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CONTENTS

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FOREWORD

The August 2026 edition of the Indonesian Update features a feature report titled "When Stigma against the LGBT Community Becomes Policy: a Threat to Indonesia's Health Security." This paper shall examine how stigma and discrimination against the LGBT community can impact health policy and services, highlighting its potential impact on efforts to build health resilience in Indonesia. The report also encourages readers to recognize the importance of evidence-based, inclusive health policies that reach all segments of the society.

In the political arena, the Indonesian Update features the article "New University for Old Problems: the Dilemma of the University of the Republic of Indonesia," which discusses the development plans for the University of the Republic of Indonesia (URI) and the various issues that need to be considered in establishing a new higher education institution. This article shall highlight the importance of ensuring that the development of the new institution is not only oriented towards institutional formation but also addresses fundamental issues related to the quality of human resources and the governance of higher education in Indonesia.

In the economic field, this edition presents two analyses of economic challenges and policy governance. The article "Artificial Intelligence, the Economy, and the Environment: An Analysis of Trade-Offs and Policy Directions in Indonesia" discusses the development of artificial intelligence and its implications for the economy and the environment, including various trade-offs that need to be considered in formulating Indonesia's policy direction. Meanwhile, the article "Maintaining Bank Indonesia's Independence" examines the importance of central bank independence as part of efforts to maintain the credibility of monetary policy, economic stability, and national economic governance.

In the legal field, the Indonesian Update includes two articles addressing the issues of rights protection and governance. The article, "Temporary Special Measures in CEDAW as a Complementary Approach to Addressing Sexual Violence," discusses the use of temporary special measures as a complementary approach to strengthening efforts to address sexual violence and promote substantive equality. Meanwhile, the article, "Caring for Animals by Improving Governance," discusses the importance of strengthening governance in animal protection and welfare in Indonesia.

Through the monthly publication of the Indonesian Update, which raises various strategic and current issues, it is hoped that this report can contribute to policy-making in government institutions, business actors, academics, researchers, think tanks, and civil society, both at home and abroad, to obtain contextual analysis of the political, legal, social, and economic dynamics in Indonesia.

Happy reading.

Main Report

When Stigma against the LGBT Community Becomes a Policy: A Threat to Indonesia's Health Security

-Made Natasya Restu Dewi Pratiwi-

The debate surrounding Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) issues in Indonesia has intensified once again. In recent months, LGBT issues have emerged not only as a moral and social debate but have also entered the public policy discourse. In June 2026, the Indonesian Ulema Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia/MUI) announced that it was preparing an academic paper and a Criminal Bill (Rancangan Undang-Undang/RUU) on LGBT to be proposed for inclusion in the National Legislation Program (Program Legislasi Nasional/Prolegnas) of the Indonesian House of Representatives (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat/DPR RI) (Indonesian Ulema Council, June 28, 2026).

This development indicates that LGBT issues are beginning to be positioned not merely as a matter of individual behavior or a debate over values, but as an object of policy and legal intervention. At the same time, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) is also advocating for the use of the term LGSP (Lesbi, Gay, Sodomi, and Sexual Abuse) as a replacement for LGBT. The MUI's Head of Fatwa Affairs, Asrorun Niam Sholeh, stated that the term LGBT was a euphemism that obscured the substance of behaviors considered prohibited under religious and legal norms (Indonesian Ulema Council, July 28, 2026).

Before such terminology is adopted, the proposed change should be critically examined because the language used in public policy must remain neutral.

When LGBT identities are placed in the same category as acts such as sexual harassment or violence, there is a risk of blurring the distinction between a person's identity and acts that actually constitute violations of the law. Public policy should clearly distinguish between actions involving violence, coercion, exploitation, and harassment and the treatment of individuals based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

This issue is becoming increasingly important because, in the future, anti-LGBT discourse may not only influence how society views the LGBT community but could also exacerbate societal polarization over whether LGBT people deserve equal rights and access to services as citizens. Global literature shows that stigma against LGBT people has consequences that extend beyond mere social rejection. A systematic review of 46 studies from various national contexts found that LGBT stigma and discrimination are associated with a range of health impacts, including mental health problems, substance use, risky sexual behavior, stigma from healthcare professionals, and avoidance of healthcare services (Maltempi et al., 2024). This means that regulations that increasingly normalize the social exclusion of LGBT people could threaten the quality of life of LGBT community members, who also have the right to the fulfillment of their human rights and access to healthcare services as mandated by law.

Therefore, the rise of anti-LGBT rhetoric needs to be viewed as more than simply a matter of freedom of speech or differing moral views. This paper shall aim to examine how anti-LGBT narratives could affect LGBT groups' access to public services. Social stigma, when legitimized through regulation, has the potential to increase fear among LGBT people of accessing health and public services that should be safely and affordably accessible.

The Unseen Impact: When Discrimination Creates a Cycle of Fear

One of the least discussed consequences of discrimination against LGBT people is the cycle of fear that can arise when accessing healthcare. While discrimination does not always directly result in a loss of access to healthcare, its impact can often be systemic. Previous experiences of discrimination may lead individuals to anticipate being humiliated, judged, having their identities disclosed, or being treated disrespectfully when accessing healthcare. This anticipation can then lead individuals to delay or avoid healthcare services.

This phenomenon is consistent with a study showing that avoidance and delays in accessing healthcare services among LGBT communities can occur because of minority stress resulting from prolonged discrimination and stigma (Thomas et al., 2025). These findings suggest that a person's decision not to seek healthcare services cannot always be understood as a lack of health awareness. In the context of sexual and gender minority groups, such a decision may instead be a rational response to repeated experiences of discrimination and insecurity.

Maltempi et al. (2024) showed that the impact of LGBT stigma could make individuals more vulnerable to mental health risks, substance use, and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) transmission due to late HIV diagnosis, stigma, and disrupted access to healthcare. This means that stigma is not merely a stand-alone psychological factor but can also function as a social determinant that influences a person's decision to delay seeking medical help, ultimately worsening their health condition.

