

A tropical beach scene with palm trees and turquoise water. The background is a clear blue sky. The foreground shows a sandy beach with gentle waves washing onto it. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, and the palm trees are lush green. The overall atmosphere is serene and idyllic.

INDONESIAN

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1. FADEL ATTENDS D-8 MEETING IN IRAN

Jakarta - Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Fadel Muhammad attended the second Development-8 (D-8) ministerial meeting in Tehran, Iran, on May 18, 2011.

The meeting in Tehran was a follow-up of the D-8 first meeting in Malaysia in February 2009.

Fadels` presence in the second meeting in Tehran was to improve Indonesian role in D-8 organization, especially in the maritime and fishery sector as a pillar in food resilience effort.

As a "prime mover" mandated in the previous ministerial meeting, Indonesia would have an opportunity to propose cooperation projects, namely the improvement of "inter trade" among D-8 member countries, harmonized system of quality assurance and safety of fishery products, certification of catches, and investment promotion at small islands in Indonesia.

At the meeting this time in Tehran, Indonesia would encourage the ratification of the establishment of the Working Group on Marine Affairs and Fisheries (WGMAF).

D-8, also known as Developing-8, is an arrangement for development cooperation among the following countries: Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey.

The D-8 ministerial meeting was preceded by working group discussion (WGD) on food standards, marine and fisheries, animal feed, fertilizer and seed bank.

In the WGMAF, Indonesia would propose several ideas on aquaculture, marine tourism, coastal area disaster mitigation, marine conservation and sustainable small islands development.

The establishment of D-8 was announced officially through the Istanbul Declaration of Summit of Heads of State/Government on June 15, 1997.

The objectives of D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation are to improve member states` position in the global economy, diversify and create new opportunities in trade relations, enhance participation in decision-making at international level, and improve standards of living.

Indonesia concerned about the existence of the d-8 organization as a potential market in the future.

To date Indonesia is the largest exporter of fishery products among D-8 member countries.

The export of Indonesia`s fishery products to D-8 countries in 2007 amounted US\$43,627 million, followed by Pakistan US\$7.145 million and Malaysia US\$3.193 million.

As of November 2010, Indonesia`s fishery exports to D-8 rose to US\$78 million.

2. NAM MEETING TO PRODUCE FIVE DOCUMENTS

Nusa Dua, Bali - Indonesian permanent representative to the UN, ambassador Hasan Kleib said the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) will at its 16th Ministerial Meeting here on May 23-27 produce five documents.

The meeting which is held to follow up and discuss the movement`s journey after the last summit in Sharm El Sheik in Egypt in July 2009 would produce five important documents regarding the organization`s vision for the next 50 years.

The first document is a final comprehensive document containing 630 paragraphs

while the second one is a "Bali Commemorative Declaration" to mark the NAM's 50th anniversary containing not thematic issues but the NAM's position with regard to challenges and opportunities in the next 50 years, he said on the sidelines of meetings.

There would also be a new declaration consisting of three paragraphs about the NAM's position on total nuclear arms eradication.

Two other documents would relate to Palestine, one of them is about Palestine in general, the NAM's general stand towards injustices happening in that country and on whether the political and refugee issues and independence issue would be brought to the UN General Assembly next September.

Hasan said the fifth document is a declaration on Palestine political prisoners in Israel.

"We will discuss it and then issue a condemnation and call for their release,".

The 16th NAM Ministerial Meeting is attended by ministerial-level officials, vice ministers from 118 countries and a vice president from Honduras, observers from 18 countries, invitees from 26 countries, observers from 10 international organizations and invitees from 23 international organizations.

During the meeting the NAM would also formally accept new members, namely Fiji and Azerbaijan, to bring the number of the organization members to 120 countries.

The NAM is now led by Egypt which together with Indonesia is now organizing the ministerial meeting under the theme "Sharing Vision for Contributing to NAM for the next 50 years."

3. NAM PLAYS IMPORTANT ROLE IN SHAPING GLOBAL ADMINISTRATION

Nusa Dua, Bali - The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) whose members form a majority in the UN General Assembly plays an important role in shaping the global administration framework in the 21st century, UN General Assembly President Joseph Deis said.

"I call on NAM to take constructive and firm steps to strengthen and reform the main bodies at the UN," he said at the 16th NAM ministerial meeting in Bali.

The world was in dire need of a global administrative system which reflects the latest realities and can effectively address global challenges.

"The system we need is one that can combine leadership, legitimacy and expertise,".

The NAM's strength was currently reflected not only by the number of its members which represent two-thirds of UN members but also by growing recognition of NAM members' role as important players in the global forum.

NAM was also expected to become a reliable partner in the international community and contribute significantly to settlement of global political issues, including the peace process in the Middle East.

NAM was founded in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in September 1961, to forge solidarity, boost confidence and unite visions of 25 developing countries in the world.

At present, almost 60 percent of the United Nations (UN) members are NAM members.

4. NAM TAKES STAND AGAINST TERRORISM

Nusa Dua, Bali - The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) issued a declaration here on Wednesday condemning any kind of terrorism.

The commitment was made in the "Bali Commemorative Declaration" issued in the framework of NAM's 50th anniversary.

The NAM's foreign ministers in the declaration underlined the achievements made by the NAM so far which should be used as a basis for promoting the NAM's goals and principles for the next 50 years.

The ministers agreed to take a number of steps among others fight against terrorism.

"(The NAM) will fight terrorism in all its form and manifestation done by anyone anywhere and for whatever causes in line with the principles in the UN Charter, relevant international laws and conventions while emphasizing that terrorism must not be linked with religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic groups," the declaration says.

NAM's foreign ministers also state that NAM will also fight organized transnational crimes, terrorism, human trafficking, trade of illegal small and light firearms, piracy and illegal drugs through improvement of regional and international cooperation and partnership.

In entering the 50th anniversary NAM states again its commitment to strengthening its action and increasing its main role in defending and promoting the interests of developing nations.

The NAM which has 120 members is a different power and unity must continue to give inspiration and influence in global issues to improve the life of the people and contribute to the UN and other international forums.

The Bali Commemorative Declaration contains 21 points presented by NAM foreign ministers.

5. NAM MINISTERS CONCLUDE BALI MEETING

Nusa Dua, Bali - Foreign ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) concluded their 16th meeting here on Friday with five final documents.

The documents include Bali the Commemorative Declaration, the Declaration on Palestine, a Statement on Total Eradication of Nuclear Weapons and a Final Document.

The meeting was closed after each delegation presented its final statement.

Indonesian foreign minister Marty Natalegawa said in his closing speech that the 16th NAM Ministerial Meeting had produced a Bali Commemorative Declaration envisaging the strengthening of the NAM's future role and relevance as a forum for accelerating its struggle to achieve peace, justice and welfare.

The meeting also issued a final document describing the common vision and general position of the NAM in dealing with international challenges.

"The two documents also state steps to overcome challenges faced by the world in the 21st century and call for increasing international cooperation," .

Marty said the NAM Ministerial Meeting also underlined the relevance of the NAM in the world as reflected by the recognition of Azerbaijan and Fiji of the organization. The two countries have officially become members of the movement.

In his speech Marty also reaffirmed the NAM's commitment to democratic values

and promotion as well as protection of human rights.

Regarding Palestine Marty reiterated the NAM's solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian people to establish a sovereign state in their land.

"We called for the release of all Palestinian political prisoners and condemned the brutality they suffered in the hands of the Israeli government,".

The 16th NAM Ministerial Meeting was attended by delegations from 128 countries including 95 member countries, 13 observer nations and 20 guest countries. It was opened by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono on Wednesday (May 25).

The next NAM Summit is scheduled to be held in Tehran, Iran, in 2010.

6. MARTY: RI CONCERNED ABOUT CONDITIONS OF PALESTINIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

Nasa Dua - Foreign Affairs Minister Marty Natalegawa has expressed concern about the conditions of Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails.

Holding the Palestinian political prisoners was unfair and against the fourth Geneva Convention, Minister Marty said here Friday in a special segment of the 16th Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) being held from May 23 to 27, 2011. The Convention called for a peaceful, just and comprehensive solution to Palestinian issues which have so far been hampering the peace process in the whole Middle East region, he said.

More than 6,000 Palestinians are being detained in 22 Israeli jails and prisons. They include 300 Palestinian children under 18 years old, women and legislators.

The Israeli interrogation process have reportedly involved violence. In most cases, the Palestinians have been denied access to lawyers, medical treatment and visits by their relatives.

Minister Marty stated the Fourth Geneva Convention on foreign occupation must be applied in this context and the Palestinian political prisoners held by Israel occupying power is a blunt violation of the Convention.

"Therefore, we ask Israel as an occupying power to abide by the Fourth Geneva Convention," Marty said.

The international community must follow up that condition, such as in the related meetings in Algeria in December 2010, Morocco in January 2011, and an international UN meeting on political prisoners in Austria in March 2011.

The political prisoner case is a hindrance in the efforts to achieve a just, peaceful and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian problem, Marty said.

"We must not stop supporting the Palestinian struggle until the problem is solved completely in line with the relevant UN international resolutions,".

The NAM has also encouraged its member countries to support an independent state of Palestine.

In the Bali Commemorative Declaration issued by the NAM meeting on Wednesday (May 25), NAM member states said they would remain in the forefront of support for the Palestinian people to realize freedom, peace and justice, in line with the long-standing international consensus recognizing the Palestinian people as a nation.

7. NAM REITERATES CALL FOR TOTAL BAN ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Nusa Dua, Bali - The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) on the final day of its 16th Ministerial Meeting issued a document calling for the total abolishment of the possession and use of nuclear weapons for the sake of preserving world peace.

The NAM ministers again expressed their deep concern over the nuclear weapons threat to humanity.

They stated that the total banning of nuclear weapons in the world was a priority of NAM.

NAM emphasized the importance of the role of its member states to convey concrete proposals for the global nuclear weapons disarmament and total abolishment within a certain time framework.

The meeting coinciding with the 50th NAM anniversary mentioned the Movement's commitment to organizing a summit to identify ways and facilities to abolish nuclear weapons as early as possible.

In addition to the statement on the total abolition of nuclear weapons, the NAM meeting also produced a Declaration on Palestine, a Declaration on Palestinian Political Detainees, a Bali Commemorative Declaration, and the Final Document.

The NAM is now led by Egypt which together with Indonesia is now organizing the ministerial meeting under the theme "Sharing Vision for Contributing to NAM for the next 50 years."

The NAM was established by five figures namely the late President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Ghana's President Kwame Nkrumah, India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito and Indonesian President Soekarno.

Around 75 ministers and one vice president from the 120-member countries of NAM participated in the 16th NAM Ministerial Meeting held at Nusa Dua, Bali Island, May 23-27, 2011.

8. NAM CALLS FOR RECOGNITION OF INDEPENDENT STATE OF PALESTINE

Nusa Dua, Bali - The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) has called for the recognition of an independent state of Palestine in two of the five declarations issued at the 16th NAM Ministerial Meeting taking place here May 23-27, 2011.

The Movement produced five documents on the final day of its meeting, namely Statement on Total Abolishment of Nuclear Weapons, Declaration on Palestine, Declaration on Palestinian Political Prisoners, Bali Commemorative Declaration and the Final Document.

NAM has considered the situation in the Palestinian land occupied by Israel has become very critical, including in East Jerusalem.

The NAM ministers condemned the holding of more than 6,000 Palestinians including children under 18 years old and women as political detainees by the Zionist country.

The ministers regretted the continued detention of Palestinian civilians by Israeli military using brutal actions which is violation to the Fourth Geneva Convention.

They also reiterated the demand for inseparable role of the international community to recognize Palestine based on the 1967 border agreement document with East Jerusalem as its capital city as soon as possible.

NAM calls for an end to Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory and the release of all Palestinian political detainees in Israeli jails.

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9. APEC'S WORKING GROUPS MEETING DISCUSS FOOD SECURITY, CLIMATE CHANGE

Jakarta - The annual meeting of members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation's (APEC) Fisheries and Marine Conservation working groups in Bali on June 6-9 will discuss food security and climate change issues, an official said.

"Food security has become an important issue recently stressing on how sustain people's life through enough supply of food but at the same time also ensure that we can create a healthy environment," Chairman for APEC's Fisheries Working group Gelwynn Jusuf said here on Monday after the opening ceremony of the event.

As in the case of climate change issue, he said the increase number of population in the Asia Pacific region had negative impacts to the environment. Therefore, a comprehensive action must be conducted soon to tackle the problem. He said the working group meeting in Bali was an important forum for APEC member countries to discuss about

how they would strengthen cooperation in order to face global challenges today such as the food security and climate change issues.

Meanwhile, Chairman of APEC's Marine Resources Conservation Working Group Ulises Munaylla from Peru stated recently the world was facing the negative impacts of climate change to the marine biodiversity which eventually would also affect food security.

