
STATEMENT BY INDONESIA NET-ZERO SUMMIT 2021

April 20, 2021

This event was convened by the Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia and participated by 142 environmental, social, and climate organizations in Indonesia. Minister for National Development Planning of Indonesia Suharso Monoarfa gave a briefing to participants at the opening.

Approaching the UN's COP-26 high-level climate talks in Glasgow in November, the Leaders' Summit on Climate (April 22-23), and Earth Day (April 22), the participants in the Indonesia Net Zero Summit 2021 appeal to the Indonesian nation – to its Government and its people – to begin work on formulating a comprehensive strategy to prevent impending climate disaster and to play a leading role in the global effort to ensure that the rise in the Earth's temperature does not exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius, in line with the vision set out in the 2015 Paris Agreement.

The present national emission reduction target of 29% (by own means) and 41% (with international assistance), set forth since 2015 and as reflected in the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) adopted as part of Indonesia's Paris Agreement commitments, is no longer sufficient. We believe that these targets no longer keep up with the latest scientific evidence. Consequently, Indonesia needs to adopt a more ambitious plan and more demanding targets for emissions reductions.

We urge the Government of Indonesia (GOI) to set new climate targets that are science-based and in line with global commitments, namely, to reduce national emissions by 50% by 2030 and to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. The Net Zero target is of critical importance to our nation if, by the time of Indonesia's centenary year in 2045, the country is not to have succumbed to myriad disasters resulting from rising temperatures: extreme weather, floods, droughts, food crises, water shortages, a rise in sea levels of up to one meter, crop failures, wildfires, and so forth. There is no doubt that the climate crisis now poses a real and existential threat to Indonesia.

If GOI sticks to its existing emission reduction targets, it will find it difficult to play a relevant and credible role in climate change negotiations.

If the necessary technology and funding become available, GOI will then be able to move on to adopt an even more ambitious emission reduction target, namely, negative zero emissions, which would mean that Indonesia's carbon sink capacity (ability to absorb carbon) would be greater than the sum of its emissions.

Net-zero emission is not only about the targeted rate of emissions reduction, but also the period over which this is to be achieved. The plan to achieve Net Zero by 2070 appears to be too little too late as our carbon quota for keeping the temperature rise to only 1.5 degrees Celsius expires in 2050. Therefore, the Indonesia Net Zero Summit believes that the most appropriate timeframe for achieving Net Zero is 2050 or even 2045.

The latest report by BAPPENAS (National Development Planning Ministry) reveals that achieving net-zero emissions in 2045 or 2050 will result in greater economic benefits compared to the 2070 target proposed by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. The report shows that the achievement of net-zero emissions in 2045 or 2050 will generate economic growth of 6.21% and 6.06%, respectively, over the following 10 years, compared with only 5.82% if net-zero emissions are not achieved until 2070. The big question now is how BAPPENAS' findings can be translated into real and concrete government policies on the ground?

Since Net Zero cannot be achieved in the blink of an eye, we urge GOI to formulate and implement a new developmental paradigm, starting right now, to achieve a Net Zero future. In other words, we need to focus on low-carbon economic development. Both GOI and Indonesian businesses should view green development as a tremendous economic opportunity, given the ongoing shift in the global economy towards decarbonization.

The achievement of Net Zero must be reflected in policy transformation across all sectors: forestry, energy, transportation, industry, infrastructure, waste, education, trade, and maritime, among others. Low-carbon development will open the door to myriad opportunities for green investment and more jobs.

In the forestry and land-use sectors alone, setting an ambitious and firm net-zero emissions target could generate economic benefits worth up to USD 1.5 trillion by 2045. In the energy sector, a firm commitment to renewable energy has the potential to create nearly 5 million new jobs in solar energy alone, and nearly 11 million in the energy sector as a whole. Indonesia's key trading partners, such as China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and the European Union, account for more than half of Indonesia's exports (worth more than USD 168 billion annually). All of them have targeted the achievement of net-zero emissions by the middle of the century. Indonesia should not allow itself to be sidelined in these markets as a result of a failure to keep pace with climate change.

Changing developmental paradigms and strategies is never an easy task. However, the stakes are high – nothing less than the survival and well-being of the Indonesian people is on the line. Thus, tough decisions and resolute action will be required. We must not allow ourselves to go down in history as the generation that fiddled while our Earth burned. If we do not rise to the challenge, we will be condemned by posterity for our failure to avoid a preventable global disaster.

Net Zero requires political will. Therefore, we all expect a firm and clear decision from GOI and speedy action that is in line with science and the global consensus. If not, there will be little for Indonesia to celebrate in its centenary year of 2045.

Through this Indonesia Net-Zero Summit, we hope that the Net Zero concept can take root in both the public and political discourse. It is time for us to embrace and promote 'climate nationalism,' whereby our love and pride for our nation is combined with a determination and commitment to preventing climate change from decimating our nation's future.

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