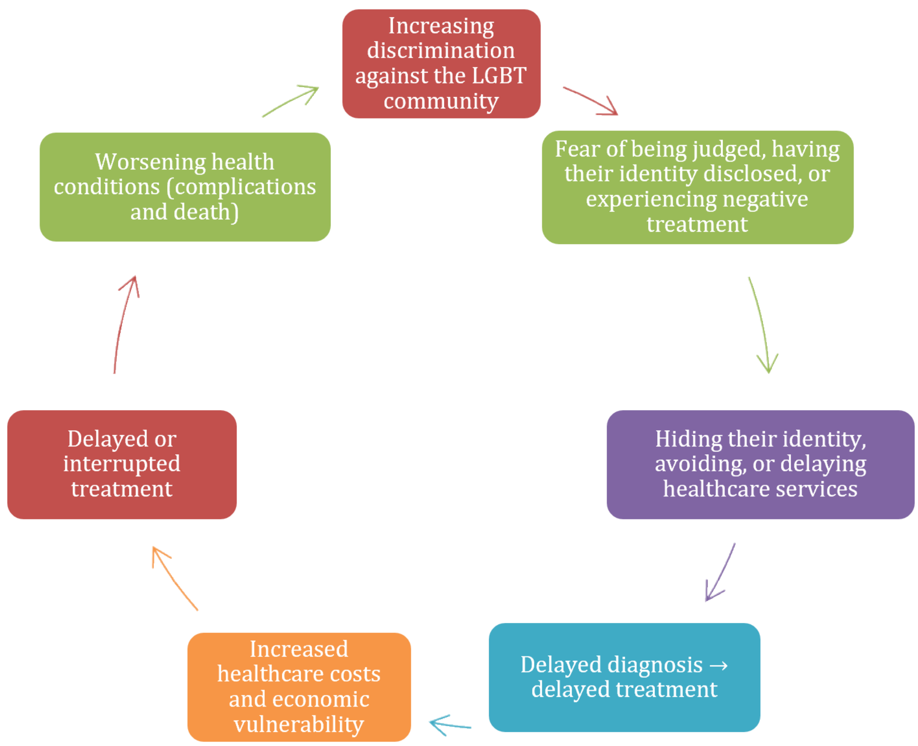
It is important to note that this cycle can persist even when healthcare facilities do not formally have policies prohibiting LGBT patients from accessing services. In the current context, the proposed LGBT Criminal Law Bill in Indonesia is concerning because it could further exacerbate the discrimination experienced by the LGBT community, particularly given the widespread rejection of LGBT people across public service sectors.

From Health Discrimination to Socio-Economic Vulnerability

In the long term, this situation can limit the freedom of LGBT people to express their gender identity safely and comfortably. Within the framework of health system resilience, the loss of a sense of security among LGBT people in expressing themselves can lead them to become more withdrawn and even conceal their identities when visiting health facilities. If LGBT people conceal their identities when seeking treatment, this may put them at risk of delays in receiving appropriate care, particularly in HIV screening services, which are prioritized for LGBT people as a key population in HIV prevention interventions. Therefore, the discourse surrounding the LGBT Criminal Law Bill requires strong criticism, particularly from a public health perspective, to prevent it from undermining their quality of life.

The impact of discrimination extends beyond healthcare. Repeated discrimination can lead to accumulated vulnerabilities in education, employment, housing, and healthcare. For example, when LGBT communities experience discrimination in schools or workplaces, their access to education, formal employment, stable income, and social protection can be hindered. As a result, when LGBT people have health needs but limited economic resources, they may struggle to maintain treatment over time. The cycle of fear, the chain of discrimination, and the socio-economic impacts on LGBT communities resulting from the strengthening of anti-LGBT narratives can be visualized in the following chart.

Diagram 1. The Chain of Discrimination and Its Impact on the LGBT Community



Source: Processed by the author

The Replacement of the Term LGBT: a Threat to Progress in Eliminating HIV/AIDS?

This issue is increasingly important to critically examine to mitigate the potential impact of replacing the term LGBT with a term that equates LGBT people with perpetrators of sexual violence who violate the law, and its implications for progress toward Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) elimination in Indonesia. Moreover, national HIV transmission remains concentrated among key populations, including the LGBT community, sex workers, and people who inject drugs (UNAIDS, 2025). Furthermore, UNAIDS (2025) estimates that approximately 570,000 Indonesians are living with HIV and identifies the treatment gap as a major unresolved challenge.

This situation demonstrates that the success of HIV elimination in Indonesia depends heavily on the health system's ability to reach key populations without discrimination. Therefore, the emergence of narratives that increasingly exclude the LGBT community in Indonesia must be addressed as a serious threat to progress in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. Furthermore, both nationally and globally, it has been recognized that achieving zero HIV infections in the community requires a commitment to the "Triple Zero" goal.

The "Triple Zero" goal in HIV/AIDS prevention and management consists of: 1) zero new HIV infections; 2) zero AIDS-related deaths; and 3) zero discrimination (UNAIDS, 2026). However, based on the previous discussion regarding the chain of discrimination and its potential impact on the LGBT community, achieving "Triple Zero" will become increasingly difficult if the government fails to provide public policies that protect the LGBT community from potential discrimination.

If the LGBT Criminal Bill and the replacement of the term "LGBT" with "LGSP" are passed, Indonesia would undermine its commitment to eliminating HIV in society. It can therefore be concluded that reducing stigma against the LGBT community is a fundamental component of a more sustainable, inclusive, and humane HIV/AIDS prevention strategy.

As anti-LGBT narratives become increasingly entrenched in society, particularly when they are legitimized through regulations, stigma, judgment, and hate speech, discrimination against the LGBT community may become increasingly normalized. This situation could further deprive the LGBT community of their basic rights to access services that the government is obligated to provide. This means that discrimination against LGBT people that is legitimized through public policy could make the community even more vulnerable, leading to fear of routine HIV screening, delays in learning their HIV status, failure to initiate antiretroviral treatment, or discontinuation of treatment due to fear of being treated differently. Consequently, this discourse could lead the Indonesian health system to miss opportunities to effectively break the chain of HIV/AIDS transmission.

For the health system, policies that discriminate against the LGBT community can contribute to increased HIV transmission rates and create a greater fiscal burden on treatment services that could have been reduced through early HIV detection and continued treatment. Therefore, policies that create fear among LGBT communities have the potential to generate social and health costs that may not be immediately apparent when they are implemented. Their impacts may only become evident when HIV cases are consistently diagnosed at later stages, patients from key populations present with more severe conditions due to delayed treatment, and the relationship between the LGBT community and health services is disrupted by a lack of safety.

Recommendations

The following recommendations related to health resilience should be implemented by the government to ensure that the policies it formulates do not further discriminate against the LGBT community:

a. The House of Representatives' Commission IX, which oversees health, employment, and social security, should ensure that draft regulations related to LGBT people are first reviewed from a human rights perspective and assessed for their potential impact on public health. This review should assess the policy's potential to increase stigma, create fear of accessing health services, delay treatment and HIV diagnosis, and interrupt treatment. Throughout the legislative process, the House of Representatives must also clearly distinguish between a person's identity and actions that constitute crimes, such as sexual violence, molestation, coercion, and exploitation.

b. The Ministry of Health needs to strengthen compliance with non-discriminatory service standards by training health workers to meet the needs of the LGBT community, including by strengthening the protection of patients' personal data.

c. The Ministry of Health could collaborate with civil society organizations, particularly those representing minority groups, to establish a complaint mechanism for individuals who experience discrimination when accessing health services. This mechanism must be easily accessible to the public and provide transparency regarding the extent to which complaints have been addressed.

d. The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the AIDS Commission, can provide incentives or performance-based awards to provinces that demonstrate the greatest progress in reducing stigma against key populations, particularly LGBT people, in accessing health and HIV/AIDS services. Successful practices at the provincial level should also be documented to inspire other regions to accelerate stigma reduction among key populations.