He expected the Bali meeting would produce positive inputs to member countries of APEC in relation to the efforts to tackle climate change and secure food supply to the people.

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) of the 22nd Fisheries Working Group (FWG), the 24th Marine Resource Conservation Working Group (MRCWG) are participated in by 63 officers coming from 15 APEC member countries, namely USA, Malaysia, Taiwan, Japan, Thailand, Mexico, South Korea, Australia, Hong Kong, Chile, Russia and the Philippines.

The event is also attended by an observer from an Independent Assessor and four expert speakers, including from the NGOs.

Since 2010, the Lead Shepherd position for APEC FWG held by Mr Gellwynn Jusuf PhD from Indonesia, which currently also serves as Secretary General of Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF), while Mr Ulises Munaylla PhD from Peru is the Lead Shepherd from APEC MRCWG since 2009. They are both Co-Chairs of the three days meeting.

10. RI CALLS FOR SUSTAINABLE USE OF APEC'S MARINE RESOURCES

Bali - Indonesia has called on APEC member countries to make use of their marine resources in a sustainable manner while also trying to preserve the environment.

The call was made by Endhay Kusnendar, head of the research and development division of Indonesia's Marine and Fisheries Ministry at the opening session of the 22nd APEC Fisheries Working Group Meeting as well as the 24th APEC's Marine Resource Conservation Working Group Meeting in Bali.

Endhay said APEC had now become one of the prominent economic powers in the world with its member economies accounting for 57% of the global GDP and more than 40% of the world trade volume.

With a total population of more than 2.6 billion, he said, APEC itself had become a huge potential market. The consumption of global fish products in APEC economies had reached 70%, which comes from both captured and aquaculture production.

"Though the numbers look very promising, on the other hand, however, we are facing a major threat of ecosystem degradation due to excessive use of our resources which in return will jeopardize the sustainability of our oceans, and coastal resources,".

It was crucial for countries having marine resources to realize the full economic potential of their fisheries resources. "Economic sustainability depends not only on management of resource sustainability but that economic value added for economies from the use of such resources is fully enabled,".

Therefore, Endhay said, Indonesia with its mega marine biodiversity as a comparative advantage, realized the responsibility to safeguard the sustainable development of its marine resources and called on other APEC members to make the most of their ocean related resources and manage it in a sustainable manner.

He also reminded about the agreement which had been made by APEC Ocean-Related Ministers last 2010 in Paracas, Peru, titled the Paracas Declaration.

"I believe strongly, after all these declara-

tions; it is high time for us to reaffirm our commitment by moving from words to action in achieving sustainable development of our ocean, seas, and coastal resources in the Asia-Pacific region,".

The APEC'S 22nd Fisheries Working Group Meeting and the 24th Marine Resource Conservation Working Group Meeting in Bali takes place in Bali starting June 6-9.

The meeting is participated in by representatives from 16 countries namely Indonesia, the US, Malaysia, Taiwan, Japan, Thailand, Mexico, South Korea, Australia, Hong Kong, Chile, Russia, the Philippine, China and Vietnam. The event is also attended by an observer from Independent Assessor and four expert speakers, including from NGOs.

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ASEAN

1. RI SOON TO RATIFY ASEAN COUNTER TERRORISM CONVENTION

Jakarta - Indonesia is soon to ratify the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism (ACCT), the Foreign Ministry's Director for ASEAN Political and Security Cooperation, Ade Patmo Sarwono, said here on Thursday.

"The process (toward ratification) is ongoing. Hopefully, it will happen this year," Ade said, adding that the government needed the approval of the House of Representatives (DPR) to the convention.

He said one of the unique factors in the convention was the existence of rehabilitation support for former terrorists or people related to terror activities.

The ACCT was signed by the ASEAN Leaders in Cebu, Philippines on 13 January 2007 during the 12th ASEAN Summit. The Convention aims to enhance the region's capacity to confront terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and to deepen counter-terrorism cooperation among the region's law enforcement and other relevant authorities. It would be elevated to become a regional treaty once it has received ratification from at least six ASEAN Member States.

Six ASEAN member countries have already ratify the convention namely Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam and Brunei Darussalam.

ASEAN Secretary General Surin Pitsuwan recently stated that the ACCT could serve as the cornerstone in enhancing the region's capacity to confront terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and to deepen counter-terrorism cooperation. The ACCT, he said, also enhances the region's strategic role in the global strategy on counter-terrorism.

"I strongly encourage the remaining ASEAN member-states to expedite their respective ratification processes,"

ASEAN had already been taking proactive



measures against terrorism including the implementation of the ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counter-Terrorism. The forthcoming entry into force of the ACCT would add new momentum to ASEAN's concerted efforts in countering extremism and terrorism.

ASEAN, Dr Surin said, could offer its long history of experiences on addressing the problem of terrorism in the region and successfully managing other cultural and civilizational tensions despite the tremendous diversity in the region.

"We are determined to continue to cooperate not only in the prevention and suppression of extremism and terrorism but to address and remove root causes and conditions giving rise to these threats to humanity,"

"The road to ending violent extremism, terrorism and global cultural discords might very well run through the ASEAN region,"

ASEAN's approach, he continued, was the promotion of development that is equitable, inclusive, and that embodies peaceful and mutual respect among the various communities, taking into account their diversity and historical uniqueness.

ECONOMY

1. GOVT TO REVIEW IMPORT PROCEDURES

Denpasar, Bali - Industry Minister Mohamad S Hidayat said he would review all procedures for the importation of all goods into the country as part of efforts to heighten the competitiveness of local industrial products.

"We will review the procedures to show the government's support to efforts to improve the competitiveness of national industrial products," he said at Udayana University, Bali.

He said if inappropriate import procedures were found, the government would immediately take corrective action.

"Importers who dare import goods by violating regulations will be directly dealt with,".

If there were imported goods coming into Indonesian ports that did not meet national standards they would immediately be prevented from being distributed.

He said his ministry would also intensify sweeps on goods imported illegally and of low quality.

"Fair competition must be put into force. Indonesia must not only become a market for foreign products but also become a competitive production house,".

So far, Indonesia's industrial products have always been defeated in competition in terms of quality or price. "Our products have always lost. This is because of a high cost at the domestic industry coming from transportation cost, high interest as well as illegal levies,".

As an example, the transportation cost from the country's western to eastern regions

is higher than export cost.

"On the other hand the credit interest rate in Indonesia is also still two digits namely at a range of 14 to 15 percent,".

In China which is one of its rivals credit interest for small and medium businesses is only around three percent.

The minister said "to make Indonesia's products able to compete they must be made cheaper and more efficient. Next week we plan to meet with the leadership of Bank Indonesia to ask if it is possible to make the credit interest low to help small and medium businesses."

If the interest could be lowered it could help small and medium businesses develop industries at home.

To increase the competitive power of national industries, the government has been focusing on six industries namely labor-intensive industry, small and medium industries, capital goods industries, natural resource-based industries, high growth industries and specially prioritized industries.

"The government this year would also allocate Rp200 billion to help provide industrial machinery for small and medium businesses to replace the old machinery," he said.

2. SOUTH KOREA IS BIGGEST MARKET FOR RI-MADE CN 235 AIRCRAFT

Nusa Dua, Bali - Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Hatta Rajasa said South Korea was the biggest market for Indonesian-made CN 235 aircraft.

"South Korea has ordered the biggest number of CN 235 aircraft so far in addition to orders from other countries," he said in Bali after the opening of the Indonesia-Kore Working Level Task Force Meeting.

South Korea had been attracted by the

Indonesian made aircraft because in terms of reliability and cruising speed it could compete with planes made by other countries.

"Even now Korea plans to increase the quota of its aircraft purchase,".

He said compared to Casa-type aircraft the quality of CN 235 was better.

"This is what the Koreans have said. The CN 235 is far better than Casas. Therefore they are interested in purchasing more,".

Hatta said he himself had observed an increasing interest in the aircraft in the international market.

"In the opening speech just now I explicitly said that we wish to produce more CN 235s,".

Regarding the use of the aircraft at home, Hatta said he would optimize it.

"In the future, we will push for more use of the aircraft to serve inter-island routes in the country,".

Some countries that are using CN-235s include Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Thailand, Pakistan, South Korea and the United Arab Emirates.

3. NORTH SULAWESI TO BOOST EXPORTS TO SIX ASEAN COUNTRIES

Manado, N Sulawesi - North Sulawesi intends to optimize its efforts to boost its exports to six South East Asian countries, a local trade official said.

"The six Southeast Asian countries that often purchase our commodities are Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Myanmar," Hanny Wajong, head of the North Sulawesi trade office, said here Thursday.

An ASEAN economic ministers` meeting to be held in Manado next August was ex-

pected to create more export paths within the ASEAN region.

Vietnam and the Philippines were two of the most potential countries among the six ASEAN countries as buyers of North Sulawesi products as shown by figures on the province`s foreign exchange income from exports, Hanny said.

But other countries would also be the target of North Sulawesi`s efforts to increase its exports, he said.

North Sulawesi commodities that have been exported to other ASEAN member countries were coconut and all of its derivative products, fish and furniture.

Export of coconut derivatives such as copra and coconut oil, copra oil and others were expected to record significant increases.

Fishery products such as fresh tuna, frozen fish, and dried fish were also expected to bring in increasing foreign exchange earnings for the province.

North Sulawesi was earning an average of 50 million US dollars per year from its exports to Southeast Asian countries and there was optimism the figure would steadily rise in the years ahead.

But the contribution of Southeast Asian countries to North Sulawesi`s export earnings was still smaller than that of European countries such as Holland, Germany, Russia, Britain and others, according to Hanny.

4. RI EXPLORING POSSIBILITY OF EXPANDING EUROPEAN MARKET THROUGH SERBIA

Jakarta - Indonesia is exploring the possibility of expanding its export markets in European countries through Serbia, a country located on the crossroads between Central and Southeast Europe.

Serbia has great potential to become an entry gate to reach more markets in Europe because of its strategic location and primary land and water distribution lines, Deputy Trade Minister Mahendra Siregar said.

"During an official tour with domestic cocoa and palmoil businessmen, we held talks with the parties concerned there on the possibility of direct marketing and making the country the place for transfer of shipments for distribution in other regions in Europe,".

He said Serbia was a potential market for Indonesian palm oil and cocoa.

After the government had improved the image of Indonesian palmoil, Serbia could become a new access for expanding Indonesia's palmoil market to the European region.

"This makes us more confident to expand markets and make breakthroughs because we no longer depend on marketing access used so far,".

He said so far Rotterdam (in the Netherlands) and Hamburg (in Germany) have been the access to Europe through East Europe. "Now we have seen a lot of new direct access which could be reached such as through regions in the Balkan and East and Southeast Europe,".

Countries in the European region are Indonesia's potential trade partners as seen from the value of trade between Indonesia and 27 members of the European Union that tends to increase from year to year.

According to the data at the ministry of trade the total value of Indonesian trade with 27 European Union member countries in 2010 reached US\$26.99 billion rising by 21.3 percent from the year before.

Indonesia's exports in 2010 were recorded at US\$17.14 billion and imports at US\$9.86 billion.

Indonesia has always recorded a surplus in its trade with the European Union from

2006 to 2010.

In 2010, the surplus reached US\$7.26 billion, up 48 percent from the year before. Meanwhile in January 2011 the surplus reached US\$953.8 million.

Indonesia mainly exports palmoil and its derivative products, copper, rubber, coal, footwear, plastic, furniture and copra while it imports mainly electronic equipment, aircraft, motor vehicles, machinery and medicines.

5. BATAM DESIGNATED AS ASEAN BATIK TRADE CENTER

Batam - The Trade Ministry has designated Batam city in Riau Islands province as an ASEAN Batik Trade Center, a local trade official said.

"The Trade Ministry approved the designation of Batam city as an ASEAN Batik Trade Center yesterday," spokesperson of Batam's Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kadin), Nada Faza Soraya, said.

The selection of Batam as an Asean Batik Trade Center was agreed on during an ASEAN summit in Jakarta early this month.

According to her, it was the Kadin Indonesia Foundation and Indonesian Batik Foundation that had asked the Trade Ministry to name Batam as a batik trade center in the ASEAN region.

Due to its strategic location and sea border with several Asean countries, the city was desfined as the Asean batik trade center.

In late 2009, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) officially recognized batik as an Indonesian cultural heritage.

Batik was considered not only as part of Indonesian cultural heritage but also recog-

nized as a representation of humanity's culture for its rich value and cultural inheritance.

With the determination of Batam as batik trade center in Asean, she said Indonesian batik industry was expected to be more prospective.

Therefore, Nada added that Kadin along with several other batik foundations would conduct batik education and its familiarization.

According to her, batik-related education was necessary for Indonesian community to know more about Indonesian cultural riches which have been recognized internationally.

