REPORT OF FINDINGS
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD)

The Impact of the United States-Indonesia Trade Agreement on Ecological Justice and Local Economic Conditions in Southeast Sulawesi

Organized by:

Indonesia For Global Justice (IGJ)

KOMNASDESA Southeast Sulawesi

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Introduction

This Focus Group Discussion (FGD) critically examines the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) between Indonesia and the United States, signed on 19 February 2026, with particular attention to asymmetries in trade relations and their implications for economic sovereignty, ecological justice, and local communities.

Several speakers, including Rahmat Maulana Sidik, Muhamad Karim, Prof. Yani Taufik, and David Efendi, argued that the substance of the agreement reflects a disproportionate burden of obligations on Indonesia, particularly in relation to access to strategic resources such as critical minerals and energy. The agreement is also seen as potentially reinforcing tendencies of ”new imperialism”, as conceptualized by David Harvey, while reflecting the ”illusion of free trade” criticized by Joseph Stiglitz. In addition, concerns were raised regarding the weakening of national policies such as domestic content requirements (TKDN), increasing environmental burdens, and the risk of Indonesia being reduced to a mere supplier of raw materials within the global economic chain.

From the perspectives of academics, civil society, and local communities, as expressed by Profesor Yani Taufik, Kiki Sriyanti, Nursadah, as well as Mando Maskuri, the agreement may accelerate ecological crises and social conflict in resource-rich regions such as Southeast Sulawesi. The expansion of the nickel industry has already triggered displacement, environmental degradation, and the weakening of local economies based on agriculture and fisheries.

Meanwhile, from the standpoint of the regional government, the phenomenon of ”pseudo-growth” suggests that the economic contribution of the mining sector is not commensurate with the socio-ecological burdens borne by the region.

Therefore, a comprehensive evaluation of the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) between Indonesia and the United States is necessary. This should be accompanied by strengthening the role of parliament and civil society, as well as formulating cooperation policies that place economic sovereignty, ecological justice, and public welfare as primary priorities.

Opening Remarks

Musaddar Mappasomba
Vice Chair, Regional Leadership of Muhammadiyah, Southeast Sulawesi

Muhammadiyah, within the dynamics of national and state life, has played an important role since the early days of the Republic. It has contributed to the emergence and development of national figures, as well as nurturing outstanding cadres who dedicate themselves to serving Indonesia.

In every political and social development, Muhammadiyah consistently positions itself as both a moral and intellectual force. It is not merely a passive observer, but an active stakeholder that offers perspectives, including in responding to various public policies that affect the interests of the people.

When policies are deemed not to serve the greater public good, Muhammadiyah pursues constitutional avenues through what is known as the ”constitutional jihad”—an effort to realign policy directions so that they remain consistent with the principles of justice and the public interest.

Muhammadiyah also continues to play a role in shaping the direction and orientation of the nation’s trajectory, grounded in progressive Islamic and national values.

As part of the regional leadership responsible for this area, I would like to emphasize that activities such as this are highly important and will always receive our full support. Differences of opinion within the dynamics of the movement are natural. However, as long as they are grounded in good intentions and a shared goal, namely, the welfare of the ummah and of the nation, such differences become a source of strength.

All Muhammadiyah initiatives are rooted in the spirit of *Amal Usaha* (institutional charitable endeavors), as a form of sustained service that is passed on to future generations. All of this is carried out solely for the sake of Allah SWT.

In this context, jihad should not be understood merely as physical struggle, but as a sincere and earnest effort to bring about good. If our endeavours are not grounded in devotion to Allah, they will lose their meaning and direction. However, when they are carried out for and with Allah, that is where true success lies.

Therefore, let us purify our intentions, strengthen our efforts, and place our full trust in Allah SWT in every step and contribution we make for this nation.

May what we do today bring benefit and the greater good to the ummah, the nation, and the state.

The Indonesia-United States Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) and Its Implications for the Free and Active Foreign Policy, Domestic Industry, and National Sovereignty

Rahmat Maulana Sidik, Executive Director of Indonesia For Global Justice (IGJ)

The Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) between Indonesia and the United States was signed on 19 February 2026 by Prabowo Subianto. The agreement emerged in the context of global tariff pressures triggered by policies introduced by Donald Trump, which placed Indonesia in a relatively weak bargaining position. Analysis indicates a substantive imbalance, reflected in the dominance of obligations placed on Indonesia compared to the United States, including in the areas of trade, the digital economy, and access to strategic resources such as critical minerals and energy.

Furthermore, the agreement has the potential to shift environmental burdens onto Indonesia, weaken national industrial policies such as domestic content requirements (TKDN), and position Indonesia as both a marker and a supplier of raw materials, while economic value-added is largely captured by foreign actors. Obligations to support the United States energy export infrastructure, along with various derivative arrangements, further reinforce these concerns. Indonesia for Global Justice views this agreement as a form of "neo-colonialism." Therefore, a comprehensive evaluation is required, along with strengthening the role of parliament and pursuing legal measures by civil society to ensure that national economic sovereignty, ecological justice, and the protection of public interests are maintained.

This theme is raised due to its significance and urgency within the context of national economic policy. On 19 February 2026, Prabowo Subianto signed a trade agreement with the United States known as the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART).

Tracing its origins, the idea for this agreement had already emerged in early 2025, when Donald Trump was re-elected and announced tariff policies targeting countries considered detrimental to the United States trade interests. These measures affected approximately 40 countries, including Indonesia, which at the time was subjected to a 30 percent tariff.

Subsequently, Indonesia undertook various lobbying efforts. However, geopolitical dynamics, including its involvement in BRICS, further worsened its position, leading to an increase in tariffs to 40 percent. Meanwhile, countries that did not engage in lobbying, such as Vietnam, faced tariffs of up to 90 percent. Under such pressures, Indonesia ultimately entered into the ART framework as part of the negotiation process.

The contents of the agreement are considered striking. There are approximately 214 instances of the phrase "Indonesia shall," indicating numerous obligations imposed on

Indonesia, ranging from requirements to consult to the adjustment or revision of strategic policies in the field of trade to accommodate United States interests.

In contrast, there are only around nine instances of the phrase ”United States shall,” none of which carry a strong binding force. In addition, several clauses explicitly refer to critical minerals, indicating the United States’ interest in securing access to and utilization of these resources.

Although the agreement is formally framed as one between equal parties, its substance reflects a significant imbalance, with the burden of obligations falling predominantly on Indonesia.