Public policy should not be built on discrimination. Legitimate exclusion of the LGBT community could actually cut off access to health services, increasing the risks of delayed HIV diagnosis and treatment. In the long term, this will set back progress in HIV/ AIDS management in Indonesia, ultimately increasing the country's social and health burden.

e. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology need to ensure that HIV/AIDS education at the school level does not use narratives that further reinforce stigma against the LGBT community. HIV education should be evidence-based and emphasize transmission mechanisms, prevention, testing, and the importance of treatment, rather than associating HIV with a particular identity or group.

f. Civil society organizations can collaborate with health facilities by involving vulnerable communities in delivering public education on HIV/AIDS prevention as a basis for strengthening inter-community support through a peer support system and preventing minority stress from widespread rejection of the LGBT community. Strengthening community-based services is also essential to reduce fear among LGBT people when accessing treatment.

g. The Government, together with civil society organizations, needs to collaborate with religious organizations to improve public communication, emphasizing that differing views do not diminish a person's dignity and fundamental rights as a citizen. This approach is also crucial to preventing social polarization that can reinforce stigma and make LGBT people increasingly fearful of interacting with public institutions, particularly the health sector.

Economy

Artificial Intelligence, the Economy, and the Environment: An Analysis of Trade-offs and Indonesia's Policy Direction

-Putu Rusta Adijaya-

Artificial Intelligence (AI)—particularly generative AI—has become a primary driver of global digital investment. According to data from Stanford University's Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence initiative (accessed August 12, 2026), private investment in generative AI reached approximately US$33.9 billion in 2024, representing an 18.7% increase from 2023 and is more than eight and a half times the figure recorded in 2022. Furthermore, AI investment is projected to contributing between 0.5% and 1% to global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2033, with a value ranging from US$500 billion to US$1 trillion (ey.com, March 22, 2024).

However, this expansion of AI—specifically the development of specialized data centers known as "AI factories" (International Energy Agency (IEA), 2026)—carries significant environmental sustainability implications, as these facilities typically require immense amounts of electricity. Beyond generating a carbon footprint, every unit of electricity consumed by these data centers also creates a "water footprint" (due to cooling and energy production processes) and a "land footprint" (associated with power generation and supply chains) (United Nations (UN), June 4, 2026). A UN study (June 4, 2026) indicates that the water consumption associated with AI development will, by the end of the decade, be equivalent to the annual basic domestic water needs of 1.3 billion people. Additionally, the land area required could exceed 14,500 square kilometers—an expanse roughly twice the size of the Jakarta metropolitan area.

Regarding AI investment, Indonesia is strategically positioned as a key player in the Southeast Asian data center market (researchandmarkets.com, 2026). However, the country also faces significant challenges, including structural limitations in clean energy supply, water resource management, and land governance. Accordingly, this paper shall analyze the economic, energy/environmental, and institutional aspects of AI development in Indonesia. It formulates policy recommendations for the administration of President Prabowo Subianto, grounded in principles of institutional quality and the internalization of externalities.

AI and the Indonesian Economy

Policymakers view data centers as essential infrastructure—crucial for digital sovereignty, security, and economic competitiveness—prompting many governments to implement policies that support data center development. The IEA also notes that capital expenditure on data center infrastructure by the world's five largest technology companies exceeded US$400 billion in 2025 and is projected to rise by 75% in 2026 (IEA, 2026). As a key player in the data center market, Indonesia stands to benefit from this surge in AI-related investment; the country's data center market was valued at US$2.81 billion in 2025 and is projected to reach US$6.08 billion by 2031—reflecting a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 13.73% (researchandmarkets.com, 2026)—with development potential concentrated in the Jakarta, Bekasi, Karawang, and Batam regions (teknologi.bisnis.com, August 10, 2026). Earlier, in 2024, East Ventures (July 18, 2025) reported that total investment in AI-based startups in Indonesia reached US$542.9 million, marking a growth of 141.5 percent over the preceding five years.

According to antaranews.com (May 25, 2026), an AI data center investment in Batam has reached US$5 billion for a single project; this initiative is set to create new jobs for 700–800 professionals in the data center and digital technology sectors, with recruitment conducted in collaboration with universities in Batam. From the perspective of institutional economics, developments in Batam align with the arguments of Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson, who posit that inclusive institutions attract large-scale investments that ultimately drive robust economic growth (Acemoglu, Johnson, & Robinson, 2005; nobelprize.org, October 14, 2024).

In other words, without a clear regulatory framework, transparency, accountability, and sound governance—covering everything from economic cost structures to benefits for the surrounding community—AI data center investments risk becoming mere "luxury goods" that local communities can only "watch from the sidelines," yielding minimal spillover effects for the local economy.

However, the Government's push to attract investment in AI data centers also warrants critical examination from the perspective of economic freedom. Within the realm of economic freedom, two dimensions may come into conflict. On one hand, to build inclusive institutions—as conceptualized by Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson—Indonesia requires regulatory certainty, the protection of property rights, and the rule of law. On the other hand, the pursuit of digital sovereignty—defined as our autonomy in managing, controlling, and protecting all aspects of the national digital landscape to avoid foreign dependency and exploitation—could potentially curtail "trade freedom" and increase transaction costs for investors.

This represents a trade-off that requires scrutiny and emphasis. If the state exerts increasing control in the name of sovereignty and security, the risk of "crowding out"—whereby increased government spending leads to a contraction in the private sector—will intensify. Yet, private investment is essential to realizing the digital economy projections discussed earlier.

Ideally, the equilibrium point lies not in choosing between total state control and *laissez-faire* economics. Instead, what is needed is a regulatory framework that is sufficient and appropriate—one that ensures legal certainty and the equitable distribution of local benefits without fostering excessive protectionism that might drive away capital which could otherwise be secured and utilized to stimulate the domestic economy.

AI, Water, and Land in Indonesia

However, the aforementioned rise in AI ecosystem investments presents Indonesia with a policy dilemma. On one hand, AI investment has the potential to strengthen Indonesia's digital economy—already the largest in Southeast Asia, with a projected value of US$340 billion by 2030 according to the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) (bkpm.go.id, January 21, 2026). On the other hand, the construction of AI facilities demands massive amounts of electricity, water, and land, potentially compromising Indonesia's environmental sustainability.

Fundamentally, this dilemma represents a classic case of negative externalities in environmental economics (Fullerton & Stavins, 2019). AI data centers consume electricity on a vast scale for operations and require immense quantities of water for cooling systems. Meanwhile, the social costs associated with exploiting these resources—such as the depletion and degradation of groundwater, reduced water availability for domestic and agricultural use in the vicinity of data centers, and the increased carbon footprint from power generation (driven largely by Indonesia's reliance on coal) to meet energy demands—are not fully reflected in the private costs borne by investors.