"The Indonesian community need to know various kinds batik motif after it has been internationally recognized," Nada said, adding that every detail of batik had the value of a decent life that has to be maintained.

According to her the color and motif of batik also reflects the regions in Indonesia because every region has its own typical motif.

"Batik is found all over Indonesia and every area in the country has its own motif of batik,".

6. RI'S MACHINERY IMPORTS REACH \$20 BLN LAST YEAR

Jakarta - Indonesia's import of machinery and mechanical appliances last year reached about US\$20 billion or 18.49 percent of its overall non-oil/non-gas imports, Industry and Trade Minister MS Hidayat said.

"The import of machinery and mechanical appliances has increased significantly all the time in line with the growth of manufacturing industries in the country," he said when addressing the opening of a machinery expo on MTT Expo here on Wednesday.

In his address read out by Director General of Manufacturing Industry Basis at the Industry Ministry Panggah Susanto, the minister said a number of machinery producing countries were also main machinery importers.

In 2010, the machinery production of the world's 28 main machinery producing countries rose 21 percent to US\$66.3 billion from a year earlier.

China, Germany and Japan were among the biggest consumers of mechanical appliances last year, with a value of US\$27.28 billion, US\$5.03 billion and US\$5.3 billion each.

However, Japan and Germany were also the biggest exporters of machinery last year by earning US\$7.83 billion and US\$6.62 billion respectively.

Germany was also the third biggest importer of mechanical appliances last year with a value of US\$1.9 billion after China with US\$9.1 billion, and the US with US\$2.1 billion.

"By holding the MTT Expo 2011 attended by almost 500 participants from 20 countries such as Britain, the US, Japan, Germany, France, Turkey and China, I hope this expo can bridge industrial development by way of technological transfer to improve the competitive edge of products,".

He predicted that Indonesia's demand for mechanical appliances and metalwork machinery would continue to increase in line with the growth of national industries and economic development under an economic corridor program and acceleration and expansion of Indonesian economic development (MP3EI) scheme.

7. BATAM DEVELOPS CONTEMPORARY BATIK TO SUPPORT ASEAN TRADE CENTER

By Otniel Tamindael

Jakarta - Batam city administration develops a contemporary batik center in its bid to support the designation of the city as ASEAN batik trade center.

On May 20 the Trade Ministry designated Batam city in Riau Islands province as ASEAN batik trade center after it has been agreed on during the ASEAN summit in Jakarta early in May 2011.

"To support Batam as ASEAN batik trade center, we are developing contemporary batik with bright colors as typical souvenirs," Batam's trade and industry, energy and mineral resources spokesman Ahmad Hijazi said in Batam over the weekend.

Contemporary batik with cotton material was very suitable for hot area like in Batam.

"In addition, foreign tourists are interested so much in the contemporary batik," Ahmad said.

Meanwhile, spokesperson of Batam's Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kadin), Nada Faza Soraya, said it was the Kadin Indonesia Foundation and Indonesian Batik Foundation that had asked the Trade Ministry to name Batam as a batik trade center in the ASEAN region.

Nada said due to its strategic location and sea border with several Asean countries, the city was designated as the Asean batik trade center.

In late 2009, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) officially recognized batik as an Indonesian cultural heritage.

Batik was considered not only as part of Indonesian cultural heritage but also recognized as a representation of humanity's cul-

ture for its rich value and cultural inheritance.

With the determination of Batam as batik trade center in ASEAN, she said Indonesian batik industry was expected to be more prospective.

Therefore, Nada added that Kadin along with several other batik foundations would conduct batik education and its familiarization.

According to her, batik-related education was necessary for Indonesian community to know more about Indonesian cultural riches which have been recognized internationally.

"The Indonesian community need to know various kinds batik motif after it has been internationally recognized," Nada said, adding that every detail of batik had the value of a decent life that has to be maintained.

According to her the color and motif of batik also reflects the regions in Indonesia because every region has its own typical motif.

"Batik is found all over Indonesia and every area in the country has its own motif of batik,".

Nada said the designation of Batam as ASEAN batik trade center was something extraordinary for the small but busy island

with hundreds of multinational-owned factories and shopping centers as the gateway to the Riau Islands.

Located only 20km from Singapore and 25km from Johor in Malaysia, Batam is Indonesia's equivalent to China's Special Economic Zones (SEZs) - a place where the nation's economic planners test new economic policies and ideas.

The island is an industrial hub with electronics factories, a large and growing ship repair industry and an even larger oil service sector.

"Our struggle to make Batam ASEAN ba-

tik trade center is finally realized and therefore all stake holders are expected to give more of their attention, especially to batik development from various areas across the country," Nada said.

She added that as ASEAN batik trade center, Batam would have a very strategic position for batik products and market that have to be worked out in an optimal way.

No wonder Batam city administration will include batik craft into the Medium-term Development Plan 2011-2016 to support Batam as ASEAN as well as national batik trade center.

"Batik is included into the Medium-term Development Plan 2011-2016 in our effort to support the designation of Batam as ASEAN and national batik trade center," Batam City Planning Board chief Wan Darussalam said in Batam recently.

He said the local government fully supported the designation of Batan as ASEAN batik trade center during ASEAN summit in Jakarta early this month.

According Wan Darussalam, the medium-term development plan has been arranged by the city government and would be submitted to the Regional Legislative Assembly (DPRD) before the end of the year.

Meanwhile, Batam Mayor Ahmad Dahlan said the local government in cooperation with other batik companies outside the city would develop garment industry on Batam island to support ASEAN batik trade center.

Although Batam was not a batik-producing city, Ahmad Dahlam expressed optimism that ASEAN batik trade center would be successful because the local craftsmen have created around 10 designs and motives of batik that have been registered at Industry Ministry for the copyright.

Therefore Jodoh wholesale market in the city of Batm is deemed necessary to be

turned into a place for batik transaction activity.

"Jodoh wholesale market is not really well-kept and I think it is better to turn it into a batik market to support the designation of Batam as ASEAN batik trade center," Batam city councilor Rekaveny said in Batam on Sunday.

He said that as the center of ASEAN batik trade, Batam needs a center of batik selling and buying.

According to him, batik trade center should be at an open market with strategic location like Jodoh wholesale market.

"It is better for the batik trade center not to be in a building but in an open market instead," Rekaveny said.

He said Jodoh wholesale market was considered best suited to be turned into a batik central market in Batam.

Meanwhile, Riau Islands deputy Governor Soerya Respationo said batik development in the district could be included into revised regional budget 2011.

"I support batik development but the regional budget for it should be made with regional legislative assembly (DPRD)," Soerya said.

Therefore he called on all the relevant parties including the DPRD to support the designation of Batam as an ASEAN batik center to preserve the ancestral culture.

8. RI'S 2012 ECONOMIC GROWTH PROJECTED HIGHEST IN ASEAN

Jakarta - Indonesia's economic growth in 2012 is predicted to be higher than those of other ASEAN countries, Finance Minister Agus Martowardojo said in Jakarta.

"The government will prepare an expansive fiscal policy in 2012 to support the eco-

conomic growth," Agus said when delivering the government's response to the outlooks of House of Representatives factions in the House plenary meeting.

According to the finance minister, the government would make every effort to reach the economic growth of around 6.5 percent to 6.9 percent in 2012, although there would be a big enough challenge.

The finance minister said the rate of Indonesian economic growth would higher than Malaysia 5.2 percent, Thailand 4.5 percent, the Philippines 5.0 percent, and Singapore 4.4 percent.

He mentioned that the sources of national economic growth in 2012 were estimated at a fairly higher level.

The public consumption and the government consumption were also estimated to grow respectively by 4.8 - 5.2 percent and 6.0 - 6.4 percent, while the investment would grow by 10.0 - 10.4 percent and need the funds of about Rp2,800 trillion.

Export and import were also predicted to increase respectively by 14.9 - 15.3 percent and 18.8 - 18.4 percent.

"Several steps to encourage the economic growth are among others to increase people's purchasing power by controlling the rate of inflation and encouraging the realization of budget absorption, to improve investment climate, and to speed up infrastructure development,".

The budget allocation policy would be made to support quality economic growth, to expand the creation of job opportunity, and to reduce the number poor people.

According to him, the policies were reflected in significant improvement of budget allocation for infrastructure development, poverty eradication program, and subsidies for farm aid.

"The policies will support the effort to ex-

pand employment, to increase people's income, and to reduce the number of poor people," the finance minister said.

9. FOREIGNERS TRYING TO CONTROL RI'S ECONOMY: ECONOMIST

Jakarta - Senior economist of the Advisory Group on Economic Industry and Trade (ECONIT) Hendri Saporini said foreigners were trying to take control of the Indonesian economy by influencing the direction of national economic policies.

"In order to make it easier for foreigners to take control over Indonesia's natural wealth, they bribe politicians and government officials so that they would produce regulations which would serve their interest," Hendri Saporini said here on Saturday.

Speaking to a discussion on "My Country Under the Shackles of Corruptors," Hendri said that in the enforcement of such laws which were pro-foreigners, the aim of the national economic policies were diverted.

She said that there were many laws which were pro-foreigners which would disadvantage the Indonesian people in the long run. She cited as an example Law No. 30 / 2007 on the mining sector.

The mining law among others stipulates that the mining sector could be under the control of foreigners up to 95 percent.

She said the clause in the law should be revised because it would harm the interest of the Indonesian people in the long run.

Hendri said that companies also often gave bribes to officials in order to obtain mining licenses.

"This is saddening because the licenses they got by way of bribing, were later sold to other businesses with a higher price," she said.

Therefore, she said, the government should evaluate the implementation of the mining licenses, whose number reached 6,000, to check their designations.

On the occasion, Hendri Saparini called on politicians to have, deepen and maintain their nationalism vision, namely by giving priorities to national interest in the long run.

"They should not give priorities to pragmatic interest for the short term," she said.

10. RI TIGHTENS WATCH OVER EUROPEAN VEGETABLE IMPORTS

Jakarta - Indonesia is tightening supervision of the import of vegetables from Europe to prevent the possible spread of disease caused by E-Coli bacteria which have been affecting parts of the European population since May.

"We will also coordinate with the Agriculture Quarantine Agency to closely monitor imports of vegetables from Europe. Imports of vegetables from Europe would be put under close supervision," the director general of standardization and consumer protection of the ministry of trade, Nus Nuzulia Ishak, said.

Trade minister Mari Elka Pangestu will also coordinate with the Drug and Food Supervision Agency (BPOM) of the ministry of health to counsel consumers.

"We will also study the developments that occur in Europe and in this case we will also coordinate with the ministry of agriculture because vegetables are under supervision of the quarantine agency,".

Apart from that, he said, the government would increase counseling regarding the need for the people as consumers of vegetables including those from Europe to practice a clean and healthy life style.

"We need to carry that campaign so that the case would not occur here,".

According to the trade ministry data, in 2010 imports of vegetables from Europe reached US\$4.3 million and from January to March 2011 they reached US\$1.8 million.

"Imports from Europe are mainly from Britain, the Netherlands, and France. Imports from Germany are the smallest,".

In the middle of May 2011 cases of illness caused by E.Coli bacteria were found in Germany and several countries in Europe and until June 2, 17 out of 1,733 cases had led to deaths.

Disease from E.Coli bacteria could usually be prevented with a clean and healthy life-style. The cases have also been found in Austria, France, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Norway.

11. RI'S FISHERIES TRADE WITH APEC MEMBERS REACHES 90 PCT

Jakarta - Indonesia's trade in fisheries with members of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) reaches 90 percent, a fisheries and marine resources ministry official said.

"Almost 90 percent of our trade in fisheries is done with APEC members," the director for foreign marketing of the ministry, Saut Hutagalung, said in a statement received on Tuesday.

In view of that, he said the role of APEC was very important with regard to increasing exports and capacity building in the domestic fisheries and marine resource sector.

According to the ministry data, US\$2.6 billion out of a total of US\$2.89 billion worth of total fisheries exports in 2010 came from trade with members of APEC.

Hutagalung expressed the hope the export value could increase up to 15 percent this year.

"We hope it will become the main driver for achieving the target of US\$3.2 billion in the value of fisheries exports in 2011,".

Besides being export destinations APEC member countries such as the US and Japan that have advanced technology are also considered able to help Indonesia in improving its fish processing technology.

The improvement was needed for the development of food security standards, fish breeding and growing.

As of Monday (June 6) 63 delegates from 15 APEC member countries have gathered in Bali for a fisheries working group annual meeting and a meeting of marine resource conservation working group.

The delegates have agreed by merging the meetings as they would have a better position to achieve the targets set in the Caracas Declaration made in Peru in 2010.

The merger plan and the new working group framework would only be submitted to the APEC Senior Officials Meeting in September 2011.

12. RI CONTINUES STRESSING NEED TO CONSERVE APEC'S MARINE RESOURCES

Denpasar, Bali - Indonesia is at APEC forums to continue stressing the need to conserve the region's marine resources to ensure its food security, an official said.

