies, it is hoped that they will create better international relations based on Indonesian interests after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Second, intensify bilateral relations with countries in the ASEAN region aimed at ensuring conducive regional conditions, this is based on empirical conditions before the Covid-19 pandemic in which citizens from countries in ASEAN made many visits to fellow ASEAN countries, both in the capacity for business and tourism purposes. One of the intensification goals is to ensure that ASEAN is free from the COVID-19 pandemic so that efforts to improve conditions in the ASEAN region would be much faster if carried out jointly by countries in the ASEAN region. This is also aimed at creating conduciveness for the ASEAN region which is able to become a regional economic recovery centre that is able to provide benefits to countries in the ASEAN region, including Indonesia, with conducive conditions in the ASEAN region, it will create an understanding that ASEAN has managed to get out of the Covid-19 pandemic so that various countries outside the ASEAN region will be interested in making better international relations with countries in the ASEAN region after the Covid-19 pandemic. So that this will create mutual benefits for countries in the ASEAN region and countries outside the ASEAN region that conduct international relations with ASEAN Countries.

Third, play an active role in the international forum to voice the interests of Indonesia and other countries as countries affected by Covid-19. This is shown to ensure that Indonesia becomes a country that is not only able to participate in efforts to tackle Covid-19 but also becomes a country that will benefit both economically and wider geopolitically in the post Covid-19 pandemic era. This needs to be done by Indonesia based on several reasons, including Indonesia as a country that has been able to cope with COVID-19, so that various efforts in establishing international relations have been prepared by the Indonesian government which is expected to provide benefits both to Indonesia and to other parties. Indonesia's efforts to voice its interests in international forums are

also based on Indonesia's position as a developing country with a large population so that it becomes a potential for the international market, this condition should be utilized by Indonesia where investment is needed to accelerate Indonesia's economic growth in a post Covid-19 pandemic era.

### C. CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic has had both positive and negative impacts on many aspects, including international relations aspects, positive impacts include increasing Indonesia's relations with other countries regarding efforts to tackling Covid-19 starting from efforts to procure personal protective equipment (PPE) of Covid-19 to cooperation in the procurement of Covid-19 vaccines. While the negative impacts include reducing international trade to the point of raising suspicions about the origins of the first country where Covid-19 was discovered.

Efforts that should be taken by the Indonesian government to improve international relations in the post of the covid-19 era are: First, the renormalization of various international agreements which during the Covid-19 pandemic experienced a decline or even had to stop. Second, intensification of bilateral relations with partner countries based on multi-sector recovery from Covid-19. Third, play an active role in the international forum to voice the interests of Indonesia and other countries as countries affected by Covid-19, where multinational relations is needed to restore international conditions after Covid-19. It is hoped that these three policy instruments will not only be able to encourage the recovery of Indonesia's national condition in the post-Covid-19 era but also be able to strengthen Indonesia's international relations with various countries. These efforts are expected to be able to improve the international relations of Indonesia in the future, especially in the post-Covid-19 era.

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