As long as the electricity and water prices paid by data center operators do not internalize these external costs—consistent with the Pigouvian framework and the "polluter pays" principle, which holds that those who pollute the environment must pay an amount equivalent to the damage caused (Pigou, 1920)—market incentives will drive resource consumption beyond socially optimal levels. This issue is compounded regarding land use; data center expansion often comes at the expense of land allocated for agriculture, water catchment areas, and forests (which serve as net carbon sinks). Without strict legal regulation, this triggers land-use conversion that is extremely difficult to reverse or rehabilitate (Gandharum et al., 2022; Dharmawantara, Rizantha, & Explorer, 2026).

In Indonesia, the pressure on these three resources has already been the subject of analysis. Dharmawantara, Rizantha, and Explorer (2026) project that national data center electricity demand will increase nearly fivefold, rising from 1.09 GW in 2025 to 5.22 GW by 2034.

Regarding land, Dharmawantara, Rizantha, and Explorer (2026) highlight that expansion is heavily concentrated in the West Java corridor; the Karawang, Bekasi, and Cikarang areas account for a projected total capacity of 2,010 MVA, far exceeding the 547 MVA projected for DKI Jakarta. This trend is driven by the availability of industrial land, proximity to fiber-optic networks, and access to electrical infrastructure. In this context, Gandharum et al. (2022) assess that the conversion of agricultural land into built-up areas in West Java will compromise national food security.

Regarding water, a 2020 report by the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) indicated that several regions in Indonesia would face a clean water crisis by 2045 (ipb.ac.id, April 22, 2025). Furthermore, the proportion of land area affected by water scarcity is projected to rise from 6% in 2000 to 9.6% by 2045 (ipb.ac.id, April 22, 2025).

Consequently, the policy challenge for Indonesia extends beyond merely attracting massive data center investment; it involves designing instruments capable of internalizing these environmental externalities. Examples include water and electricity tariff schemes that reflect resource scarcity, mandates for data center operators to develop and utilize renewable energy, and carbon taxes. These measures ensure that the growth of Indonesia's AI ecosystem does not come at the expense of the natural resource base—a prerequisite for the country's long-term economic sustainability.

Policy Recommendations

In accordance with the above explanations, the following recommendations are proposed for the administration of President Prabowo Subianto. First,

The Government must strengthen AI data center governance through three key measures: (1) designing electricity tariffs for data centers that reflect social marginal costs—including the costs associated with coal emissions—and mandating a gradual increase in renewable energy usage; (2) establishing scarcity-based raw water tariffs, requiring water usage and sustainability studies before data center construction, and restricting groundwater extraction; and (3) tightening regulations on land-use conversion, particularly in water catchment areas and productive agricultural land, while mandating Environmental Impact Assessments (AMDAL) that explicitly account for water and land footprints in addition to carbon emissions.

the Government—through the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM), the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Forestry, and the Ministry of Finance, in collaboration with the state-owned electricity company (PLN) and other relevant agencies—must work together to design electricity tariff schemes for AI data centers. These schemes should reflect social marginal costs, including the costs associated with coal emissions if coal-fired power is utilized. Additionally, the Ministry of ESDM and PLN could mandate the use of renewable energy for new data center operators, implementing this requirement through a phased approach.

Second, regarding water resource management, the Ministry of Public Works—including the River Basin Organizations (BBWS)—in collaboration with relevant ministries, agencies, and provincial governments, must establish scarcity-based raw water tariffs for data center cooling requirements. Furthermore, inter-ministerial cooperation must mandate studies on water usage, management, and sustainability as a licensing prerequisite prior to data center construction, including limits on groundwater extraction.

Third, the Government—through the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Forestry, the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency (ATR/BPN), relevant ministries and agencies, and provincial governments—must tighten and strengthen the legal framework governing land-use conversion for data centers, particularly in water catchment areas and productive agricultural lands. Additionally, the government must mandate Environmental Impact Assessments (AMDAL) that explicitly calculate water and land footprints, rather than focusing solely on carbon emissions.

Economy

Preserving the Independence of Bank Indonesia

-Putu Rusta Adijaya-

Central banks are among the most critical institutions for maintaining economic stability. As the monetary authority, a central bank plays a pivotal role in managing and controlling interest rates, liquidity, exchange rates, inflation, and financing conditions within the economy. Decisions made—such as implementing contractionary or expansionary monetary policies—often carry significant economic and political consequences. Consequently, central bank independence stands as a fundamental principle in the institutional design of modern economic policy. The primary legal basis for the independence of Indonesia's central bank, Bank Indonesia (BI), is established in Law No. 23/1999 concerning Bank Indonesia. This law has undergone several amendments, most notably through Law No. 3/2004 and Law No. 4/2023 regarding the Development and Strengthening of the Financial Sector (P2SK).

However, central bank independence does not imply that BI operates in isolation from the Government, particularly the Ministry of Finance. Hilbers (2008) explains that monetary and fiscal policies cannot function in a vacuum—even if implemented by separate institutions—because they are deeply intertwined. Macroeconomic stability requires coordination among monetary, fiscal, and financial sector policies. Yet, tensions can arise; for instance, fiscal policy might exert pressure on monetary policy to achieve short-term economic growth targets. Other issues may also emerge, such as the speculation—subsequently refuted by the Minister of Finance—that BI would be placed under the authority of the Ministry of Finance (investor.id, August 3, 2026).

The context described above gained further relevance following the official resignation of BI Governor Perry Warjiyo on 27 July, 2026. The government stated that the resignation was voluntary and driven by personal reasons—marking the first time in history that a BI Governor has voluntarily stepped down (bbc.com, July 27, 2026).

To ensure continuity of leadership, Destry Damayanti, the Senior Deputy Governor of Bank Indonesia (BI), was appointed to serve as the Acting Governor. On 10 August, 2026, President Prabowo Subianto nominated Destry Damayanti as the sole candidate for the position of the BI Governor (cnbcindonesia.com, August 12, 2026). Market reaction was positive; according to investor.id (August 11, 2026), following her nomination, the Rupiah exchange rate closed 142 points (0.79%) stronger at the level of Rp17,555 per US dollar.

Destry Damayanti is no stranger to the world of central banking, possessing an excellent track record and extensive experience from serving two terms as BI Senior Deputy Governor. Nevertheless, this article aims to analyze whether BI can maintain its independence and policy credibility. As Alexander Jung wrote on the European Central Bank website (December 23, 2025): "…weakening central bank independence erodes the credibility of monetary policy and jeopardizes price stability."

Efforts to Safeguard Bank Indonesia's Independence

From an institutional economics perspective, central bank independence is essentially a solution to the "time inconsistency" problem in monetary policy, as described in the literature driven by the framework established by Kydland and Prescott (1977). They posited that time inconsistency refers to the notion that an optimal policy set initially may no longer be optimal in the future, thereby losing its credibility (inceif.edu.my, July 18, 2025).