"Damage to the marine environment due to excessive exploitation may have negative impacts on the supply of food for the people, especially for Indonesians who get 60 per cent of their total protein consumption from marine products," Acmad Poernomo, Indonesia's representative in the APEC Marine Resources Conservation Working Group, said here on Tuesday at the group's annual meeting.

He made the statement in response to APEC's plan to merge the Marine Conservation Working Group and the Fisheries Cooperation Working Group soon.

Poernomo said marine resources were of substantial economic benefit to Asia Pacific countries. But at the same time, conservation was needed to ensure the sustainability of the resources.

He took as example Indonesia which since the 1980s had started to implement marine conservation by establishing a program called Marine Protected Areas (MPA). Up till 2010, there were 14 million hectares of MPA in the country scattered from ocean near Sumatra island to Papua.

"The government has set a target to have a total of 20 million hectares of MPA by 2020. Such achievement is expected not only to ensure the sustainability of local marine resources but also protect world's biodiversity,".

In forming MPAs, he added, the central government tried to involve officials from the regional government as well as the local community.

Meanwhile, APEC's Chairman for Marine Resources Conservation Working Group Ulises Munaylla expressed appreciation towards Indonesia's stance on marine conservation issue saying "It is important to keep the balance between marine industry and conservation in order to secure the sustainability of world's economy as well as marine resources,".

13. WEF REPORT: RI'S ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS IMPROVING

Jakarta - Since 2005, Indonesia has improved its score on each of the 12 pillars of competitiveness, according to Thierry Geiger, Senior Economist for the World Economic

Forum, in the latest Indonesia Competitiveness Report 2011.

"As a result of these positive dynamics, Indonesia's rank improved by 10 places, making it the most improved country among G20 countries over this period," he said in the report published in Jakarta.

The Indonesia Competitiveness Report 2011 is released, ahead of the 20th World Economic Forum on East Asia, which will take place in Jakarta for the first time, on June 12-13, 2011.

As one of the world's 20 largest economies, Indonesia boasts a large pool of potential consumers, as well as a rapidly growing middle class, of great interest to both local businesses and foreign investors.

However, much more must be done to improve Indonesia's competitiveness and therefore fully reap the benefits of international trade.

In addition, a more integrated ASEAN would offer opportunities for streamlined regional supply chains, while offering new channels of distribution.

He believed that as the 2011 Chair of the organization, Indonesia can play a catalytic role in the realisation of the ASEAN Economic Community by 2015.

Following the Asian financial crisis and the end of Suharto's regime in 1998, Indonesia has embarked on an impressive growth trajectory and is poised to become an economic heavyweight very soon.

The nation is already the world's 17th largest economy and the 6th largest among developing countries.

Indonesia's economy is also very dynamic, having grown at an annualized rate of 5 percent between 2001 and 2010.

The country has weathered the latest global economic crisis remarkably well and,

in 2010, it was the third fastest-growing G20 country, according to the report.

14. JAKARTA TO HOST MUSLIM WORLD BIZ EXPO 2012

Kuala Lumpur - Jakarta will host the Third Muslim World Biz, the largest business exhibition of Muslim countries, in 2012.

"Tomorrow, Kadin (Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry) and OIC (Organization of the Islamic Conference) will sign documents on the staging of the Third Muslim World Biz expo in Jakarta in 2012," Eddy Kuntadi, chairman of Kadin's Jakarta chapter said.

Eddy is in Kuala Lumpur to take part in the Second Muslim World Biz being held here.

"We are making preparations, and 40 days after this expo (the Second Muslim World Biz), we will decide the location (for the next expo), it could be at the Jakarta Convention Hall and President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono is expected to inaugurate it,"

Dato Dr Raja Mohamad Abdullah, chairman of the second Muslim World Biz organizing committee, confirmed that next year's expo will be held in Jakarta.

"Thursday morning (June 9), we will sign a memorandum of understanding with the Jakarta chapter of Kadin on the holding of the expo in Jakarta next year," Dato Raja said.

Eddy hoped that next year's expo in Jakarta will attract more participants given the fact that Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population. The country's population is currently around 237 million, the fourth largest after China, India and the USA.

"In addition to promotion and investment, the exhibition will also provide networking

opportunities to businessmen from OIC member countries", he said.

He hoped the Muslim World Biz 2012 would also encourage Indonesian businessmen to enter OIC member countries' markets.

The Second World Muslim Biz being held in Kuala Lumpur from June 8 to 11, 2011, is expected to draw greater interest from both local and international trade communities, especially those in OIC's 57 member countries.

Accommodating over 500 booths occupied by international and local exhibitors, the event is expected to attract more than 50,000 visitors.

15. VP CALLS FOR ENHANCED COOPERATION AMONG WIEF MEMBER STATES

Jakarta - Vice President Boediono called for enhanced economic cooperation among countries taking part in the 7th World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF) in Astana, Kazakhstan to address the increasingly formidable economic challenges.

"The world has just experienced very serious economic meltdown and has not yet recovered from it. Now is the right time for us to cooperate in dealing with the challenge and hindrance to the only access to recovery, namely economic growth," the vice president said in an emailed statement to ANTARA.

Through the forum, WIEF member countries could try to identify practical steps to ensure that the planned economic growth could be achieved in a fair manner in accordance with Islamic teachings.

Better connectivity among and within WIEF member countries was a key to achieving growth for the better mobility and efficient use of resources.

In the meantime, better connectivity was also an important step to narrow and reduce disparities among and within WIEF member countries,

The vice president further said the Muslim community had a sacred mission as a proactive player and maker of global consensus.

"We must accept it as part of our tasks to contribute to the settlement of urgent global issues which are now being faced by mankind such as food and energy security, climate change, natural disasters and transnational crimes,".

WIEF was established by Malaysia's World Islamic Economic Forum Foundation to encourage economic relations within the Muslim world, as well as connecting non-Muslim societies to Muslim ones via business.

16. BONDOWOSO CONDUCTS MAIDEN COFFEE SHIPMENT TO SWITZERLAND

Bondowoso, East Java - Bondowoso, a district in East Java province, conducted a maiden arabica coffee export totaling 6.2 tons to Switzerland.

A ceremony was held by the local administration to mark the export at the district's square, attended by Bank Indonesia deputy governor Budi Rochadi, Bodowoso district head Amin Said Husni and a representative of the Indonesia Coffee and Cocoa Research Center.

Amin Said Husni said "the quality of Bondowoso arabica coffee is not inferior compared to that of other regions."

he also saw a big export opportunity following increasing international coffee consumption.

The head of the local plantation and forestry service, Mat Sakur, meanwhile said the coffee exports were the result of farmer cluster plantation program that has been developed involving various agencies concerned including Bank Indonesia and Cocoa Research Center.

The plantations that are developed by farmers in the production forest area of the state-

owned forestry company PT Perhutani by reach 7,526 hectares.

He said the plantations in Sukorejo, Sumberwringin subdistrict, have been managed well so that the project involving five groups of farmers would be optimized for next exports.

17. INDONESIA HAS GREAT INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

By Otniel Tamindael

Jakarta - It is a great time for investors to take advantage of great investment opportunities in Indonesia following its enticing financial climate.

Located at the crossroad of the Asian and Australian continents and between the Indian and the Pacific Oceans, Indonesia has many advantages of investment opportunities.

Endowed with fertile soil and abundant natural resources, the country is offering investors wide opportunities in many sectors.

Therefore, director of Quvat Management in Singapore Thomas T. Lembong has called on the government, business players and investors to optimally utilize the wide investment opportunities in Indonesia.

On the sidelines of World Economic Forum on East Asia (WEF-EA), Lembong said China and India have a great interest in investment in Asia, including Indonesia, and this trend should be used as best as possible.

"Asia is on the rise. Indonesia at present is a `darling` investor. The investors are aware that Indonesia has a very big potential," Lembong said.

He said as coal, palm oil and consumer goods are now lucrative commodities in Indonesia they need to offer them to investors.

But Lembong cautioned Indonesia not

always has the attention of investors.

"Therefore we have to be realistic because the market and investors always have a trend. How much investment can be sustained, will depend on how we utilize it optimally," said the recipient of World Economic Forum Young Global Leader.

He said that in terms of investment supporting facilities and infrastructure, Indonesia was not inferior to those of other developing countries as China and India, but compared with the developed countries, Indonesia was still lagging far behind.

"As learned from international investors, China and India are not the countries without problems because in the developing countries there facing many obstacles and difficulties, but Indonesia actually has many good facilities,".

For that, Lembong said all parties including the government, business players, and investors need to be more patient because the important thing was not quantity but quality of investment.

"Ideally, all parties should be patient, and not be in a hurry so that the funds do not go to unnecessary projects," he said, adding that the key to investment success in Indonesia was cooperation of all parties namely of the government, business players, and investors.

According to Lembong, Indonesia has very big investment opportunities as a developing country.

Meanwhile, presidential special staff for foreign relations Teuku Faizasyah said on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum said on Sunday that Singapore wished to make investment in development projects in Sumatra, especially in Batam.

"It was said earlier that Singapore can make investments in Sumatra," Faizasyah said, explaining that Singapore's interest in

investment in Sumatra's projects was disclosed when President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono received a courtesy call of Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on the sidelines of the WEF-EA.

Faizasyah said Singapore wanted explanations about development schemes in Indonesia, especially after the Indonesian government launched the Master Plan of Acceleration and Expansion of Indonesian Economic Development (MP3EI).

"Singapore wants Indonesia to explain it in detail the areas where the country can make an investment," .

According to him, President Yudhoyono and Lee Hsien Loong agreed to optimize again the cooperation agreement on Singapore-Johor-Riau (Sijori).

The partnership concept would be harmonized with the MP3EI which has been launched by Indonesia.

In the WEF-EA, Indonesia also offered investment in the infrastructure sector through a public private partnership (PPP) scheme.

"The ability of the government's fiscal is in a small balance and therefore we offer the investment in infrastructure sector to both foreign and private parties," Finance Minister Agus Martowardojo said.

The forum among others discussed the failure in the monetary sector as a result of the impact of economic turmoil in Asia.

Present as the speakers at the meeting were Michael Buchanan, Chief Asia-Pacific Economist at Goldman Sach; Stuart T Gulliver, Group Chief Executive HSBC Holding UK; Omar Lodhi, Chief Executive Officer Abraaj Capital Asia Singapore; and Bank Indonesia Deputy Governor Muliaman D Hadad.

Agus Martowardojo on the occasion said the provision of infrastructure was a chal-

lenge that Indonesia has to face in the next five years.

The finance minister said around Rp1,400 trillion were needed in the next five years for infrastructure development in Indonesia.

But he added that the government was only able to provide around 20 to 30 percent of the funds and the rest should be obtained with the cooperation of private parties through a public private partnership schemes.

"In the past seven years such a scheme did not give a significant result but expected there will soon be a pilot infrastructure project,".

An infrastructure pilot project with the PPP scheme in East Java would soon be realized and it was expected to be followed by other projects.

Agus admitted that although a capital flight could occur any time, Indonesia would not implement a capital control policy.

"I am optimistic that there will be no capital control," the finance minister said, adding that fiscal and monetary conditions in the real sector were good and could support capital inflows.

Investment opportunities in Indonesia help both residents and investors because the country has over 200 million residents who are actively competing in joining the work force.

18. MINISTER HOPES RI TO RAISE ITS COMPETITIVENESS RATING

Jakarta - Trade Minister Mari Elka Pangestu hoped Indonesia would continue improve its competitiveness until it reached a position over the 40th level on the list of the World Economic Forum (WEF)'s Global

Competitiveness Index (GCI).

"We hope in the coming two or three years Indonesia's competitiveness rating would increase and be registered at over the 40th level," the minister said on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum - East Asia (WEF - EA) meeting here on Sunday.

She said that the government would do its best to overcome problems that had so far hampered and weakened its competitiveness such as insufficient infrastructure and inefficient bureaucracy.

"We will also do our best to overcome corruption and public health problems. For these, we will take short and long term steps,"

The 2010-2011 WEF's GCI report placed Indonesia's competitiveness rating on the 44th list of 239 developing countries.

Indonesia's position was still over those of a number of developing states such as Brazil, South Africa and India but it is under those of Singapore and Malaysia.

Several factors considered to be contributing to Indonesia's competitiveness included fast economic growth, sound fiscal management, and increasing basic educational access.

In the meantime, factors seen as having weakened the country's competitive edge consisted of insufficient infrastructures, roads, ports, railways and the lack of power and energy supplies.

In order to increase its competitiveness, Indonesia should also improve its health service, labor welfare, transparency and accountability of bureaucratic services.

19. ASIA HELPS BALANCE WORLD'S ECONOMY: PRESIDENT

Jakarta - President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in his speech at the opening ceremony of the World Economic Forum (WEF) on East

Asia here on Sunday said Asia can help balance world's economy.