Within the realm of digital policy, the agreement also raises concerns. There are indications that Indonesia’s strategic measures in the digital economy must take into account, or may even require approval from, the United States. This condition could constrain Indonesia’s sovereignty in determining the direction of its own digital policies.

Moreover, there is potential for restrictions on cooperation with other countries, such as China and Russia, which may affect Indonesia’s flexibility in managing its international trade relations.

Access to Mineral Resources

The agreement is also viewed as opening very broad avenues for the United States to access and manage strategic resources in Indonesia. Article 6.1 of the Indonesia-United States Trade Agreement states that Indonesia “shall allow and facilitate U.S. investment in its territory to explore, mine, extract, refine, process, transport, distribute, and export critical minerals and energy resources.”

This provision indicates Indonesia’s obligation to open and facilitate United States investment across various strategic sectors, ranging from the exploration and extraction of critical minerals, processing and refining, to transportation, energy distribution, and the development of strategic infrastructure such as electricity and energy systems.

Furthermore, the phrase ”ensure secure and diversified supply chains” may be potentially interpreted as a requirement to guarantee supply chain security. In practice, this could involve the deployment of domestic security apparatuses to safeguard the extraction and distribution of resources.

Kondisi tersebut menimbulkan kekhawatiran akan meningkatnya eskalasi konflik di wilayah pertambangan, sekaligus memperbesar risiko kriminalisasi terhadap masyarakat yang terdampak atau menyuarakan penolakan terhadap aktivitas tambang.

This situation raises concerns about the potential escalation of conflict in mining regions, while also increasing the risk of criminalization of communities affected by or opposing mining activities.

Environmental Burdens on Indonesia

Another aspect of concern is the potential transfer of environmental responsibility to Indonesia. Article 2.36 states that Indonesia ”shall take measures to promote the recovery of critical minerals from waste streams.” This provision places Indonesia in the position of being responsible for managing waste generated from critical mineral industries.

The implication is that the burden of environmental remediation and the management of ecological impacts may fall entirely on Indonesia, while the United States does not bear equivalent obligations in this regard. This situation raises concerns about an imbalance of responsibility, particularly in addressing the risks of environmental degradation resulting from extractive activities.

For example, if nickel exploitation in Southeast Sulawesi results in pollution or environmental degradation, local governments may ultimately bear the ecological consequences.

On this basis, several observers argue that the substance of this agreement goes beyond a conventional trade relationship. Indonesia for Global Justice has even characterized it as a form of ”neo-colonialism” framed within a trade cooperation arrangement between Indonesia and the United States.

Is Indonesia Supporting the Promotion of U.S. Coal?

The agreement also contains provisions that raise concerns regarding the imposition of obligations on Indonesia to support the United States energy interests in the global market. Article 6.5 on Investment states that Indonesia “shall provide investment to help develop a U.S. West Coast export corridor, including developing export terminals, to increase U.S. coal's competitiveness in the international market.”

This provision indicates an obligation for Indonesia to contribute to financing the development of the United States coal export infrastructure, particularly along the West Coast, including regions such as Oregon, Washington, and California.

Substantially, this article may be interpreted as requiring Indonesia to support the enhancement of the United States coal competitiveness in international markets, both through infrastructure investment and indirect contributions to strengthening export supply chains.

This situation raises fundamental questions regarding Indonesia's position within the agreement, as it is not only acting as a trading partner but may also become a supporter of another country's energy commodity expansion in the global market.

The Weakening of Domestic Content Requirements (TKDN)

The agreement is also considered to have the potential to weaken Indonesia's Domestic Content Requirement (TKDN) policy. In practice, companies from the United States may be granted flexibility to operate without significant obligations to utilize local components, engage domestic labor, or develop national supply chains.

The implication is that Indonesia risks becoming merely a market and a supplier of raw materials, while industrial value-added, technological control, and greater economic benefits are instead captured by foreign actors. This condition is considered inconsistent with various national regulations, including Articles 85 and 86 of Law No. 3 of 2014 on Industry, Article 57 of Law No. 7 of 2014 on Trade, as well as Government Regulation No. 29 of 2018 on Industrial Empowerment.

In addition, following the signing of the ART agreement, at least 11 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) have been concluded, covering highly strategic areas. One example is the extension of contracts for major mining companies such as Freeport-McMoRan until 2061, reportedly without any significant new investment obligations.

In other sectors, agreements have also emerged concerning the import of shredded second-hand clothing. This policy raises concerns, as the capacity of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to process such materials remains limited, thereby risking Indonesia becoming a dumping ground for textile waste from abroad.

More broadly, the agreement also opens the door to the entry of various United States products, ranging from agricultural commodities to energy products such as liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). In this context, U.S. companies stand to gain greater advantages through increased exports to Indonesia.

Taken together, these dynamics indicate that the trade agreement affects not only economic aspects but also calls for strong national leadership aligned with domestic interests. Without careful management, Indonesia risks being placed in a disadvantaged position within the global trade structure, while foreign actors reap significant economic benefits.

Criticism and Legal Measures

Several parties, including Indonesia for Global Justice, view this agreement as resembling a form of ”neo-colonialism” operating through international trade mechanisms.

On the other hand, the House of Representatives (DPR), constitutionally, holds the authority to evaluate and annul international agreements deemed detrimental to national interests. However, no such action has been taken to date.

At present, a coalition of civil society organizations has also filed a lawsuit with the Jakarta State Administrative Court (PTUN) challenging the policy, raising several arguments that point to alleged legal violations in both the process and substance of the agreement.

The Impact of the United States-Indonesia Trade Agreement on Economic and Ecological Justice

Muhamad Karim, Lecturer at Trilogi University – Jakarta

This study presents a critical perspective on the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) between Indonesia and the United States, highlighting asymmetries in trade relations that point toward tendencies of new imperialism. Drawing on David Harvey's concept of accumulation by dispossession and Joseph Stiglitz's critique of the "illusion of free trade," the analysis examines how international trade rules are often structured to extract natural resources from developing countries through mechanisms that are inherently unequal (unfair trade rules).

Muhammad Karim elaborates on four strategic policy options for Indonesia in responding to the ART: maintaining the status quo, diversifying partnerships, renegotiating the agreement, or terminating it altogether. He emphasizes the urgency of a paradigm shift in global trade toward justice, equality, and national sovereignty, asserting that ecological sovereignty and local economic interests are non-negotiable principles that must not be sacrificed for access to exploitative global markets.