According to inceif.edu.my (July 18, 2025), central banks establish inflation targets to ensure price stability. However, once a target is set, an incentive arises to stoke inflation in order to boost output and employment in the short term. Consequently, economic actors do not view the central bank's inflation target as credible. Anticipating government moves to trigger inflation, these economic agents factor in higher inflation rates from the outset. The central bank is then compelled to align with these higher inflation expectations to avoid a loss in output. The ultimate result is an inflationary bias (inceif.edu.my, July 18, 2025).

This framework was reinforced by Rogoff (1985) through the concept of the "conservative central banker," which has since solidified central bank independence as a cornerstone of modern monetary policy (Farvaque & Stanek, 2025). This independence—both *de jure* (as stipulated by law) and *de facto* (as actually practiced or observed in reality)—encompasses various mechanisms, such as the independent appointment of the governor, restrictions on government borrowing, and a clear, goal-oriented mandate (Farvaque & Stanek, 2025). The Bank Indonesia Law and its subsequent revision via the P2SK Law grant Bank Indonesia relatively strong *de jure* independence.

The *de jure-de facto* framework outlined above provides a relevant perspective for assessing the current leadership transition at Bank Indonesia. In terms of track record, Destry Damayanti's nomination as the sole candidate for Bank Indonesia (BI) Governor supports the argument for technocratic continuity. Her journey at BI began in 2019, following a career spanning over two decades in the economic and financial sectors, with extensive experience in macroeconomic policy, financial markets, and banking (cnnindonesia.com, August 11, 2026).

Destry Damayanti's track record—specifically her ability to quell policy uncertainty and maintain a stable monetary policy trajectory following her appointment—aligns with Source-Credibility Theory, which posits that the information provider (in this case, Destry Damayanti as BI Governor) must be perceived as an expert and trustworthy (Kelman 1961).

However, BI's *de facto* independence is not determined solely by the personal capacity of its governor; it is also influenced by the institutional framework surrounding the policy decision-making process. BI is a member of the Financial System Stability Committee (KSSK), alongside the Ministry of Finance, the Financial Services Authority (OJK), and the Indonesia Deposit Insurance Corporation (LPS). A development warranting scrutiny is the inclusion of the Investment Management Agency (BPI) Danantara in the KSSK (cnnindonesia.com, July 27, 2026).

Several economists believe this involvement would risks creating conflicts of interest. Telisa Aulia Falianty, a professor at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Indonesia (FEB UI), highlighted the concerns regarding Danantara becoming a permanent participant in KSSK meetings (money.

Regarding Destry Damayanti's leadership, the test of independence is no longer merely a matter of reputation or personal experience, but rather her ability to uphold the boundaries of Bank Indonesia's (BI) authority amidst structural pressures and increasingly complex institutional coordination. Therefore, the Government must consistently safeguard and strengthen BI's independence. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Finance must reinforce coordination with BI to maintain macroeconomic stability. On the other hand, BI needs to uphold consistent, data-driven policy communication. At the same time, academics and civil society must continue to exercise independent oversight of the Financial System Stability Committee (KSSK) institutional framework and caution that both the government and BI should not let policies stray beyond the scope of their respective mandates.

kompas.com, July 29, 2026). The issue arises because Danantara's portfolio includes shares in state-owned banks (*Himbara*), while KSSK members such as BI, the OJK, and the LPS are responsible for supervising these very banks. According to Falianty, this situation could potentially violate institutional governance standards and raise concerns among foreign investors regarding the independence of decision-making (money.kompas.com, July 29, 2026).

In other words, the primary challenge for BI's future independence lies not merely in the identity of the new Governor, but in how the institution upholds its independence amidst the expanding scope of economic policy coordination that now involves non-regulatory actors.

Policy Recommendations

Regarding Destry Damayanti's leadership, the challenge of maintaining independence is no longer merely a matter of her personal reputation or experience; rather, it hinges on her ability to uphold and negotiate the boundaries of Bank Indonesia's (BI) authority amidst new structural pressures. This effort will determine whether the credibility of Indonesia's monetary policy—as highlighted by Jung (December 23, 2025)—remains intact or is eroded by increasingly complex institutional coordination dynamics.

According to the foregoing analysis, the following policy recommendations are proposed for the administration of President Prabowo Subianto. First, the President and his administration must consistently affirm, safeguard, and promote BI's independence, as mandated by the constitution. Second, the Ministry of Finance must strengthen coordination and cooperation with BI to bolster macroeconomic stability.

Third, Bank Indonesia needs to maintain consistent, data-driven policy communication to ensure monetary stability. Fourth, academics and civil society must continue to exercise independent oversight of the Financial System Stability Committee (KSSK) institutional framework and hold the government—including BI—accountable should they deviate from their proper mandates.

Laws

Temporary Special Measures in CEDAW as a Complementary Approach to Addressing Sexual Violence

-Afifah Fitriyani Oceanto-

Sexual violence against women remains a serious human rights concern in Indonesia. According to the 2025 Annual Record Fact Sheet of the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) (CATAHU 2025), a total of 376,529 cases of violence against women were recorded throughout 2025, representing an increase of approximately 14.07 percent compared to the previous year. These figures demonstrate that women continue to face a high level of vulnerability to various forms of violence, including sexual violence.

In response, Indonesia has strengthened its legal framework through Law No. 12/2022 on Sexual Violence Crimes (UU TPKS), which complements the criminal provisions under the Criminal Code (KUHP) and other laws and regulations. The enactment of the UU TPKS marks a shift in the approach to addressing sexual violence, moving beyond a sole focus on punishing perpetrators to also emphasizing victim protection and recovery.

However, the persistently high incidence of sexual violence raises questions about the extent to which Indonesia's existing regulatory framework has been able to reduce the continued prevalence of violence. Beyond the criminal justice approach, which has been strengthened through various legal instruments in Indonesia, is there another approach that could complement the State's efforts to prevent sexual violence and address its root causes?

This article shall examine one approach that could serve as a reference for preventing sexual violence, namely Temporary Special Measures (TSM), as provided under Article 4(1) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

TSM are affirmative measures introduced following the adoption of CEDAW by the United Nations in 1979 as a mechanism to accelerate the achievement of equality for women (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2012). Unlike the *ex post* nature of the criminal justice approach, TSM focuses on *ex ante* measures through prevention, protection, institutional strengthening, and the removal of structural barriers that continue to place women at risk of violence.

Sexual Violence as a Form of Discrimination against Women

Equality is a fundamental and central commitment in human rights, and the aspiration for equality is reflected in various regulations at both the national and international levels. Traditionally, the principle of equality is rooted in the Aristotelian formula that like cases should be treated alike. However, Aristotle's concept of equality raises a further question: to what extent can equality address violence that arises from inequality?