"The world economy cannot afford to rely on strong growth in emerging economies alone. We need healthy growth globally, including in the developed world. One way or another, we all need to make structural adjustments to correct the global imbalances. Asia -- more than any other region -- can help achieve a strong, sustainable and balanced world economy,"

However, he reminded that needs to anticipate and address the growing pressures that will come from food, energy and water insecurity. He said of the 7 billion people that now inhabit the planet, 60 percent among them live in Asia. As their economies grow, they would seek and compete for finite natural resources.

"A pattern that in previous centuries led to wars, conquest, exploitation and untold suffering,"

The president also suggested Asia to do all it can do to become the center of global innovation. Technology, he said, would be the key to solve challenges in Asia such as poverty, marginalization, inequity and degradation.

"Asia should not just try to catch up, it can leapfrog into the future. And these days, innovation and technology can come from anywhere. There is a growing force of innovators and techies, from Bangalore to Bandung, from Singapore to Shenzhen that can produce homegrown innovation with global application, he said.

Apart from the need for Asia to develop technology, President Yudhoyono in his speech praised the existence of young people in the region that now are much more connected, more open, more creative, and more active. Through the internet, and social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter, the youths are developing a sense of trans-generational consciousness, a feeling of mutual empathy and shared hopes.

"It is therefore important for Asian countries to provide them with the skills and opportunities, so they can become the most dynamic and pro-

ductive part of society. If these youths grow to be entrepreneurs, innovators and pioneers in their fields, the rewards for Asia will be incalculable," he said.

20. GOVT EXPECTING WEF-EA PARTICIPANTS TO INVEST US\$10 BILLION IN RI

Jakarta - The Indonesian government is expecting foreign companies to invest at least 10 billion US dollars in Indonesia as a result of the World Economic Forum-East Asia , said Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM) chairman Gita Wirjawan.

"Major foreign companies from Korea, India and Japan are expected to invest up to 10 billion US dollars in Indonesia," said Gita at the World Economic Forum East Asia (WEFEA) being held in Jakarta June 12-13, 2011.

Gita said major companies such as Toyota, Daihatsu and Mitsubishi had committed to expand their operations and investment moe capital in Indonesia.

"South Korea`s Hankook Tires will also be investing in Indonesia,".

The new foreign investments and expansion of foreign company operations in Indonesia would also create new job opportunities for Indonesian workers.

"Education is a fundamental matter in the employment of Indonesian labor,".

According to the WEF Director for Asia, Sushant Palakurthi Rao at the same occasion, the number of participants in the World Economic Forum East Asia 2011 was higher than in last year`s event.

The previous WEF-EA which was held in Vietnam was only attended by some 450 participants, while the 2011 event was attended by more than 600 participants from various countries.

"Last year the participants numbered about 450 but this year there are more than 600 participants or 42 percent more than last year in Vietnam," said Sushant Palakurthi.

Palakurthi said the increasing number of the WEF-EA meeting participants shows the enthusiasm for the progress achieved by Indonesia in recent years.

Indonesia was chosen as the host of the meeting WEF-EA 2011 as an ideal location for the event as well as celebrations marking the 20th WEF East Asia due to its ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Chairmanship in 2011, the biggest economies in East Asia, and members of the G-20.

WEF meeting was attended by government leaders, businessmen, civil society, and academia.

The grand theme of this 2011 WEF-EA held here in Indonesia was "Responding to The New Globalism" in responding the tensions condition of the old and the new world in the globalization era.

21. WEF: ASIA NEEDS SENSE OF URGENCY TO MEET MDG ANTI-POVERTY GOALS

Jakarta - Asia has made the most progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) but a sense of urgency is now needed before it can achieve all the anti-poverty targets by the 2015 deadline, said panelists at the World Economic Forum on East Asia (WEF-AE).

"What I think is still lacking in varying degrees is a sense of urgency. We have four and a half years to go and we have a long way to go," Rajat M. Nag, Managing Director-General, Asian Development Bank, said in a plenary session on "Inclusive Asia: Reinvigorating the Millennium Development Goals" here Monday.

Nag said an estimated US\$ 8 billion a year is needed to help 14 of Asia's least-developed countries meet the MDG goals. He pointed out that, in recent years, non-traditional donors like China, South Korea and Brazil are stepping up, reflecting the re-balancing of the world economy. "China is the major financier of infrastructure in Africa right now,".

A press statement of the WEF quoted Indonesian Vice-President Boediono as saying that his country has met the targets of halving extreme poverty and improving gender equality, and is moving in the right direction on health but still working on areas like maternal health, HIV/AIDS and the environment.

He added that the government had announced plans to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 26% by 2020 while maintaining the economic growth rate at 7%.

Boediono called for greater public-private partnerships and an increase in trade and investments to help the country achieve the remaining goals.

Jeffrey D. Sachs, Director, The Earth Institute, Columbia University, USA, and Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on the Millennium Development Goals, blamed part of the problem on the crisis facing the traditional Official Development Assistance, with some OECD countries not living up to their commitments.

Sachs said the US has made a "profound mistake" in this regard, the WEF's press statement said.

"We invest 25 times more in military than we do in development assistance. We are not going to get the kind of outcomes that we need for a safer world. We invest more in bonuses on Wall Street even after the financial collapse than we do in development assistance,".

Among the eight MDG goals are the halving of the proportion of people living on less

than US\$ 1 a day; achieving decent employment and universal primary education; reducing child mortality rates and improving maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS; and protecting the environment.

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The 20th anniversary World Economic Forum on East Asia is taking place in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 12-13 June 2011. Under theme 'Responding to the New Globalism', the meeting is convening more than 600 top regional and global leaders from over 40 countries.

The programme is built on four sub-themes: Managing Global Disruptions, Ensuring Employment and Inclusive Growth, Leading through Sustainability and Exploring New Norms in Asia.

The programme focuses on how governments, businesses and civil society in Asia will have to forge new, collaborative efforts to capitalize on the region's dynamism while addressing interlinked challenges such as inflationary pressures, threats to food security and complexities associated with massive urbanization.

The Co-Chairs of the World Economic Forum on East Asia are: Karen Agustawan, President Director and Chief Executive Officer, Pertamina (Persero) of Indonesia; Dominic Barton, Worldwide Managing Director, McKinsey & Company of the United Kingdom; Stuart T. Gulliver, Group Chief Executive Officer, HSBC Holdings of the United Kingdom; Paul Polman, Chief Executive Officer, Unilever of the United Kingdom; Prashant Ruia, Group Chief Executive, Essar

Group of India; and Sehat Sutardja, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, Marvell Technology Group of the USA.

22. WEF EXPECTED TO INDIRECTLY BOOST RI'S HUMAN RESOURCES' COMPETITIVENESS

Jakarta - The Indonesian Economic Committee (KEN) expects the World Economic Forum (WEF) being held in Jakarta on June 12-13, 2011 to be a momentum to improve the competitiveness of the country's human resources.

"More and more foreigners are going to work in the country and therefore, we must be able to increase Indonesian workers' capability and productivity," KEN chairman Chairul Tanjung said on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum on East Asia (WEFEA).

Chairul made the statement when commenting on the fact that an increasing number of foreigners were entering Indonesia to work.

He said the WEF must be a momentum for all elements of the nation to increase their proficiency in every field so that Indonesia would have more competent and capable human resources.

"Many foreign workers are employed here in high management jobs such as CEOs but there is a tendency expatriates are also increasingly taking up lower level managerial positions,".

Chairul also said it was time to invest in education and trainings in an effort to increase the competitiveness of Indonesia's human resources.

The grand theme of the WEFEA 2011 held here in Indonesia was "Responding to The New Globalism" in responding to the tensions between the old and new worlds in the globalization era.

The Indonesian government was also expected to be different from the 20th century internationalism, where Asia was envisioned to be in the center of globalization with its rich natural resources, opportunities and trust to form an international system.

23. EU HOPES FOR INCREASED INVESTMENT IN INDONESIA

Jakarta - The European Union (UE) hoped a comprehensive economic cooperation with Indonesia under the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) could raise the investment opportunities for European companies in Indonesia.

"In the short run, we hope to raise investments here," head of an EU delegation/ambassador Julian Wilson said following an Indonesian-EU vision group recommendation in Jakarta Wednesday.

Under the cooperation, the EU wished for a conducive climate for its business players in Indonesia.

While the EU is still the second biggest investor in Indonesia after Singapore, direct EU investment to Indonesia was still small than that of the entire Asia.

"Investment in Indonesia accounted for only 1.4 pct of EU's direct investment in Asia," .

Julian said most of EU investors had been investing in the textile, footwear and pharmaceutical companies in Indonesia.

"If conditions are favorable, they may invest in the aircraft industry here. The increase EU's investment in Indonesia is mutually beneficial. Unlike China, cooperation is merely mutually complementary to meeting their own purposes. Indonesia, however, can also benefit from our investment such as in employment," he said.

He also said that the EU is also hoping for the benefit of increased trade under the CEPA and the increased trade would not harm Indonesia's trade because the commodities of the two sides are more complementary in nature.

"We are manufacturing high-tech machinery for factories here, while Indonesia is producing things like textile, footwear and raw material for export to Europe under a mutually beneficial cooperation," he said.

Talks about increased Indonesia-UE relations under the CEPA were started from a meeting between President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso by the end of 2009.

The two sides agreed to increase trade and investment, and assigned a joint vision group to study the potentials of the cooperation.

For six months the vision group discussed issues on the planned partnership and made some recommendations, including bilateral agreement between the two sides covering a rate of nil percent of 95 pct of the rates of at least 95 pct of the trade value in not more than nine years.

In the meantime, joint chairman of the Indonesia-EU vision group Djisman Simandjuntak said the recommendations include increased market access through dealing sanitation standard problems and other non-tariff obstacles as well as capacity development.

"Combining capacity facilities and development needs to consider how to reach harmonized standards and evaluation of Indonesia and the UE. The vision group recommended CEPA to identify priority sectors once in every three years for adjustment of standards, testing, evaluation and accreditation," he said.

The vision group also recommended CEPA to include concrete measures to pro-

mote "green" elements on a sustainable basis in trade and investment in Indonesia and the UE.

"Sustainability here is not only referring to the environment, but business relations as well," member of vision group Jakob Sorensen said.

Another vision group recommendation covers the management of the government, increasing capacity to support increased market access, and prenegotiation, socialization and consultation.

"Initial consultations with the important stakeholders are also very important, with socialization and consultations conducted prior to negotiations so that many sides already have their inputs," Djisman said.

He also suggested quick negotiations so that cooperation agreements could be carried out at least in the next two years.

DIVERSE

1. KALIMANTAN FOREST AREAS HOSTING SOME OF WORLD'S LUNGS

Martapura, South Kalimantan - Forest areas in Kalimantan island, including those in Banjar districts, are host to some of the lungs of the world, a local official said.

"The forest areas in Kalimantan island which include forest areas in Banjar district are host to some of the world's lungs so that their sustainability should always be maintained and preserved," Nasrun Syah, secretary of the Banjar district administration said.

In addition to holding some of the lungs of the world, forests in Kalimantan also play an important role in maintaining the balance of nature so that the island which is administratively divided into four provinces is spared from disaster.

Disasters such as floods are due to illegal logging or other activities that damage forests. However, all these natural disasters have been avoided because forest in Kalimantan were well preserved.

"Keeping and maintaining forests as well as the life within them is not only the government's duty but also of every component of society," Nasrun said.

He explained, the forest areas in Banjar district was so large that more than it covered half of the region's territory which was 471,097 hectares.

2. BILLIONS OF TREES TO BE PLANTED ACROSS INDONESIA

Jakarta - Realizing that tree-planting can make a valuable contribution to the fight against global warming, the Forestry Ministry and the Indonesian National Youth Commit-

tee (KNPI) will plant billions of trees across the country.

Tree-planting is believed to provide a host of wider environmental and socio-economic benefits and therefore KNPI launched a youth movement on Friday to plant one billion trees.

In observance of National Awakening Day on Friday, May 20, 2011, the Indonesian National Youth Committee launched the movement to plant one billion trees nationwide in 33 provinces.

KNPI chairman Aziz Syamsuddin said over the weekend that the movement was initiated by KNPI to save the environment, and it was expected to be emulated by other youth organizations across the country.

"It is time for all elements of the younger generation in Indonesia to support the national development program by planting trees to save the country's environment from total destruction,".

He realized that tree-planting on deforested lands creates further environmental benefits.

Therefore the KNPI chairman said a similar tree-planting activity by youths would also be conducted in West Java, Central Java, Jambi, Riau, Central Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, and other provinces across the country.

Besides KNPI, the Forestry Ministry also plans the planting of 1.5 billion trees this year to re-green critical land and forest areas.

It is because forests play a vital role in regulating water supplies, helping to minimize both water shortages in times of drought and damaging floods in heavy rains.