In his presentation, Muhamad Karim highlights two main aspects in assessing trade cooperation between Indonesia and the United States, particularly in the context of the Reciprocal Agreement.

First, asymmetrical relations and the emergence of new imperialism. Trade relations between developed and developing countries, including Indonesia and the United States, do not operate on equal footing. There is a tendency toward a new form of imperialism, in which developed countries encourage, or even impose, policies aimed at extracting natural resources from developing countries.

This phenomenon is closely linked to a global economic agenda oriented toward capital accumulation. The "America First" policy promoted by Donald Trump reflects efforts to dominate strategic resources, including critical minerals, amid global competition, especially between the United States and China, within the context of the energy transition.

Referring to David Harvey's work on *new imperialism*, the current global economic system can be understood as a form of "organized dispossession" (*accumulation by dispossession*), whereby crises of capitalism are addressed through the appropriation of resources from developing countries.

Second, a critique of the illusion of fair trade. Karim closed the presentation by quoting the arguments in the book, The *Fair Trade for All*, including Joseph Stiglitz's argument that free trade in reality was never free in practice

According to Stiglitz, international trade rules are often designed to benefit developed countries. In contrast, developing countries are compelled to open their domestic markets through mechanisms that are inherently unequal (unfair trade rules). As a result, protections for domestic economies become weakened.

Although the concept of *fair trade* is offered as a moral solution, Karim argues that this approach has limitations, as it relies too heavily on individual consumer awareness rather than on structural changes within the global trading system. In this context, agreements such as the ART are seen as a new form of economic imperialism, packaged within the framework of trade cooperation.

Muhamad Karim proposes four policy options that Indonesia may consider in responding to the ART agreement. First, maintaining the *status quo*, namely continuing the agreement without significant changes, with the risk of increasing dependency. Second, *strategic diversification*, which involves reducing dependence by developing alternative partnerships, such as with the European Union, Japan, and South Korea.

Third, *renegotiation* of the agreement, by reassessing its provisions and leveraging legal gaps and evolving global policy dynamics to secure technology transfer and more equitable benefits. Fourth, *termination* of the agreement, meaning a complete withdrawal in order to restore economic sovereignty and national control over resource management.

In conclusion, Karim emphasizes the need for a paradigm shift in how global trade is understood. Indonesia can no longer remain trapped in the illusion of "free trade," but must instead advocate for a trading system grounded in justice, equality, and national sovereignty. Ecological sovereignty and local economic interests must not be sacrificed merely for access to global markets.

The United States–Indonesia Trade Agreement: Ecological Impacts, Natural Resource Sovereignty, and Constitutional Implications

David Efendi, Secretary of the Institute for Hikmah and Public Policy (LHKP), Central Board of Muhammadiyah

The Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) is viewed as undermining national sovereignty and public welfare. The analysis focuses on three critical dimensions: the marginalization of civil society in policymaking, asymmetries within the cooperation framework, and ecological threats arising from unsustainable industrial downstreaming.

LHKP highlights the phenomenon of "sacrifice zones" in resource-rich regions such as Southeast Sulawesi, North Maluku, Papua, and Central Sulawesi, which bear the burden of environmental degradation and agrarian conflict for the benefit of global markets.

Grounded in the constitutional mandate of Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution, LHKP PP Muhammadiyah recommends the evaluation and annulment of unjust international agreements, the rejection of unconstitutional treaty mechanisms, and the reaffirmation of environmental protection principles and halal product guarantees as non-negotiable aspects. LHKP emphasizes the importance of sovereignty, ecological justice, and public participation in shaping the direction of national development.

In recent months, the Institute for Wisdom and Public Policy (LHKP) PP Muhammadiyah has taken a firm stance on two key issues: its response to the IDR 17 trillion BOP policy issue and the representation of civil society voices in national policymaking.

LHKP asserts that the state must open epistemic space for input from various stakeholders, including civil society organizations (CSOs) and academics. It is highly detrimental to research and public policy if the government closes itself off from independent input. Disregarding research constitutes a weakening of healthy democratic governance.

LHKP also underscores inequalities in the government's international cooperation practices. There are serious concerns regarding asymmetrical foreign relations, where policies appear not to reflect national sovereignty, particularly in the management of natural resources.

Based on the constitutional mandate under Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution, natural resources must be managed for the greatest prosperity of the people. International cooperation that undermines sovereignty over natural resources is therefore unconstitutional.

The impacts of the United States–Indonesia agreement are particularly evident in downstream industrialization and the ecological crisis. The government is seen as being driven by an “unlimited growth regime” in pursuit of global recognition, while sacrificing regions such as Southeast Sulawesi, North Maluku, Papua, and Central Sulawesi.

These regions have effectively become “sacrifice zones” for global markets, with little regard for local communities. This has resulted in human rights violations, violence, massive deforestation, tailings pollution, and agrarian conflicts (with more than 400 palm oil–related conflict areas identified).

The analogy is that Indonesia bears the full burden of waste and environmental degradation, while foreign actors reap the profits from exports. The state must stop acting as a “dishwasher” for the benefit of others.

Muhammadiyah has also expressed deep concern regarding regulatory provisions that contradict the Halal Product Assurance Law. The government is seen as weakening halal standards, including through policies such as zero tariffs on pork imports and low tariffs (5%) on alcohol, which risk institutionalizing the distribution of non-halal products without adequate information for consumers. Access to proper information regarding halal products is a fundamental consumer right that cannot be compromised.

Based on these points, LHKP PP Muhammadiyah puts forward the following demands:
First, the government must evaluate and annul all international agreements that do not provide reciprocal benefits and undermine national sovereignty.
Second, to employ termination mechanisms for agreements that are proven to be inconsistent with the mandate of Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution.
Third, to establish halal regulation and environmental protection as non-negotiable principles.

The Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) between Indonesia and the United States: Implications for Natural Resources and the Environment in Southeast Sulawesi, with a Focus on Policy Space and Downstreaming

Prof. Ir. Yani Taufik, M.Si., Ph.D., Lecturer at Halu Oleo University, Kendari

The Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) is often promoted as an instrument to expand market access. However, from a political economy perspective, it has the potential to undermine state sovereignty, particularly in the governance of natural resources. This presentation highlights how international trade provisions—such as National Treatment, Most Favoured Nation (MFN), and the ISDS mechanism—may threaten national downstreaming policies and trigger regulatory chill. Using a case study from North Konawe, the analysis shows that asymmetrical trade liberalization contributes to ecological degradation, the marginalization of traditional fishing livelihoods, and accelerated deagrarianization, all of which threaten social resilience at the rural level.