Under Article 1 of CEDAW, discrimination refers to any distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on the basis of sex that has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The definition of discrimination was expanded through CEDAW General Recommendation No. 19, which recognizes that discrimination includes gender-based violence directed against women because they are women, resulting in physical, mental, and/or sexual harm through various forms of coercion and other attempts to deprive them of their freedom.

This formulation was further reinforced through General Recommendation No. 35, which affirms that gender-based violence constitutes both a human rights violation and a form of structural discrimination. Accordingly, the CEDAW Committee recommends that States take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination perpetrated by any person, organization, or entity. This forms the basis of the State's due diligence obligation, under which the State may be held responsible when it fails to take appropriate measures to prevent violence and provide protection and recovery for victims.

In other words, if the State focuses solely on punishing perpetrators without addressing the factors that place women in vulnerable positions, its obligations have not been fully fulfilled. An approach focused solely on enforcement will not be sufficient to break the cycle of sexual violence if the underlying discriminatory structures remain intact. Therefore, CEDAW positions the State not only as a law enforcement actor, but also as an actor responsible for eliminating structural barriers through policies, services, and affirmative measures capable of accelerating the realization of substantive equality.

In its efforts to achieve equality and provide protection from sexual violence, Indonesia enacted UU TPKS as a *lex specialis* regulation. The UU TPKS not only regulates the criminal liability of perpetrators, but also requires the Central Government and Regional Governments to undertake measures for prevention, handling, protection, and victim recovery.

However, the implementation of these obligations continues to face various challenges, including the uneven availability of victim service infrastructure, the suboptimal implementation of training and certification for victim support providers, and the readiness of implementing regulations, which has at times hindered capacity-building at the regional level. In addition, differences in the understanding among law enforcement officials regarding the elements of sexual violence crimes continue to affect the consistency of case handling (Hukumonline, 2026).

Therefore, the effectiveness of the regulatory approach needs to be further strengthened, alongside affirmative measures capable of reinforcing the implementation of the UU TPKS while addressing structural barriers as mandated by TSM under CEDAW.

Temporary Special Measures as an Approach to Substantive Equality

Article 4(1) of CEDAW provides States with the opportunity to adopt Temporary Special Measures to accelerate the achievement of de facto equality between men and women. This provision emphasizes that temporary special measures cannot be considered discriminatory because their primary purpose is to eliminate inequalities that have persisted historically and structurally.

In General Recommendation No. 25, the CEDAW Committee emphasizes that formal equality; namely, rules that apply equally to everyone, does not necessarily produce equality in practice. Therefore, States are encouraged to adopt affirmative measures to address the barriers that women experience in reality.

Drawing on Sandra Fredman's journal title Substantive Equality Revisited, substantive equality consists of four dimensions:

a. **Redressing disadvantage**; namely giving particular attention to groups that experience disadvantage or marginalization as a result of discrimination;

b. **Redressing stigma, stereotyping, and humiliation** by ensuring that individuals are free from discrimination, violence, and degrading treatment based on their identity;

c. **The participative dimension: social inclusion and political voice**, namely creating opportunities for groups that have historically been marginalized to participate equally in social and political life; and

d. **Accommodating difference and structural change**, by recognizing that characteristics such as sex, race, or disability are part of an individual's identity and therefore need to be accommodated through systemic change, rather than disregarded in the name of equal treatment.

In General Recommendation No. 25, the CEDAW Committee emphasizes that TSM are special measures that should be distinguished from general social policies. To implement them, States need to identify the barriers faced by women and design affirmative measures through legal instruments, policies, administrative guidelines, and dedicated budget allocations to accelerate the realization of substantive equality.

When applied to the implementations of the UU TPKS in Indonesia, various challenges, including the uneven availability of victim services, limited capacity among gender-responsive law enforcement officials, weak inter-agency coordination, and insufficient budgetary support demonstrate that formal equality through the enactment of legislation has not yet fully translated into equality in practice.

Furthermore, in the Four-Year Reflection on the Implementations of the UU TPKS, published by Komnas Perempuan in May 2026, at least 91 complaints were recorded concerning delays in the handling of sexual violence cases, ranging from slow legal processes and termination of investigations to suboptimal case handling (Komnas Perempuan, 2026). These findings demonstrate that the challenges in addressing sexual violence lie not only in the availability of regulations, but also in institutional capacity and the effectiveness of their implementation. This condition highlights the importance of affirmative measures capable of strengthening the victim protection system comprehensively, as mandated through TSM under CEDAW.

Through Fredman's framework, these barriers reflect that women continue to experience disadvantage, stigma, limitations on participation, and institutional structures that are not yet fully responsive to victims' needs. Therefore, the implementations of TSM should be realized through the equitable distribution of victim services, the allocation of gender-responsive budgets, capacity-building for law enforcement officials through a victim-centered approach, as well as the involvement of survivors and civil society organizations in policy formulation and evaluation.

Accordingly, TSM are not intended to replace criminal prosecution, but rather to serve as an affirmative instrument that complements the implementation of the UU TPKS while accelerating the realization of substantive equality as mandated by CEDAW, with the aim of reducing violence against women.

Recommendations

To optimize the implementations of TSM, the following measures are needed:

a. **The Central Government, particularly the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA)**, together with relevant ministries and institutions, should integrate the principles of TSM into the implementation of the UU TPKS through strengthening victim services, developing gender-responsive national policies, and allocating adequate gender-responsive budgets for prevention, protection, and victim recovery;

b. **The House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI) and the Government** should strengthen the legal basis for implementing TSM through the development or improvement of implementing regulations and technical guidelines that provide clear direction on the application of affirmative measures in addressing sexual violence, both at the national and regional levels;

Addressing sexual violence cannot rely solely on a single institution or criminal prosecution. It requires cross-sectoral collective action and affirmative measures to eliminate structural barriers and strengthen victim protection.

c. **Law Enforcement Officials (the Indonesian National Police, the Prosecutor's Office, and the Supreme Court)** should require continuous training on gender perspectives and the victim-centered approach to prevent revictimization and ensure that cases are handled in a manner that prioritizes victims; and

d. **Komnas Perempuan**, together with relevant ministries and institutions, should strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the implementation of the UU TPKS and CEDAW, including by developing indicators that measure the effectiveness of victim services, the implementation of affirmative measures, and progress toward substantive equality, rather than merely the number of cases processed.

Laws

Caring for Animals by Improving Animal Governance

-Afifah Fitriyani Oceanto-

Cases involving alleged irregularities in the management of operational funds at zoos have once again drawn public attention. Reporting on these cases has also been accompanied by the recirculation of old photographs showing zoo animals appearing thin, ill, and malnourished. A photograph of a Sumatran tiger that had previously been in critical condition, in particular, became a major topic of public discussion online regarding animal welfare in zoos (Detik, July 27, 2026).