The trees also reduce soil erosion, thereby conserving soil quality upstream and water quality downstream.

Forests also provide habitats for a wide

array of plant and animal species, a number of which are threatened with extinction by deforestation.

Therefore Forestry Minister Zulkifli Hasan said in Palu, Central Sulawesi recently that his office planned the planting of 1.5 billion trees this year to re-green critical land and forest areas.

"In 2010 we succeeded in planting 1.39 billion of targeted 1 billion trees, and I am optimistic that we can plant more than that this year," Zulkifli said after attending the graduation ceremony of Palu Muhammadiyah University students in Palu.

He admitted that the area of critical land in Indonesia at present covered 40 million hectares while the forest area in Indonesia covered 187 million hectares.

According to the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the forests play a key role in the battle against climate change while in reality, 1.6 billion of people around the world depend on forests for their livelihoods.

Forests also feed the rivers and areas essential to supplying the water for nearly 50 percents of the world's largest cities, including Jakarta and New York, and help to regulate the often devastating impact of storms and floods.

They are the most biologically-diverse ecosystems on land, home to more than half of the terrestrial species of animals, plants and insects, and also provide shelter, jobs and security for forest-dependent people.

But according to UNEP, global deforestation continues at an alarming rate, for around 13 million hectares of forest are destroyed every year.

In an effort to preserve the forest in Indonesia, the forestry minister said that billions of trees would be planted in forest area, people's forest, garden rehabilitation area, and

mining reclamation area anywhere to prevent natural disaster and to anticipate climate change and global warming.

The former legislator from National Mandate Party faction also expressed hope for the involvement of all parties to keep and protect the trees that had and would be planted.

"It is easy to plant a tree but to keep and protect it is difficult," he said, adding that the movement to plant one billion trees was an annual program.

In addition, the Forestry Ministry this year also plan to rehabilitate 500,000 hectares forest and watersheds areas, and to develop 500,000 hectares of industrial plantation forest and people's plantation forest.

Meanwhile, PT Deltomed Laboratories in collaboration with the Yogyakarta Atma Jaya University's Faculty of Biotechnology has planted 5,000 tree seedlings at Srunen hamlet in Glagaharjo village, Cangkringan sub-district in Sleman district.

PT Deltomed Laboratories managing director Mulyo Raharjo said in Yogyakarta recently that Srunen hamlet was chosen as a location for the tree-planting because that region suffered severe damage due to the eruption of Mount Merapi in 2010.

According to Mulyo, Deltomed as a national herbal medicine manufacturer realized the importance of maintaining the continuity of natural resources and the environment.

He added that to celebrate its 35th anniversary, Deltomed had decided to plant 5,000 tree seedlings on the slopes of Mount Merapi.

"The tree-planting activity is to help accelerate the natural regeneration and re-greening of the damaged environment. The program is expected to help the recovery of environmental conditions and the local economy,".

Deltomed together with the Faculty of Biotechnology at the University of Atma Jaya Yogyakarta provided 5,000 tree seedlings consisting of 1,000 stems of trembesi (*Albizia saman*) tree seedlings and 4,000 of sengon (*Albazia falcataria*) seedlings.

The provision of 5,000 trembesi tree seedling was inseparable from President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's trembesi tree planting movement which was launched in January 2010.

President Yudhoyono in January last year at the State Palace launched the trembesi-tree planting movement in an effort to help reduce global warming.

Also known as rain tree, trembesi has an extraordinary capability to absorb carbon dioxide (CO₂), the gas contributing to global warming.

Trembesi trees are native to Latin America but can also grow well in tropical countries such as Indonesia.

The tree also has great capability to absorb ground water, while according to research conducted by the Forestry Faculty of the Bogor Institute of Agriculture (IPB), a trembesi tree trunk can absorb as much as 28 tons of CO₂ in a year.

The trembesi-tree-planting movement was launched at the time as part of the president's "one man, one tree" policy to save the environment.

3.RI AND RUSSIAN STUDENTS HOLD ISLAMIC AND CULTURAL DIALOG

London - Indonesian Muslim students held an Indonesian-Russian Student Friendship and Dialogue on Islam and Culture at the Islamic University in Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan, Russian Federation.

Second Secretary for information, social and cultural affairs at the Indonesian embassy in Moscow Enjay Diana told Antara's London correspondent on Tuesday that seven Indonesians visited Russia to follow the first dialog in the history of Indonesia and Russia.

The seven students from the State Islamic University of Syarif Hidayatullah and the Al-Azhar University in Jakarta, were in the company of Sudarnoto Abdul Hakim, Assistant Rector for institutional development and chairman of Dirasat Islamiah study program of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah in Jakarta Willy Oktaviano Syahrudin.

In the program the students had a dialog on Islam, its history and developments in the two countries, and the role of education and Islamic young generation.

Some of the themes in the discussions like Islam and Pop Culture: Indonesian and Russian Students Experiences, How can Young Muslim students Build a Better World, Challenges of Globalization: the Role of Students.

A cultural show was also held in which the Indonesian students introduced the angklung they specially brought to Kazan.

Sudarnoto Abdul Hakim said the short program was very beneficial to increasing the relations between the two countries.

He added that the program was one of the realization of the cooperation agreements between the state Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah of Jakarta and the Islamic University in Kazan signed in December 2009 in Jakarta.

During the program Sudarnoto Abdul Hakim had delivered several general lectures to Russian Islamic university students on Islam and its history and Islamic education in Indonesia.

Islam in Russia had been developing in the last 20 years following the fall of the So-

viet Union. Islam entered Russia in the middle of the 7th century several years following the death of Prophet Muhammad.

"Not many Indonesians knew about Islamic in Russia. Therefore religious cooperation between the two countries could be promoted and developed for mutual understanding", Sudarnoto Abdul Halim said.

In the meantime, Indonesian ambassador to the Russian Federation Hamid Awaludin said that closer relations between the two countries could be developed by way of education and religion.

The Indonesian embassy in Moscow is cooperating with several relevant institutions both in Indonesia and Russia in holding programs in the sector, including cooperation between Islamic institutions of higher learning.

Hamid also fully supported the activities of the new student graduates. It is this that he called diplomacy rarely resorted to by many circles.

4. KALIMANTAN CENTER OF WORLD'S FLORA

Jakarta - Kalimantan Island (Borneo) is one of the world's flora center because the diversity of trees in a small plot of land in the island's forest equals to those in the whole Papua or South America, according to the forestry ministry's a press statement.

The Island has the richest flora on the Sunda Islands because it has 10,000 to 15,000 special of floral plants.

The flora diversity on the Borneo island is as rich as those in the whole Africa, which is 40 times bigger than Borneo.

The diversity of Borneo Island's flora covers the Asian and Australian elements with more than 3,000 trees, including 267 species of Dipterocarpaceae (58 percent of them are

endemic Dipterocarpaceae species) and belongs to the most important commercial wood in Asia.

It has also over 2,000 orchid species, 1,000 fern species and various species of "kantong semar" (*Nepenthes* sp.).

The endemic plant rate is also very high, namely 34 percent of plant species and 59 plant families are only found on the island.

Kalimantan has the high biodiversity and flora rates thanks to its geographical condition. The majority of the island's geography is in coastal and river areas and the height of almost half of its land is below 150 meters of the sea level.

These conditions have made Kalimantan an ideal place for various floral plants to grow.

Its tropical climate. constant temperature and high rainfall rate with even distribution make the Borneo forests always green all the years.

Kalimantan is the world's third largest island after Greenland and Irian island. The island is located in three countries, namely Indonesia, Malaysia (Serawak, Sabah), and Brunai Darusalam.

The island is part of the Sunda Island chain consisting of two parts, namely Big Sunda Islands: Kalimantan, Java, and Sumatra; and Little Sunda Islands: Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa, Flores, Sumba, Timor, Barat Daya Islands, and Tanimbar Islands.

5. GERMANY ASSISTS RI IN FOREST, CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAM

Jakarta - Germany has committed to assisting the Indonesian government in the Forest and Climate Change program (ForClime).

The ForClime program will be carried

through two cooperation moduls, namely Technical Cooperation (TC) via GIZ with funds worth 6.75 million Euro and Financial Cooperation (FC) through KfW worth 20 million Euro, the forestry ministry said here Thursday in a press statement.

The program has a target to decrease the CO2 emission rate from deforestation and forest degradation by 300 to 400 thousand tons during a seven-year period.

The assistance was provided as the result of the bilateral negotiation held in October 2007.

The ForClime program launching was marked by "ForClime FC-Module National Kick-off Workshop".

The program`s demonstration activities on REDD+ (Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) is implemented in three districts on Kalimantan Island, namely Kapuas Hulu, Malinau and Berau.

The objective of the program is to cut the greenhouse gas emission from the forestry sector and to improve the living condition of the rural people.

The gas emission rate will be reduced by addressing the main drivers of deforestation and forest degradation occurring the conserved forests, protected forests and production forests.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono recently signed a Presidential Instruction on deforestation moratorium to help curb the climate change impacts and preserve the remaining tropical forests and biodiversity in it.

The presidential decree on a moratorium on logging concessions for two years was only applicable to primary forests and peat lands in conserved forests, protected forests, production forests and the Other Use Land (APL).

Indonesia hosts the world`s third largest

forest area after Brazil and Congo (formerly Zaire). Based on forestry ministry 2010 data, Indonesia has around 130 million hectares of forests, including 64.2 million hectares of primary forests, and 24.5 million hectares of peat lands.

6. INDONESIA RECEIVES MORE CRUISE SHIP CALLS

Jakarta - The number of international cruise ship calls at Indonesia`s harbors has increased significantly over the past three years, an official said.

"Indonesia has become a favourite of world cruise operators, as indicated by the number of cruise ship calls which has gone up over the past three years," the tourism and culture ministry`s marketing director general, Sapta Nirwandar, said.

According the ministry`s statistical data, Indonesia received 140 calls with 135,608 passengers in 2009; and 213 calls with 127,674 passengers in 2010.

In 2011, the country received 189 calls, a decrease, but the number of the passengers was significantly up to 135,608 passengers.

"World cruise operators have shifted to the latest generation cruise ships, namely mega cruise such as `Oasis of the Seas` which can carry 6,360 passengers and 2.165 crew members on board," Sapta said.

Another mega cruise, "Rhapsody of The Seas" belonging to Royal Caribbean International and having a capacity to accommodate 2,435 passengers and 765 crew members, once called at the Lombok harbor recently.

He believed that Indonesia has a better chance to become a world cruise destination with the usage of mega cruise ships.

"However, it is also a challenge for us to prepare adequate facilities and infrastructure,".

For that purpose, the ministry will organize a seminar on "Cruise Development of Indonesia: How to Meet The Challenge of The Increasing Tonnage and Capacity of The Cruise Ships" at Saptia Pesona building, here on May 30, 2011.

Speakers of the seminar will include foreign and domestic cruise management consultants, operators and practitioners as well as seaport administrators in Indonesia.

The Culture and Tourism Ministry has set itself the target of 7.7 million foreign tourist arrivals this year.

The number of domestic tourists this year was also expected to increase to 237 million from 234 million in 2010.

7. SABANG TO HOST SAIL TOURISM EVENT IN SEPTEMBER

Banda Aceh, Aceh Province - Sabang Municipality, Aceh Province, will host an international sail tourism event in September 2011.

"We have made several preparations to welcome the guests and make the event a success," Islamuddin, the deputy mayor of Sabang, said.

The sail race will be participated by around 50 ships coming among other things from Phuket (Thailand), Langkawi (Malaysia) and Sabang, Aceh Province, Indonesia.

Each ship will have around 15 crew members and the race will start from Sabang Bay, Islamuddin said.

"In addition to the sail race, we will also organize a number of interesting touristic activities among other things to enjoy the beauty of Aceh's nature and culture,".

The event's participants will also visit Banda Aceh, after staying for three days in Sabang.

"In Banda Aceh, the participants will visit interesting places packed in a 'tsunami' tourism,".

Gapang and Iboih located in Sabang, around

14 miles off Banda Aceh, have enchanting underwater scenery, according to Islamuddin.

The Sabang administration has set a target of attracting at least 10,000 tourists annually.

Tourism and the fishery sector is potential to increase the revenue of Sabang.

8. SAUDI GOVT READY TO SIGN MoU ON RI MIGRANT WORKERS

Jedda - Saudi Arabia has agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding with Indonesia on the placement of Indonesian workers in the Middle Eastern country, a Saudi minister said.

"Thank God, we will sign a letter of intent toward the signing of an MoU with Indonesia," Saudi Arabian Manpower Minister Adel Mohammad Fakeih said after attending an Indonesia-Saudi Arabian Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) in Jedda.

The SOM between the two countries discussed matters relating to the placement of Indonesian workers in Saudi Arabia.