The agreement is therefore not merely a trade instrument, but also a political-economic tool that can influence national policies, particularly in the areas of natural resources and environmental governance.

Several strategic issues commonly arise in agreements of this kind. First, *National Treatment*: there is pressure not to favor domestic companies. On one hand, Indonesia is still categorized as an emerging economy, with many industries in early stages that require support to grow and compete with more established counterparts.

Second, *Most Favoured Nation (MFN)*: if Indonesia grants preferential treatment to one country, the same treatment must be extended to all ART partner countries. This reduces the flexibility of economic diplomacy. For instance, if Indonesia offers concessions to the United States, other countries may demand equivalent treatment, potentially creating widespread and difficult-to-control implications.

Third, *Investor Protection*: environmental regulations may be interpreted as barriers to investment, potentially leading to *regulatory chill*, where the state becomes hesitant to introduce new regulations. This situation increases the risk of disputes under ISDS (*Investor-State Dispute Settlement*).

ISDS is an international legal mechanism that allows foreign investors or multinational corporations to file claims against states or governments before international arbitration tribunals. In many cases, ISDS functions as a form of corporate privilege, enabling companies to challenge government policies, regulations, or laws that are perceived to harm their investments or expected profits.

Over the past decade, Indonesia has pursued downstreaming policies to ensure that more economic value is retained domestically rather than flowing abroad. However, such policies may be interpreted as restrictive under investment provisions. In practice, these crucial policies, which are designed to increase domestic value-added and strengthen national downstream industries, could be challenged by investors. Existing regulations may be deemed obstructive and become subject to future legal disputes.

There is a paradox between trade liberalization and environmental protection. This gives rise to what is known as *regulatory chill*, where the government becomes reluctant to enact strict environmental regulations for fear of being sued by foreign investors. Second, there is the intensification of natural resource exploitation. Expanded access to the United States market encourages increased extraction of natural resources, which in turn accelerates deforestation, land degradation, and pollution. If not balanced by strong environmental standards and consistent law enforcement, this will further exacerbate environmental damage.

One of the observed areas is Tappunggaya Village, Molawe Subdistrict, North Konawe Regency, studied between 2011 and 2022. The landscape has undergone significant changes over the past decade. Large areas have been opened up, coastal ecosystems have been damaged, and sedimentation has occurred.

The impact of mining land clearing on fishing communities, predominantly from the Bajo ethnic group, is particularly evident. Their fishing gear has had to be modified, as their traditional equipment was designed for limited range. Historically, Bajo fishers did not venture far to catch fish, as their catches were sufficient to meet household needs.

Due to sedimentation, however, Bajo fishers must now travel two to four times farther than before. This significantly increases their operational costs. Fish yields have declined sharply, and most fishers have shifted to new livelihoods. Nearly 100% of Bajo fishers in three villages—Tappunggaya, Tapuemea, and Mandiodo in Molawe Subdistrict, North Konawe—have changed professions, primarily into boarding house businesses, laundry services, and other activities no longer based on their inherited, traditional economic skills. New types of work have emerged suddenly, such as meatball vendors, boarding house operators, and laundry entrepreneurs.

However, these changes have also transformed the rural landscape. Forest cover has declined, agricultural land has decreased, and coastal sedimentation has significantly affected the environment. While these impacts may not yet be fully felt, within the next decade they are likely to become a burden for surrounding communities.

Another impact on villages in Molawe is the acceleration of economic globalization. While globalization cannot be avoided, its rapid pace often comes at the expense of local communities. It has become increasingly difficult to encourage young people to become farmers, influenced by perceptions of prestige, farming is seen as dirty work that does not generate adequate income. Children of farmers who study at universities in Kendari, including Muhammadiyah University and others, are reluctant to return to their villages after graduating, as rural areas are seen as offering little future opportunity. As a result, farming is left to older generations, while younger people move away from agriculture.

The agreement results in several implications. First, the relationship between Indonesia and the United States is not symmetrical or balanced. It is akin to a large distributor partnering with a small company. No business actor willingly becomes "Santa Claus," and as a result, exploitation is likely to occur, given the United States' advantages in technology, capital, and negotiating capacity. On the other hand, Indonesia remains dependent on commodity exports while attempting to promote downstream industrialization.

Because of this imbalance, the benefits are unevenly distributed—commonly referred to as *unequal gains*. In this case, Indonesia risks being confined to the role of a raw material supplier, for example providing nickel ore for processing abroad, despite efforts to promote downstreaming so that value-added benefits remain within the country.

Another implication concerns economic sovereignty. From a political economy perspective, the ART may shift the role of the state from an active regulator to merely a market facilitator. Indonesia may no longer be fully free to subsidize local industries, implement local content requirements (TKDN), or restrict foreign investment. This condition contradicts Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution, which mandates state control over natural resources for the greatest prosperity of the people.

Four key measures are proposed to mitigate the negative impacts of the agreement: **first**, the inclusion of a *Policy Space Clause*, ensuring exemptions for strategic sectors so that the state retains full authority to formulate public policies in the national interest, without being constrained by international trade rules. **Second**, the implementation of *Environmental Safeguards* by establishing minimum environmental standards that must be met by investors. Furthermore, all policies related to environmental protection and natural resource governance should be explicitly excluded from the scope of disputes under the ISDS mechanism. **Third**, reform of the ISDS (*Investor-State Dispute Settlement*) mechanism by limiting the scope of investor claims and ensuring full transparency and accountability in arbitration processes. This is essential to prevent the misuse of ISDS as a tool of pressure against governments. **Fourth**, strengthening global economic diplomacy by enhancing Indonesia's bargaining position through strategic alliances with countries of the Global South, in order to build a more solid bloc in facing the economic policy pressures of developed countries, and to ensure that international trade rules do not undermine sovereignty over natural resources.

The Impact of Indonesia–United States Cooperation on the Media Industry and Local Communities in Southeast Sulawesi

Nursadah, Chair of the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) Kendari

The implications of Indonesia–United States cooperation on the independence of the media industry and the protection of the rights of local communities, with a particular focus on Southeast Sulawesi, a region rich in natural resources. Amid the influx of foreign investment in the extractive industry sector, there is a tangible threat of media co-optation by corporate interests, which may manipulate public opinion and narrow the space for expression among communities affected by mining activities.

The Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) Kendari critiques the phenomenon of "media capture," whereby mining companies frequently utilize local media to legitimize their operations without adequately considering their social and environmental impacts. At the same time, it highlights the limited role of the state in protecting a public information space that serves the interests of communities affected by mining.

To respond to these challenges, AJI Kendari emphasizes the importance of strengthening the capacity of independent journalism, as well as the urgency of cross-sector collaboration among journalists, academics, NGOs, and civil society. This synergy is viewed as a vital mechanism of social control to safeguard media independence, ensure alignment with the public interest, and protect democracy from the threat of capital hegemony arising from the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) between Indonesia and the United States.

The discussion of the Indonesia–United States *Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART)* is not limited to trade aspects alone, but also encompasses broader implications, including potential threats to the independence of the media industry in Indonesia.

Within this cooperation framework, there are concerns that investors from the United States may gain significant access to and control over the media industry, both at the national and local levels. This situation could weaken information sovereignty and press independence, particularly if media ownership falls under the control of specific economic interests.

Southeast Sulawesi has become one of the strategic regions targeted due to its natural resource potential, especially in the mining sector. The influx of large-scale investment in this sector opens the possibility of linkages between mining companies and ownership of local media.

Previous experiences indicate that mining companies often utilize local media to shape public opinion in their favor, without providing fair space for the voices of affected communities. In such situations, communities risk losing access to objective information and the opportunity to express their aspirations.

However, there are still media outlets that maintain their independence and provide space for civil society, particularly communities affected by mining, to voice their experiences and demands.

The Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) Kendari affirms its commitment to: first, strengthening the capacity of journalists and media organizations so they are not easily influenced by information manipulation driven by industrial interests. Second, promoting independent, balanced journalism that serves the public interest. Third, opening the widest possible space for communities to express their voices and experiences.

In addition, AJI Kendari emphasizes the importance of collaboration among journalists, NGOs, academics, and civil society to address the potential negative impacts of such international cooperation. This collaboration is expected to strengthen advocacy, public education, and preparedness in facing various risks that may harm communities.

AJI Kendari considers that the dominance of foreign capital in investment may influence the direction of national policy, making the social control function of the media increasingly critical. If the media ceases to be independent, this will pose a serious threat to democracy and the protection of society.

On the other hand, there is criticism regarding the limited presence of the state in addressing the challenges faced by communities affected by mining. The government is seen as not yet optimal in ensuring the protection of community rights amid the expansion of extractive industries.

AJI Kendari underscores the importance of strengthening solidarity and cross-sector collaboration among journalists, NGOs, academics, and civil society to safeguard media independence and ensure that public policies remain aligned with the interests of the people.

Indonesia–United States cooperation, if not critically monitored, has the potential to threaten information sovereignty, narrow democratic space, and worsen conditions for communities in regions affected by mining or extractive industries.

The Impact of the United States–Indonesia Trade Agreement on Ecological Justice and Local Economic Conditions in Southeast Sulawesi

Kiki Sriyanti, KOMNASDESA Southeast Sulawesi

The implications of the United States–Indonesia trade agreement for ecological justice and local economic conditions, with a focus on Southeast Sulawesi as a global hub for critical mineral reserves. KOMNASDESA highlights the escalation of nickel mining exploitation driven by large-scale concessions, both through 168 Mining Business Permits (IUP) and 14 National Strategic Projects (PSN). The analysis outlines the systemic impacts arising from these developments, ranging from land dispossession and pollution of aquatic ecosystems to the erosion of economic resilience among fishing and farming communities on Wawonii Island.

KOMNASDESA Southeast Sulawesi critiques that such international trade cooperation has the potential to accelerate natural resource extraction without adequate environmental safeguards, thereby exacerbating ecological crises and social inequality. In response to these threats, KOMNASDESA emphasizes the urgency of active community involvement in spatial governance, strengthening critical education for affected communities, and advancing data-driven advocacy to demand policy evaluation and reform that prioritizes environmental sustainability and the welfare of the people of Southeast Sulawesi.

Critical minerals are mining resources with high global strategic value, with at least 47 types in high demand, including nickel, copper, tin, and cobalt. Indonesia is among the countries with the largest reserves of critical minerals in the world, particularly in Southeast Sulawesi, Central Sulawesi, and South Sulawesi—with Southeast Sulawesi as one of the primary regions.

However, behind this potential lies a serious threat to ecological justice and local economies. Currently, Southeast Sulawesi has 182 nickel Mining Business Permits (IUP) distributed across various regencies. The highest concentration is in North Konawe (86 IUP), followed by North Kolaka (22 IUP), Kolaka (18 IUP), South Konawe (18 IUP), Konawe (17 IUP), Bombana (13 IUP), and Konawe Islands (4 IUP). Meanwhile, the regions with the lowest number of IUPs are Central Buton (3 IUP) and Buton (1 IUP).

This data indicates that the exploitation of natural resources will continue to increase, especially with the push from international trade agreements such as Indonesia–United States cooperation. This situation raises concerns about large-scale expansion of the nickel industry in Southeast Sulawesi, including in sensitive areas such as Wawonii Island.

In addition, Southeast Sulawesi is surrounded by at least 14 National Strategic Projects (PSN) focused on the development of nickel industrial zones and the construction of smelters. These include Konawe Industrial Park (IKIP), Pomalaa Industrial Park, Motui, Kendari, Indonesia Giga Industrial Park (IGIP), Kolaka Resource Industrial Park (KRIP), and Tekno Hijau

Konasara (KITHK). At the same time, smelter development is also being carried out by various large companies in the regions of Bombana, Kolaka, and Konawe.

This expansion has had and will continue to have direct impacts on local communities. Many residents have experienced displacement as their areas fall within mining concessions. In coastal areas, marine pollution is beginning to threaten the livelihoods of fishers. One concrete example can be found on Wawonii Island, where research indicates water contamination at the mouth of the Roko-Roko River caused by nickel ore waste, affecting the community's source of clean water.

Significant changes in the landscape have also led to the reduction of forest areas and agricultural land. This has implications for the decline in community economic resilience, particularly for farmers and fishers who are highly dependent on environmental conditions.

Concerns are further heightened as mining activities are also taking place on small islands such as Wawonii, despite regulations prohibiting such activities. At present, several active Mining Business Permits (IUP) remain, including those held by PT Gema Kreasi Perdana, PT Bumi Konawe Mining, and PT Wawonii Makmur Jayaraya, along with the emergence of new permits for quarrying activities that further constrain community living space.