Regardless of the context in which the photographs were taken, public attention to the animals' condition has raised broader questions, particularly regarding how animal welfare is ensured in *ex-situ* conservation institutions. This question is crucial given the high level of dependence that animals in zoos have on humans (Novita, 2026).

Humans determine and provide animals' food, shelter, healthcare, and even the activities they are permitted to undertake. When humans take over responsibility for meeting most of an animal's basic needs, they also assume the responsibility of ensuring that those needs are adequately fulfilled.

Therefore, it is important to examine animal welfare in zoo regulation and governance more analytically, to ensure that human intervention does not become a new source of harm in efforts to safeguard animal health and welfare.

Understanding Animal Freedom as the Basis of Animal Welfare

Animal welfare is addressed in several regulations, including Law No. 18 /2009 on Animal Husbandry and Animal Health, as amended by Law No. 41 of 2014. Article 1(2) recognizes animal welfare as part of animal health and defines it as matters concerning the physical and mental well-being of animals that must be implemented and enforced to protect animals from improper and inappropriate human treatment.

More specifically, Government Regulation No. 95/2012 on Veterinary Public Health and Animal Welfare sets out, in Article 83(2), five fundamental principles of animal freedom to ensure animal welfare:

a. Freedom from hunger and thirst;

b. Freedom from pain, injury, and disease;

c. Freedom from discomfort, abuse, and mistreatment;

d. Freedom from fear and distress; and

e. Freedom to express natural behavior.

Article 83(3) further provides that the application of these five freedoms covers activities ranging from capture and handling, slaughter, to veterinary medical practices. Furthermore, Article 84(1) stipulates that these principles must be applied by animal owners, persons working with animals, and owners of animal-keeping facilities. Article 84(2) further provides that owners of such animal facilities must obtain a business permit issued by the relevant regent or mayor.

Looking at the definitions of animal welfare and the principles of animal freedom above, a different approach is required when dealing with animals of different species and with forms of communication different from those of humans. In understanding animals, *sentience*, or the capacity to experience feelings, should serve as a primary guide in communicating and interacting with animals.

In addition, an understanding of *anti-speciesism* is necessary in upholding animal welfare. This concept is rooted in the rejection of discrimination against living beings or the assumption of superiority based on species (Sueur, 2019). Therefore, this understanding provides an ethical foundation for promoting fairer treatment of animals, including ensuring that restrictions on animals' freedom in conservation institutions are not justified merely because animals are regarded as a species subordinate to humans.

Animal Welfare as Part of Governance

If animals are neglected to the point of malnutrition and illness, who can tigers, elephants, and giraffes turn to? Animals cannot speak, file lawsuits or complaints, or express decisions concerning their own lives in zoos, where their existence is highly dependent on human intervention.

Minister of Forestry Regulation No. 31/2012 on Conservation Institutions ("Conservation Institution Regulation") provides guidelines on the criteria for managing zoos. Article 9 stipulates in detail that zoos must have at least three protected animals, an area of at least 15 [hectares], as well as adequate animal-keeping facilities and healthcare facilities.

Article 29(e) of the Conservation Institution Regulation prohibits zoo or conservation institution permit holders from neglecting animals or managing them improperly and in ways that are inconsistent with animal ethics and welfare. Thus, zoo governance serves as both a reference and an obligation for permit holders to act fairly and ethically toward the animals under their care.

Governance is not merely an administrative requirement for establishing and/or managing a zoo. It is also a means of fulfilling the responsibility to safeguard the welfare of animals whose lives are dependent on humans. Therefore, feeding, health examinations, enclosure maintenance, and monitoring of animals' conditions should not depend on individual initiative, but should form part of a management system with established standards and clear accountability.

The question then becomes: who ensures that such governance actually functions and is capable of fulfilling animal welfare principles? When animals cannot communicate their own interests, oversight of conservation institutions becomes essential to prevent animal welfare from remaining merely a norm on paper. The Government, as the authority responsible for granting and supervising permits; management, as the party directly responsible for the animals; veterinarians, as professionals with relevant expertise; and the public, as part of public oversight, all have complementary roles.

Good practices in implementing animal welfare could be observed in the United Kingdom, which has established a division of responsibilities through a licensing- and oversight-based governance system. Under the *Zoo Licensing Act 1981*, zoos are required to meet welfare standards and undergo periodic inspections involving professionals with veterinary expertise. The United Kingdom's *Modern Zoo Practice* standards also require the monitoring and recording of animals' health and behavior (GOV.UK, 2026; DEFRA, 2026). This practice should serve as an example that animal welfare needs to be supported by standards, inspections, professional expertise, and accountability that are evaluated periodically, rather than remaining merely a normative obligation.

Therefore, the governance of conservation institutions should not be assessed solely on the basis of facility completeness or administrative compliance, but also on the institution's ability to ensure animal welfare on a continuous basis. When animals cannot complain or even determine their own fate and food, it is the governance system that should speak on their behalf and safeguard their welfare.

Conclusion

Animal welfare in conservation institutions cannot be separated from how humans exercise their authority in managing animals' lives. When animals depend on humans for food, shelter, healthcare, and protection, such intervention must be accompanied by the responsibility to fulfill their basic needs and freedoms. Indonesia already has a legal framework concerning animal welfare, including the principles of animal freedom. However, these norms need to be translated into governance mechanisms that ensure that the provision of food, healthcare, maintenance, environmental conditions, and opportunities for natural behavior can be monitored and subjected to accountability.

Ultimately, animal welfare is not merely about how humans care for animals, but about how humans take responsibility for the authority they exercise over animals' lives. When animals cannot complain, bring claims, or determine the conditions of their own lives, the humans and institutions responsible for managing them have a duty to ensure that their interests remain protected. Good governance is not merely about how a zoo is managed, but about how the lives of animals entrusted to human care are treated fairly.

Animals cannot communicate their own interests, good governance must ensure that those interests are still heard through standards, oversight, and accountability that protect their welfare.

Recommendations

To strengthen animal welfare and the governance of conservation institutions, the following measures are needed:

a. **The Ministry of Forestry**, together with the **Ministry of Health and local governments**, should strengthen the implementation of animal welfare principles in the management of conservation institutions through standards for animal care, health, nutrition, environmental conditions, and the fulfillment of animals' natural behaviors, based on the principles of animal freedom;

b. **The Ministry of Forestry**, together with **local governments and veterinary authorities**, should strengthen oversight mechanisms for animal welfare by assessing not only administrative compliance, but also using animals' conditions and welfare as indicators in evaluating conservation institutions. Oversight should also ensure accountability when neglect or animal management practices inconsistent with animal welfare requirements are identified; and

c. **The Ministry of Forestry**, together with conservation institution managers and local governments, should strengthen transparency and public participation in monitoring animal welfare, including by providing information on animals' health conditions, the number and causes of animal deaths, and the care standards being applied. Public complaint mechanisms should also be strengthened as a channel for reporting alleged violations of animal welfare.