With the agreement, the target of the Indonesian delegation to the SOM that Indonesia and Saudi Arabia should agree an MoU on Indonesian workers was achieved.

The Indonesian delegation to the SOM was led by Moh Jumhur Hidayat, head of the National Agency for Placement and Protection of Indonesian Workers Overseas (BNP2TKI).

The SOM was held at Jedda's Royal Guest House, where Jumhur and other Indonesian delegates are staying.

Fakeih said the two countries needed to sign the MoU as a legal umbrella for the placement and protection of Indonesian workers in Saudi Arabia.

He said that the letter of intent contained a number of matters relating to the arrangement, placement and protection of Indonesian workers so that they would be able to work comfortably and securely with protection.

The Saudi minister expressed gratitude to the Indonesian delegation for its cooperation so that the SOM proceeded smoothly and produced a decision which was very important for both nations.

In the meantime, Jumhur said that the readiness of Saudi Arabia to sign an MoU in the near future constituted a victory of both nations.

"This is the victory of the Saudi Arabian Kingdom and the Indonesian government in making improvement in the placement and protection of Indonesian workers," Jumhur said.

He praised the Saudi government, including Manpower Minister Adel Mohammad Fakeih and his delegation which had high commitment to the Indonesian workers affairs.

Jumhur said that the Indonesian migrant workers in Saudi Arabia which numbered 1.5 million had brought many advantages to Indonesia and Saudi Arabia.

9. RI, BOSNIA TO EXCHANGE VISA-FREE FACILITIES

Nusa Dua, Bali - Indonesia and Bosnia-Herzegovina have agreed to provide visa-free facilities to each other's diplomatic and official passport holders.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa and his Bosnia-Herzegovina counterpart, Svan Alkalaj, signed a memorandum of understanding to that effect at the end of a bilateral meeting held on the sidelines of the 16th Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting here on Friday.

The agreement was expected to increase interaction between the two peoples.

Indonesia recognized Bosnia-

Herzegovina's independence on May 20, 1992. Since the two countries opened diplomatic ties several years ago, a number of Bosnia-Herzegovina high officials have visited Indonesia.

Both countries have so far established good ties at international forums as they supported each other in their bids for membership of international organizations.

In the economic field, two-way trade between Indonesia and Bosnia-Herzegovina is relatively small and fluctuating all the time.

Indonesia's exports to Bosnia-Herzegovina include glassware, wood, wood products, cocoa, tea, machinery and spare parts and pharmaceutical products.

Meanwhile, Indonesia has so far imported machinery, mechanical appliances and spare parts and optical instruments.

The two countries signed a trade agreement in 2002, an MoU on bilateral consultation in 2004 and an MoU between the two chambers of commerce and industry in 2004.

At the bilateral meeting, the two ministers also discussed a wide range of regional and international issues of mutual concern.

10. GOVERNMENT PREPARES US\$5 MILLION TO PRESERVE CORAL REEFS

Wangi-wangi, SE Sulawesi - The Indonesian government prepares US\$5 million funds for sustainable preservation and management of coral reefs at the world coral triangle in Wakatobi, Southeast Sulawesi.

"The Indonesian government through President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono provides five million dollars for sustainable preservation and management of coral reefs in six countries of the Coral Triangle Initiative

(CTI)," CTI spokesman Imran said in Wakatobi on Sunday.

Speaking at a meeting of the Association of District Administrations (APKASI) Imran said there were two reasons Indonesia wanted to play a major role in preserving coral reefs in the six CTI member countries.

He said the first was that Indonesia has wider coral reefs than those of the other five other countries and was prepared to turn 20 million hectares of mining areas into national marine parks.

And the second, Indonesian waters have the most diversity of coral reefs namely 70 species of the world's 850 species.

"The Caribbean sea has only 50 coral reefs and the Red Sea only 300," Imran said.

He added that besides having a very rich variety of coral reefs, Indonesian waters, especially in Wakatobi district, have various natural resource potentials for millions even billions of people.

Therefore, coral reefs in Wakatobi must be protected from damage to make them to remain sustainable for a certain period of time.

"The management and utilization of natural resources in Wakatobi waters at the center of world coral triangle should consider the principles of sustainable use," Imran said.

He said that to support the management and utilization of natural resources in Wakatobi waters, the government of Indonesia through the Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Ministry would soon establish a Coral Reefs Conservation School in Wakatobi.

The first school in ASEAN and even in the world, was scheduled to be inaugurated by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in conjunction with the opening of Sail Wakatobi -Balitung 2011 later.

"The establishment of Coral Reefs Con-

servation School in Wakatobi is part of the government attention to protecting and preserving the coral reefs from damage," Imran said.

11. RI SOCIAL MINISTRY ESTABLISHES COOPERATION WITH CHARITY COMMISSION OF ENGLAND, WALES

London - The Indonesian social affairs ministry established cooperation with the Charity Commission of England and Wales with the signing of a Letter of Intent (LoI) in capacity building assistance to promoting the registration and reports of social welfare organizations in Indonesia.

The signing was carried out by Director General of Social Empowerment and Poverty Mitigation of the Social Affairs Ministry Drs. Rusli Wahid, and Executive Director, Legal Service Division, of the Charity Commission of England and Wales, Kenneth Dibble, at their office in London, First Secretary for Information, Social and Cultural Affairs of the Indonesian embassy in London Novan Ivanhoe Saleh told Antara's London correspondent on Saturday.

The two-year assistance program will be focused on online registration and reports applied to 33 provinces in Indonesia.

The purpose of the online data base to make it easier for everybody concerned in registration and reporting. All the social welfare organizations in Indonesia need to make financial registration and reporting under the Law on social organizations in 2009.

Program funded by the Canadian government and British experts, will train 750 social service officials in the provinces and regencies.

Before the signing, an Indonesian social ministry delegation held intensive meetings

with the Charity Commission to discuss policy and technical matters and make a direct inspection of the registration center of the charity institute and branches of the Charity Commission and an inspection of Liverpool.

12. RI STUDENTS AND PROFESSIONALS IN US DISCUSS 21TH CENTURY VISION

New York, May 29 (ANTARA) - Nearly 100 Indonesian students and professionals in the United States are by the end of this week getting together in a forum in Washington DC for sharing ideas and views on challenges Indonesia has been facing in the 21st century.

The forum themed "Generation 21: Indonesian Ideas Forum USA 2011" was held by the Indonesian embassy in Washington with the support of all Indonesian representative offices in the US, namely in New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Los Angeles and Houston.

The forum also has the support of the Investment Coordinating Agency (BKPM) and Modernisator -- an Indonesian non-profit organization developing a development vision - - assembling 97 young Indonesian students and professionals of various universities in the United States.

They were involved in three days of discussions under the guidance of Indonesian prominent figures including the Indonesian ambassador to the US Dino Patti Djalal; former finance minister, now World Bank executive director Sri Mulyani Indrawati; and businessman Peter Gontha -- who in the forum shared their experience in global branding Indonesia by way of the international music festival Java Jazz.

The Indonesian embassy in Washington said that the topics discussed in the forum

Generation 21 included Vision of the 21st Century for Indonesia; how the Indonesian generation is currently making the good into the best; how the Indonesian generation is planning a change for the better future of Indonesia; and how to place innovation, brilliance and entrepreneurship in the main stream in Indonesia.

The discussions were held interactively, with the participants having the chance to openly say what is in their minds.

Dino Patti Djalal said in the forum that the challenges facing the generation of the 21st century are quite heavy and different from what their predecessors were facing.

But he believed that Indonesia's current potentials could answer all the challenges.

The potentials of the Indonesian people in the 21st century, Dina said, included the very productive workforce; rapidly growing economy, and a better education for the people.

13. MAKASSAR BECOMES NATIONAL AVIATION MAIN POINT

Makassar, S Sulawesi - State-owned airline company Garuda Indonesia has officially named Sultan Hasanuddin International Airport a national aviation main distribution point by opening 15 routes to East Indonesia and one international flight to Singapore from Makassar as of June 1, 2011.

President Director of PT Garuda Indonesia Emirsyah Sattar said here Tuesday that Makassar had been chosen as a national flight main point after Jakarta and Bali, as a commitment of the state-owned company in supporting the development of East Indonesia according to six corridor based concept set by the government.

The 15 new domestic routes are to Manado, Ternate, Ambon, Biak, Kendari, Balikpapan, Jayapura, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Denpasar, Jakarta, Palu, Gorontalo, Timika and an international route to Singapore.

The new routes will in the future be developed following the increase in the number of aircraft for long- and short-distance flights.

Under the program called Quantum Leap, the Garuda chief planned to increase the number of planes to 153 until 2015 including Boeing 737-800s next generation and Airbus 330-200s, and raising international flight status from four star achieved in 2010 to five star in 2014.

He will also increase the number of 100 seater planes for flights between pioneering cities.

The launching of Makassar airport as a national main flight point was also marked with the signing of an MoU between the Garuda maintenance subsidiary and PT Angkasa Pura I as operator of Hasanuddin international airport for building an aircraft maintenance center in Makassar's old airport.

South Sulawesi Governor Syahrul Yasin Limpo said the choice of Makassar as an air transportation and distribution point is a repetition of history. "Makassar airport has a strategic position in linking east and west in Indonesia. This moment is a historical repetition that this area was an international trading center in the 16th century," he said in assuring that what Garuda is doing is fulfilling the hopes and needs of the community.

He described that in 2008 there were a total of 48 flights in Makassar, which in 2009 increased to 120 and now the total reached 200 flights of Lion Air and 40 were Garuda flights.

On the occasion, he repeated his proposition to Garuda for Makassar-Jidda direct flights. He said quoting data of the Religious

Ministry, 70 percent of Indonesians conducting an umrah (minor haj) and haj came from South Sulawesi. The opening of the route, he said, will make it easier to meet their religious obligations.

The launching of Sultan Hasanuddin international airport as a main point in national aviation by Garuda was conducted at the official residence of the South Sulawesi Governor and attended by Minister of State Enterprises Mustafa Abu Bakar, Air Transportation Director General Heri Bakti, and West Sulawesi Governor Anwar Adnan Saleh.

14. US AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE MEETS INDONESIAN WOMAN LEADERS

Jakarta - US Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Initiatives Melanne Verveer accompanied by US Ambassador to Indonesia Scot Marciel held a dialog with leaders of Indonesian women's civil society here last weekend.

Part of Ambassador Verveer's mission to Indonesia was to further women's empowerment as part of the "Strategic Dialogue on Civil Society," launched by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in February, the US embassy said in a press statement.

"Ambassador Verveer's visit was a testament to how important women's issues in Indonesia are for President Obama," the embassy said.

Over lunch, Ambassador Verveer met 10 dynamic leaders representing both civil society organizations, including Aisyiyah, that are active in promoting health and access to the justice sector, countering human trafficking and other forms of violence against women, and improving child protection.

All the guests agreed on the need to increase women's participation in every aspect of development.

The dialogue ended as Ambassador Verveer expressed her happiness to be able to meet with Indonesian women's leaders who are experts in economic, political, and social issues.

She agreed that U.S. and Indonesian women need to work together to continue the struggle for women's empowerment.

Ambassador Marciel said the Embassy would continue the dialogue with women's leaders to identify concrete areas for cooperation.

15. INDONESIA MOST PROGRESSIVE IN STRENGTHENING HUMAN RIGHTS

London - Indonesia is the most progressive country in strengthening human rights mechanism at national level and among ASEAN countries.

United Nations Human Rights High Commissioner chief for Asia Pacific Division, Rory Mungoven, said in a seminar on Human Rights Mechanism in Asia, organized by the University of Essex in cooperation with Indonesian Embassy in London on Friday.

Mungoven admitted that various efforts have been made by Indonesia at national level through the establishment of National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM), and at regional level through Bali Democracy Forum and the strengthening of human rights in ASEAN.

The two-day seminar, conducted by University of Essex Human Rights Center at Indonesian Embassy building in London, was part of the 3rd Human Rights in Asia Conference, embassy spokesman Novan Ivanhoe Saleh said.

Present at the seminar were three speakers namely Rafendi Djamin, Indonesian representative in ASEAN Inter-governmental Commission for Human Rights; Dr. Suzannah Linton, international law professor at

Bangor Law School; and Mervat Rishmawi, a Palestinian human rights activist who graduated from the University of Essex.

Meanwhile, Indonesian Ambassador to Britain, Yuri Octavian Thamrin, said the country had a high commitment to promote and protect democracy and human rights.

Therefore Vice President Boediono said in Jakarta recently that Indonesia was not human rights violator because it embraced democracy and practiced transparency.

"Human rights violation can be committed by a state but thanks God Indonesia is not such a country," the vice president said when opening the 3rd Coordination Meeting of National Action Plans for Human Rights for 2011-2014 at his office on May 25.

According to the vice president, the governments would punish people only for obvious reasons.

That's why the vice president said that Indonesia had been chosen by the International community as one of the members of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Indonesia has been elected member of the United Nations Human Rights Council for the 2011-2014 period.