The impacts experienced are not only ecological, but also social and economic, including limited access to land, declining public health conditions, and disruption of community livelihoods.

In this context, KOMNASDESA Southeast Sulawesi emphasizes the importance of: first, active community participation in spatial planning and policymaking; second, strengthening critical public education regarding the impacts of extractive industries; third, data-driven advocacy to encourage policy evaluation and revision.

In addition, collaboration among NGOs, civil society, and various stakeholders is key to ensuring justice for communities living around mining areas.

KOMNASDESA Southeast Sulawesi assesses that the United States–Indonesia trade agreement has the potential to accelerate natural resource exploitation without adequate environmental and social safeguards. If not critically addressed, this situation will exacerbate ecological crises, social conflict, and economic inequality in the region.

Therefore, corrective measures are required through strengthening the role of civil society, enhancing policy oversight, and advocating for revisions to agreements that do not uphold ecological justice and the welfare of local communities.

The Struggle of the Wawonii Island Community Against Mining Expansion

Mando Maskuri, Representative of the Wawonii Island Community

The long-standing struggle of the Wawonii Island community against the expansion of the mining industry, which has been ongoing since 2007. Using a local community advocacy perspective, it examines three systemic crises triggered by inconsistencies in government policy: inconsistencies in the Regional Spatial Planning (RTRW), the misuse of the Agrarian Reform Land Object (TORA) program for corporate interests, and the disorderly management of Mining Business Permits (IUP) in small island areas.

Mando Maskuri's analysis shows that mining activities on Wawonii Island have caused severe ecological impacts, including damage to clean water sources and a drastic decline in agricultural and fisheries productivity, while also triggering social fragmentation and the criminalization of affected communities. Nevertheless, the Wawonii community's resistance movement has achieved important legal precedents through victories in the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court, reinforcing the prohibition of mining activities on small islands in Indonesia. Mando Maskuri emphasizes that the revocation of all IUPs on Wawonii Island is a crucial step toward restoring community living space, as well as upholding ecological justice and the sovereignty of coastal communities.

The resistance of the Wawonii Island community against the mining industry has been ongoing from 2007 to the present. The conflict emerged alongside the issuance of Mining Business Permits (IUP) by the regional government.

Several key events in the history of community resistance on Wawonii Island can be noted as follows. In 2010, residents of Mosolo Raya and Roko-Roko Raya villages expelled PT Bumi Konawe Mining (BKM) from their areas. A year later, in 2011, residents of Lampeapi Raya took similar action against PT Gema Kreasi Perdana (GKP).

In 2015, resistance re-emerged in Polara Village, where residents carried out acts of burning and expulsion against PT Derawan Berjaya Mining (DBM). This action resulted in the criminalization and imprisonment of one of the residents.

Subsequently, from 2017 to the present, resistance has continued consistently, particularly by residents of Roko-Roko Raya and Mosolo Raya, against the activities of PT GKP, which is part of the Harita Group.

There are three main crises arising from inconsistencies in government policy, both at the Konawe Regency level and the Southeast Sulawesi Provincial level.

First, the spatial planning (RTRW) crisis. The revision of the Regional Spatial Plan (RTRW) has not been completed since 2021. During the process, there are indications of inconsistencies in the document, where the main body of the RTRW does not include mining zones, yet the annex—legally an integral part of the document—includes mining areas. This condition is considered to contradict Supreme Court rulings that have corrected the inclusion of mining zones in the area.

Second, the crisis related to forest area status and the implementation of TORA. The Agrarian Reform Land Object (TORA) program of 2018, which was intended to strengthen community access to land, is suspected of being misused. Instead of benefiting residents, the program is alleged to have opened access for mining activities, particularly by PT Gema Kreasi Perdana (GKP). As a result, community-managed areas, including coastal settlements, have been categorized as forest zones, thereby reducing community living space.

Third, the mining licensing crisis. Of the total 15 Mining Business Permits (IUP) that were issued, 9 have been revoked and 5 others suspended. However, a new development has emerged with the issuance of one new IUP in 2025 by the Southeast Sulawesi Provincial Government, as recorded in the MODI database of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources. This situation reflects policy inconsistency in the midst of legal rulings that should serve as the basis for managing small island areas.

Mining activities on Wawonii Island, particularly those conducted by PT Gema Kreasi Perdana (GKP), have caused tangible impacts directly felt by the community, environmentally, economically, and socially.

First, environmental impacts. Sedimentation resulting from mining activities has reached knee height in community water sources. This condition has rendered three main rivers no longer functional as sources of clean water. In addition, water sources from mountainous areas have also been polluted and can no longer be used for daily needs.

Second, economic impacts. Agricultural productivity has declined drastically, particularly for cashew crops. Previously, harvests could reach 7–10 sacks, but in some areas yields have sharply decreased or even dropped to zero, and the same applies to fishers' income. This has had a direct impact on community income and economic resilience.

Third, social impacts. Mining activities have triggered horizontal conflicts among residents, resulting in social fragmentation at the community level. Residents are divided between those who support and oppose mining. At the same time, mining conflicts have led to criminalization, with at least 49 residents becoming involved in legal proceedings.

Nevertheless, the struggle of the Wawonii Island community has also resulted in several important victories that serve as national precedents in environmental protection, particularly in small island areas.

First, victory at the Supreme Court (MA). Through Decision No. 57 P/HUM/2022, the Supreme Court annulled the inclusion of mining zones in the Konawe Islands RTRW. Subsequently, through Decision No. 83 PK/TUN/TF/2025, the Court also revoked the forest area utilization permit (IPPKH) held by PT Gema Kreasi Perdana (GKP).

Second, victory at the Constitutional Court (MK). Through Decision No. 35/PUU-XXI/2023, the Constitutional Court rejected a judicial review petition concerning the Law on the Management of Coastal Areas and Small Islands (UU PWP3K). This decision further reinforces the prohibition of mining activities on small islands across Indonesia.

Third, administrative government action. The Ministry of Forestry, through Decree No. 264 of 2025, formally revoked the forest area utilization permit (IPPKH) of PT GKP.

Based on the various challenges faced, the Wawonii Island community has put forward urgent demands: first, the government is urged to revoke all remaining Mining Business Permits (IUP) in the Wawonii Island area. Second, the community demands the complete cessation of all mining activities that have been proven to damage the environment and disrupt the social and economic life of residents.