Politics

A New University for Old Problems : the Dilemma of the University of the Republic of Indonesia

-Felia Primaresti-

Photo Source: kompasiana.com

The Indonesian Government has introduced the establishment of the University of the Republic of Indonesia (URI) as part of the efforts to build superior human resources and prepare future government leader candidates (Kompas.com , 22/7/2026) . However, the plan has raised a number of questions related to urgency, institutional design, efficiency, and URI position in the educational ecosystem.

These questions have become relevant because Indonesia has had a network of civil service higher education institution and universities. According to Regulation Government Number 57/2022 concerning the Implementations of Higher Education by Other Ministries and Non-Ministerial Government Institutions (PP 57/2022), various education institutions operate under ministries, TNI, and Polri.

The plan to establish URI should not only focus on the need to produce institution leaders. The more important thing is to produce sound govrrnment policies.

This article shall analyze URI as a policy instrument to answer human resources and leadership challenges in Indonesia. URI has the potential potential to create an institutional overlap.

From HR Issues to a Formation of a New Institution

According to CNN Indonesia (22/7/2026), the URI formation plan departs from the problem that Indonesia still needs more capable human resources to face the complexity of governance and future development. The Government emphasizes the importance of competent, integrated, and adaptive leadership. In the context of development towards Golden Indonesia 2045, the quality of human resources is seen as as one of the foundations to increase competitiveness and state capacity .

The Government needs mechanism to build leadership capacity in a systematic way. However, the human resources problem has turned into a problem of creating a new institution.

In policy public, problem identification should precede instrument selection (Vasely , 2020). This argument is in line with McDonnell & Elmore (1987) who think that Government needs to determine the roots of the problem to be solved.

If the problem is the weak capacity of ASN leadership, then a policy could be in the form of strengthening the existing education and training institutions. If the problem is the fragmentation of education leadership, the Government could develop new curricula or cross-institution programs. If the problem is low connectedness between education level and the needs of the public sector, the Government could strengthen the cooperation between colleges and ministries / institutions and also state-owned enterprises.

The study conducted by Hakiem (2024) argued that there were more from one hundred civil service universities (PTK) in Indonesia. In fact, as recorded in PP 57/2022, there are various service colleges under ministries, government institutions, TNI, and the Indonesian National Police. These institutions have different mandates in accordance with the needs of their respective sectors .

STAN has the focus on the field of state finance. IPDN has the focus on government. STIS has the focus on statistics. STIN has the focus on the field of intelligence. In addition, there are also various service institutions in the fields of transportation, aviation, meteorology, immigration, corrections, and other sectors .

This means that Indonesia has already had many service education institutions with different mandates. Therefore, the challenge is to identify the real problems, such as capacity shortcomings, graduate quality, curriculum fragmentation, and weak inter-agency coordination.

The Problem of Indonesian Higher Education is Not Merely the Absence of Institution

It is important to see education problems in Indonesia more generally. If the goal is to build superior human resources, then the challenge is to create a high quality education ecosystem education.

BPS data (2025) show that the proportion of residents who finished higher education was still in the range of ten percent . This figure was low compared to those in other contries according to Our World Data (2020). The figure in the Philippines was 32.7 percent, Malaysia 30.8 percent, Thailand 20.2 percent, Myanmar 17.9 percent, and Brunei Darussalam 15.6 percent. Indonesia was slightly better than Vietnam (8.8 percent), India (8.5 percent), and Cambodia (2.8 percent).

This shows that most Indonesian population has not reached higher education. According to BPS report (2025), most Indonesians still could not access higher education. Therefore, if the Government wants to increase the quality of national human resources, it needs to be aware that a new institution new with limited capacity will not give a greater impact, compared to investment to expand access to higher education and investment to improve the quality of the existing higher education institutions.

The second problem is the low quality of lecturers and researchers in Indonesia. Wirjawan in 2025 found that the median monthly salary of lecturers in Indonesia was only around US$257. That figure was the lowest in the group of countries being compared. Malaysia was better (US$425), Vietnam (US$396), Thailand (US$890), South Korea (US$1,597), Japan (US$2,699) , and Singapore (US$4,413). Thus , the median salary of Indonesian lecturers was only around 60 percent of that in Malaysia, 29 percent of that in Thailand, and less than 6 percent of that in Singapore. This nominal comparison needs to be interpreted carefully, taking into account differences in living costs, purchasing power, allowance, and the remuneration structure of each country. However, the gaps are still wide.

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) data show that Indonesia is still left behind compared to a number of countries in Southeast

Asia. In 2022, Indonesia's PISA score was 369, while Singapore's score was 560, Vietnam's 468, Thailand's 394, and Malaysia's 388.

Data show that the proportion of residents aged 25–65 years who attended higher education in Indonesia was only around 10 percent, while the proportion reached 30.8 percent in Malaysia and 57.1 percent in Singapore. At the same time, the median salary of lecturers in Indonesia in 2025 were recorded around US$257, far below Singapore (US$ 4,413), Thailand (US$890), Malaysia (US$425), and Vietnam (US$396).

Third, the quality education cannot be separated from academic freedom. Higher education institutions do not only function as a place for knowledge transfer but also as room for academics and students to do research, to test ideas , to convey criticisms, as well as developing thinking in an independent way. According to the Academic Freedom Index 2025, Indonesia obtained score 0.33, lowers compared to the Philippines (0.59), Singapore (0.47), and Thailand (0.38). That figure shows that Indonesia is still facing challenges in creatimg academic environment that provides room for the freedom of research, of teaching , of exchanging ideas , and institutional autonomy.

In the context of URI development, if the problem defined is the low quality of human resources, then the development of a new institution should not be the only instrument considered. Education achievements are influenced by a larger educational ecosystem, starting from the access to education, good quality academics, up to an environment that supports learning and kmowledge processes.

Recommendations

Referring to the analysis mentioned, there are a number of recommendations that could be considered :

a. The Ministry of the Empowerment of State Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform (Ministry of PANRB) together with the State Administration Institute (LAN) and the State Civil Service Agency (BKN) need to carry out a needs assessment for government human resource competencies before expanding URI. There needs to be a mapping of competence gaps based on positions, sectors, and bureaucracy. This is important to determine whether the gaps could be handled through strengthening the existing programs at LAN, IPDN, and other service universities.

The main problem related to the University of the Republic of Indonesia is that Indonesia does not need a new university. Indonesia actually needs a strategic policy that strengthens the ecosystem of higher education institutions. The improvement of education needs to guarantee academic freedom.

b. The Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology together with higher education institutions need to conduct consolidation and evaluation of educational ecosystem. This is important to map the mandates, study programs, the number of students, graduates, and the performance of each PTKL. The evaluation results could be used to identify overlapping programs.

c. The Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Finance need to prioritize the expansion of access to education, strengthening the capacity of higher education institution.

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