16. SAIL WAKATOBI BELITONG OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED

Jakarta - Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare Agung Laksono flanked by Marine Affairs and Fisheries Minister Fadel Muhammad officially launched the Sail Wakatobi Belitong (SWB) or Sail Indonesia 2011 in Jakarta on 7 June 2011.

The launching was expected to help promote the international mariners' event to the public worldwide, Minister Fadel said according to a press release of the marine affairs and fisheries ministry .

The SWB 2011 is being held in Wakatobi, Southeast Sulawesi Province, and Belitung in Bangka Belitung (Babel) Province.

Minister Fadel has outlined four objectives of the marine event, namely: to make harmonization in benefiting the regions' potential for the welfare of the people; to promote Wakatobi and Belitung as domestic and international tourist destinations; to create the best sailing passage; and to make the marine and fishery potential in the two regions as a living source for the local people and the source of sustainable development in the regions.

The SWB 2011's theme is "Clean Ocean for the Future" and it will have six main activities.

The six main activities are yacht rally and yacht race, a Bhakti Surya Baskara Jaya civic mission, national and international seminars, marine youth cross country, and an exhibition on small scale and medium businesses as well as fishery products.

The peak events, which President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono is expected to be present, will respectively take place at Sombu beach, Wakatobi, on August 23-29, 2011, and at Tanjung Kelayang Beach, Belitung on October 5-12, 2011.

The flagging off event to mark the start of the yacht rally and yacht race will be held in Darwin, Australia, on July 23, 2011. It will include a tour of 21 districts in Indonesia from Kupang (East Nusa Tenggara Province) or Saumlaki (Maluku), to Belitung (Bangka Belitung, Sumatra) or Batam (Riau Islands, Sumatra).

Other activities highlighting the SWB 2011 will include the inauguration of a marine institute at Wakatobi, underwater mass weddings, underwater chess game, diving contests, a national sailing competition, a traditional sport festival, beach and sea clean up, and a traditional culture and art festival.

The SWB 2011 is continuation of Sail Indonesia 2009 in Bunaken, and Bitung in North Sulawesi Province, and Sail Indonesia 2010 in Banda, Maluku.

At least 200 domestic and foreign participants will join the marine event, and 94 of them from 16 countries have so far registered themselves.

17. INDONESIA TO HOST ASIA-PACIFIC CHILDREN CONFERENCE

Jakarta - Indonesia is to host the Second International Conference on Child Friendly Asia Pacific 2011 in Solo, Central Java, on June 30 to July 2, 2011.

"This is a pride for Indonesia, particularly for the Woman Empowerment and Child Protection Ministry as host," Minister of Woman Empowerment and Child Protection Gumelar Linda Amalia Sari said.

In the event Indonesia was appointed as the venue of the 2011 Asia-Pacific Children Eligible Conference.

"It is also considered as an appreciation for the Indonesian government's commitment to the fulfillment and protection of the children's rights through holistic efforts to create a decent environment for children,".

Linda also said that the government has developed a District Fit for Children (KLA) policy since 2006 to fulfill Indonesian children's rights to live, grow and develop and protected to the maximum for they can become superior human resources in the future.

KLA is a realization of Indonesia's commitment to the implementation of international Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the World Fit for Children (WFC) also the legislation related child.

The Minister also said that the event which will be participated in by approximately

500 participants with theme "Engaging Children"

The Conference will also invite experts in children as keynote speakers from 14 countries, namely Malaysia, Brazil, Sudan, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, Bolivia, Australia, Japan, India, Hong Kong, Pakistan, Malawi and the United States,".

18. ITB STUDENTS RESEARCH WORK TO BE PUBLISHED IN INT'L JOURNALS

Bandung, W. Java - The Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) intends to publish the results of 500 research projects conducted by its doctoral students in international journals in 2011, an ITB graduates association official said.

"This year we want to publish the results of 500 research projects in international research journals," Freddy P Zen, secretary general of the ITB Alumni Association said.

Freddy said last year the results of 250 ITB students' research projects were published in international journals.

Based on Scopus index in June 2011 the number of students who filed an international journal of research reached 37.

According to Prof. Freddy, the research aimed to embody the innovations of the ITB students in every field and know the ITB ranking in the international journals.

"To know the ranking of ITB, it can be seen from the existing research in Scopus. The ITB research publications, compared with the other universities, is far above which is per year by 1,200 of the number of the faculty lecturers. In the other places, the number of professors are many more than ITB has," Prof. Freddy explained.

Although the ITB students who submit the

research for publication in international journals have increased every year, there is a classic problem which is constrained funding.

"The devotees are indeed a lot but again, the funds become one of the constraints," Prof. Freddy said.

Nevertheless, ITB through its alumni had been four years to provide funds for the students who wish to submit their research for publication in the international journals through the Research Grants Program of ITB Alumni Association.

This year the funds provided for the programs that had lasted four years reached Rp1 billion.

"The first year the funds reached Rp1,25 billion, in the second, the third and now is Rp1 billion. The amount of Rp25 million decrease is due to innovation funds such as the ITB students who participated at the robotics competitions and others," Prof. Freddy noted.

19. PRESIDENT RECEIVES OPEN LETTER FROM UNWTO

Nusa Dua, Bali - President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono received an Open Letter from the secretary general of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Taleb Rifai, that acknowledges Indonesia's commitment to progress in the tourism sector.

Indonesia was the first Asian country to receive the letter, Tourism and Culture Minister Jero Wacik told the press following a meeting between President Yudhoyono and UNWTO Secretary General Taleb Rifai at Laguna Hotel here Saturday.

"UNWTO considers Indonesia a country that has a very high commitment to promoting tourism. And according to the UNWTO secretary general, Indonesia is the first Asian nation the UNWTO has presented with the 'Commitment Letter'," the minister said.

Indonesia views the tourism sector as an industry which can create jobs, boost economic growth, reduce poverty and is friendly to the environment.

UNWTO also recognized that Indonesia's tourism sector has developed significantly over the past ten years.

"He (Rifai) said there is a golden opportunity for Indonesia because many investors want to come to Indonesia to do business or engage in productive activities," Jero Wacik said.

Rifai is in Bali to speak at a three-day Seminar on "Tourism Ethics For Asia And The Pacific" participated in by around 160 delegates from Asia and Pacific countries.

UNWTO and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) are jointly presenting the Open Letter to heads of state and government around the world, calling on political leaders to acknowledge tourism's role in facing global challenges and prioritize the sector high in national policies in order to maximize its potential to deliver on sustained and balanced growth.

Travel and Tourism is today one of the world's biggest generators of employment and export earnings, and a key driver for economic growth and development.

Travel and Tourism currently accounts directly and indirectly for about 3% to 5% of global GDP, as well as 30% of the world's export of services.

The total contribution of Travel & Tourism to employment - including jobs indirectly supported by the sector - is estimated at 7% to 8%.

20. TWENTY-TWO COUNTRIES TO PARTICIPATE IN SAIL INDONESIA 2011

Kupang, E.Nusa Tenggara - As many as 22 countries have confirmed their plans to participate in Sail Indonesia 2011 that was officially launched in Jakarta a few days ago, a local marine official said.

The number of participants has increased compared to Sail Indonesia 2010 when only 15 countries took part, the chairman of Cinta Bahari Indonesia Foundation (YCBI), Raymond T. Lesmana, said here Saturday.

"There are more participants for Sail Indonesia 2011 than last year. If in 2010 there were only 15 countries, now the number has increased to 22," he said.

According to Raymond, the Sail Indonesia participants were scheduled to depart from Darwin, Australia, on July 23 and expected to arrive in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara's provincial capital, on July 27 to 28.

The participants will be in Kupang for a week before they sail on to Alor, Rote Ndao, Sabu Raijua, Lembata, Ende and Labuan Bajo districts on Flores Island and elsewhere in Indonesia.

"We expect the participants will be in East Nusa Tenggara province about a month because there are a number of such new areas to be visited by the participants as Sabu Raijua and Rote Ndao," Raymond said.

He said, the foundation is coordinating with several district administrations, especially the new area ones that will be stop off to perform a variety of preparations.

In addition, Sail Indonesia 2011 which will make Kupang as the entrance to the other regions in Indonesia will focus on areas that have not yet been visited.

The regions are Ndao Rote, Sabu Raijua to Sumba island which have been less had

the opportunity to stop off by the Sail Indonesia participants.

"In previous years, the transit route is always monotonous namely the northbound lane through the East Flores to West Flores. Now we are trying to open new destinations," Raymond noted.

The new areas to be visited is located on the southern route which has been less a promotion, he added.

21. PRESIDENT YUDHOYONO CALLS ON ASIA TO ANTICIPATE FOOD CRISIS

Jakarta - President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has called on Asian countries to anticipate food, energy, and water crises in order to maintain their position in new world.

"Asia should anticipate and take heed of the heightening tension in relation with food, energy, and water insecurity," President Yudhoyono said in his address and World Economic Forum on East Asia (WEF-EA) here on Sunday.

The Indonesian head of state on the occasion pointed out that 60 percent of around 7 billion people on planet earth are in the Asian continent.

President Yudhoyono said the improvement of their economy would enable them to compete in obtaining and controlling the natural resources.

"This pattern, which in centuries past centuries, led to war, colonization, exploitation, and suffering," President Yudhoyono said, asserting that the issue of food, energy, and water should not end with a conflict.

For that, the president called on all parties to work together to prioritize the peaceful way in the conflict-zone areas such as Mekong River, and South China Sea.

President Yudhoyono said that as a continent with big population, Asia should be able to use all resources for peace and sustainable development.

The president was also of the opinion that Asia should always be part of solution maker instead of creating conflict.

He said Asia should also be a balancing of all forms of inequality that happened in the world.

Commenting on technological development in Asia, Yudhoyono said that to become the center of a new world Asia should make every effort to lead in technological innovation.

"Technology is a key determinant of making a change in the 21st century," the president said.

Then he added that Asia should make diversity as a capital, and the population of the continent have to keep and maintain historical and cultural diversity for the sake of a peaceful life.

22. RI'S DEFORESTATION RATE DROPS TO 600,000 HECTARES PER YEAR: MINISTER

Pasaman, West Sumatra - Forestry Minister Zulkifli Hasan said the pace of deforestation in Indonesia has already dropped and now reaches 600,000 hectares per year.

"The figure is lower than in 1999-2002 when it was recorded at four million hectares a year," he said after opening a coordination meeting between the West Java provincial governor and mayors and district heads of the region.

The fastest pace of deforestation was recorded in East, West and South Kalimantan, Lampung and South Sulawesi. To offset the

deforestation, the government plans to plant 1.5 billion trees across the country this year.

"This is part of the efforts to reduce natural disasters and anticipate climate change. Deforestation has reduced forests in terms of quality as well as quantity. Due to that forest potentials to contribute to the state's income have also dropped. The government has produced a decision to stop issuing permits for forest exploitation. There would also be no tolerance for illegal logging in the country in view of its impact on the environment and community.

The minister said the critical forests in the country at present are recorded at 40 million hectares while the country's total forests reach 187 million hectares.

23. INDONESIAN MUSLIMS EXPLORE ISLAM IN AUSTRALIA

Jakarta - A delegation of three young Indonesian Muslim leaders departed for Australia on Sunday to participate in a bilateral exchange program aimed at strengthening understanding of Islam and inter-faith issues in both countries, the Australian Embassy here said in a media release on Monday.

Australian Ambassador to Indonesia Greg Moriarty said their visit aimed to show the group the broad cultural diversity of Australian Muslims, made up of 70 different ethnic backgrounds, including from Indonesia. "Islam in Australia is one of the country's fastest growing religions and makes an enormous contribution to the success of contemporary, multicultural Australia," the Ambassador said.

Muslim contact with Australia pre-dates European settlement and goes back to the sixteenth century when Macassan traders and fishermen shared their lives with local Indigenous people throughout northern Australia.

"It is also important that these young Indonesian Muslims are able to contribute to Australia's understanding of the role of religion in Indonesia and share their perspectives on a range of issues," the Ambassador added.

During their two week program in Australia (13- 26 June) the participants will visit Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra and meet with community and religious leaders, academics and media representatives. The delegation will experience the diversity of Australian society, the ways government and non-government organisations engage the community, and exchange ideas on the future of Australia-Indonesia relations. They will also make a brief visit to the rural Victorian town of Shepparton which has a long history of immigrant settlement in the region.

This is the last of three delegations from Indonesia who are scheduled to visit Australia under the Australia-Indonesia Institute Muslim Exchange Program in 2011. From 16 -29 May, four young Muslim leaders from Australia made a reciprocal visit to Indonesia to learn firsthand about Indonesia's diverse, democratic and tolerant society.

This Muslim Exchange Program was established by the Australian Government through the Australia-Indonesia Institute in 2002.