Moderator’s Note on Wawonii Island represents an important case in Indonesia’s environmental movement. The success of its residents in pushing for the revocation of several IUPs and winning legal cases at both the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court demonstrates that communities possess the capacity to defend their living space.

This case also illustrates how national policies and global dynamics can have direct impacts on environmental and social degradation at the local level. Therefore, the experience of Wawonii serves as an important lesson in strengthening future protection for communities and the environment.

Response of the Southeast Sulawesi Regional Government

The impacts of the expansion of extractive industries in Southeast Sulawesi through the perspectives of three regional government institutions: the Regional Research Agency, the Energy and Mineral Resources Office (ESDM), and the Manpower Office. Although the nickel mining sector has placed Southeast Sulawesi among the top five provinces with the highest economic growth in Indonesia, the analysis points to a phenomenon of "pseudo-growth." The significant contribution of the metal processing industry to Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) is considered disproportionate to the ecological and social burdens borne by the region, particularly due to declining environmental quality and the limited net economic benefits received by local communities.

From a governance perspective, the discussion highlights the marginalization of regional government roles due to the centralization of authority over strategic mineral management at the national level. This condition has made it difficult for local governments to conduct environmental oversight, monitor production, and collect taxes effectively. In the labor sector, a significant competency gap was identified; although the quantitative absorption of local labor has increased, local workers continue to occupy predominantly non-strategic positions, while foreign and non-local workers fill technical and managerial roles.

Regional Research Agency – Ir. J. Robert. MTP

In the discussion on the local economy and mining in Southeast Sulawesi, the representative of the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) emphasized that the region indeed possesses enormous mineral resource potential, particularly nickel. It is undeniable that the mining sector, smelters, and metal processing industries have driven regional economic growth to rank among the top five highest nationally. Nevertheless, this growth is considered "pseudo-growth."

The regional economic structure shows that the agriculture and fisheries sectors remain dominant in terms of employment, yet their contribution to Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) is relatively small, at around 20 percent. In contrast, the nickel and processing industries contribute more than 50 percent. This imbalance raises fundamental questions regarding the quality and sustainability of the economic growth taking place.

From the perspective of economic benefits, Bappeda considers that the gains received by the region are not proportional to the burdens it must bear. This can be seen in Konawe, particularly the Morosi industrial area, where economic growth has occurred without adequate planning. The impacts include increased population concentration, declining environmental quality, rising cases of illnesses such as acute respiratory infections (ARI), and the emergence of various new social problems.

When calculated comprehensively, including social costs and ecological losses, the economic benefits of the mining sector are considered not to provide significant net gains for the region. A similar situation exists in Routa, where contributions from the mining sector mainly take the form of central government transfer funds, which are insufficient to offset the environmental and social damage caused.

Data show that the revenue-sharing funds received by Southeast Sulawesi in 2025 amounted to approximately IDR 820 billion for public needs, but in 2026 this figure declined drastically to around IDR 200 billion. This decline, amid increasing environmental degradation and social burdens, may further strain regional finances.

In the context of international trade cooperation, including with the United States, Bappeda critically questions: what tangible benefits are actually received by regional governments? If current trends continue, economic gains are likely to be smaller than the long-term risks and losses that must be borne.

Experiences from other regions, such as tin mining in Sumatra, serve as an important lesson that the exploitation of natural resources without fair and sustainable management will only leave ecological and social burdens for future generations. Therefore, Bappeda emphasizes the importance of guarantees from the central government, economically, socially, and in terms of environmental protection, to ensure that natural resource management truly delivers equitable benefits for the regions.

Southeast Sulawesi Energy and Mineral Resources Office (ESDM) – Laode Faisal Rahman

In the context of mineral governance and oversight of mining exploitation in Southeast Sulawesi, the representative of the Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM) sector emphasized that authority over mining management is now largely centralized under the national government. This particularly applies to strategic metallic mineral commodities such as nickel, which is categorized as a critical mineral.

For regional governments, the scope of authority has become very limited. Currently, the provincial government’s focus is directed more toward the management of non-metallic minerals and quarry materials, while the management of metallic minerals is entirely under the control of the central government. Consequently, matters relating to licensing, production, distribution, and export of commodities such as nickel no longer fall within regional authority.

From the perspective of environmental regulation, the government refers to national policies such as Government Regulation No. 22 of 2021, which emphasizes reclamation and post-mining restoration obligations. However, in practice, oversight of these obligations is also largely controlled by the central government. This leaves regional governments with limited capacity to ensure corporate compliance with environmental standards.

In addition, regarding the production and sale of mining outputs, particularly those transported outside Southeast Sulawesi, the control system is likewise centralized. Production, distribution, and export data are mostly accessible only to the central government. Regional governments do not have full access to conduct comprehensive tracking, including in taxation and reporting aspects.

This situation creates challenges in overseeing natural resource exploitation, especially amid increasing mineral export activities, including exports to the United States. On the other hand, Southeast Sulawesi also possesses considerable potential in other resources such as limestone, which could serve as an alternative industrial raw material, particularly to support smelter needs. However, without sufficient authority, regional governments face difficulties in independently optimizing these resources.

Overall, mining governance in Southeast Sulawesi reflects a strong centralization of authority. Regional governments ultimately play only a limited role, primarily in managing non-metallic minerals, while strategic control over major natural resources remains at the national level.

Manpower Office (*Dinas Tenaga Kerja*) – Arman Jaya

Employment data in the mining sector in Southeast Sulawesi indicate a dynamic relationship between local and non-local workers. In Kolaka Regency, for example, the total number of workers in the mining sector in 2025 was recorded at 6,811 people. Of this figure, local workers accounted for 4,807 people (approximately 70.6%), while non-local workers totaled 2,004 people (approximately 29.4%). The high proportion of local workers is inseparable from regional policies in the form of local regulations (*Perda*) requiring companies to prioritize local labor recruitment. Nevertheless, an important question arises regarding the quality of the jobs filled by local workers: whether they truly occupy strategic positions or are limited to low-wage and high-risk jobs.

Unlike Kolaka, the number of workers in the mining sector in Konawe Regency is significantly larger. Approximately 17,656 workers are employed in companies such as Virtue Dragon Nickel Industry, Obsidian Stainless Steel, and PMS. This data formed the basis for the Southeast Sulawesi Governor's Decree No. 110.3.3.1/581 of 2025, which came into effect on January 1, 2026. However, in practice, non-local workers still dominate technical and strategic positions, particularly as heavy equipment operators requiring specialized skills.

The current Provincial Minimum Wage (UMP) in Southeast Sulawesi is approximately IDR 3,306,496 per month. However, limited access to training remains a serious challenge. The regional government is only able to train around 1,000 workers annually, while industrial demand is far greater. In addition, training for heavy equipment operators—which is crucial for filling strategic positions—is still conducted outside the region, as such training facilities are not yet available in Kendari.

On the other hand, the expansion of extractive industries has also encouraged the influx of foreign workers, currently estimated at around 12,000 people across various areas of Southeast Sulawesi. The presence of these foreign workers, most of whom occupy technical and managerial positions, further narrows opportunities for local workers to advance into higher-level roles. The regional government itself has limited authority, primarily restricted to supervisory functions, while permits for foreign workers fall under the authority of the central government.

Overall, this condition demonstrates that although the quantitative absorption of local labor has increased, the quality of employment and the positions occupied remain the primary concerns.

Participant Response Session

Dalam sesi tanya jawab, berbagai peserta dari kalangan akademisi, jurnalis, pemerintah, dan masyarakat sipil menyampaikan pandangan kritis terkait dampak pertambangan dan perjanjian dagang internasional terhadap Sulawesi Tenggara.

Imran Tumamora highlighted concerns over central government policies that encourage natural resource exploitation in pursuit of ambitions to position Indonesia as the "Asian Tiger." He stressed that protected forest areas in Routa are under threat of disappearing, despite their role as a crucial hydrological buffer for the Lasolo River. He also criticized the overlap of authority between the central and regional governments, whereby mining permits continue to be issued despite legal disputes and public opposition.

A **lecturer** from **Halu Oleo University (UHO)** expressed pessimism regarding the current state of democracy. According to him, government policies tend to proceed without adequate oversight. He emphasized the importance of strengthening the role of the House of Representatives (DPR) and encouraging the emergence of a strong opposition to ensure effective monitoring of state policies.

Other perspectives from academic circles highlighted that various civil society advocacy efforts to date have not been strong enough to halt the expansion of extractive industries. Cases of displacement and criminalization, such as those occurring in Bombana, demonstrate that local communities remain the most vulnerable parties. The fundamental question raised was: what concrete steps can be taken to respond to the impacts of the trade agreement?

A participant from **civil society** argued that the trade agreement resembles a form of neocolonialism, in which developing countries are positioned as suppliers of raw materials for global interests.

Bambang, a journalist from *SultraTop*, emphasized the importance of collaboration among journalists, NGOs, and academics. He also highlighted labor issues, including the layoffs of approximately 4,000 workers in North Konawe.

Another lecturer advocated for a comprehensive audit of all Mining Business Permits (IUP). He also highlighted the environmental impacts of coal use as an energy source, which contributes to declining air quality and public health in mining areas. In addition, he proposed strengthening the role of Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) to support local economies.

Responses from Speakers and Government Representatives

A representative from the Energy and Mineral Resources Office (ESDM) explained that the status of IUPs in Wawonii is still undergoing administrative processes, and some have not yet been fully registered in the official system. The office stated that it has requested regional governments to conduct evaluations and revoke problematic permits.

The Manpower Office (*Dinas Tenaga Kerja*) added that the handling of layoffs is conducted through industrial relations mechanisms at both the regency/city and provincial levels, involving mediators according to their respective authorities.

Muhammad Karim from Trilogi University reminded participants that the lifespan of the mining industry is relatively short, approximately 10-15 years. He cited conditions in Bangka Belitung as a lesson that dependence on mining can leave long-term damage. He stressed the importance of building a more sustainable local economy that is not dependent on the extractive sector.

Kiki Sriyanti emphasized that the various parties present at the forum already share a common understanding regarding the impacts of the trade agreement on the region. Therefore, strategic steps are needed to campaign on this issue at a broader level.

Prof. Yani stressed the importance of improving national capacity and competitiveness so that Indonesia is not always placed in a weak position in international cooperation. He also proposed **the management of sovereign wealth/endowment funds** and **the formulation of more targeted Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) schemes** to support regional development.

Prof. Yani also highlighted that local workers are still predominantly concentrated in non-strategic positions, such as security personnel and manual labor. Ideally, local workers should be encouraged to occupy middle- to managerial-level positions through capacity-building and greater access to education.

Discussion participants also observed that the increase in income among communities surrounding mining areas is often illusory. Rising incomes are not proportional to increases in living costs, environmental degradation, and the loss of access to natural resources such as clean water.

Rahmat Maulana Sidik from **Indonesia for Global Justice (IGJ)** highlighted the weak oversight exercised by the DPR over international agreements, as well as the importance of gender perspectives in policy advocacy. He also warned that over the past year, Indonesia's foreign policy direction has tended to prioritize the export of raw natural resources.

David Efendi from LHKP PP Muhammadiyah expressed support for legal challenges against the agreement. He stressed the importance of learning from other regions in order to avoid the "resource curse," where natural wealth fails to generate prosperity for local communities.

Finally, **Mando Maskuri** firmly reiterated the stance of the Wawonii Island community: they do not need nickel mining. He called on all parties to strengthen collaboration, through both litigation and non-litigation avenues, in order to protect community living spaces.

Moderator's Note – Parid Ridwanuddin, Researcher/Academic

Parid Ridwanuddin emphasized that the development direction of Southeast Sulawesi must be restructured by placing community-based local economies as the primary foundation. Strengthening real sectors such as agriculture and fisheries should become a priority through policies that favo

r the people rather than merely extractive industries. In addition, transparent and equitable distribution of information to the public is essential so that communities can consciously participate in decision-making processes.

In terms of policy and advocacy, the moderator highlighted the importance of overseeing ongoing legal processes, including judicial review efforts at the Constitutional Court.

Regional governments are also encouraged to formulate strategic schemes such as the establishment of sovereign/endowment funds derived from natural resource revenues, in order to ensure sustainable development and the long-term welfare of the people of Southeast Sulawesi.

The forum also recommended the revocation of all IUPs on Wawonii Island as a measure to protect community living spaces and the ecosystems of small islands.

Moving forward, the key lies in collaboration among universities, civil society organizations (CSOs), and local communities in conducting critical evaluations and strengthening collective movements. Such efforts are essential for safeguarding regional sovereignty while confronting the dominance of global interests, including within the context of economic relations with major powers such as the United States.

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