



Connecting Policymakers and Knowledge Makers

Jakarta, July 6th 2021 – Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia is currently hosting the 19th International Congress of the International Economic Association (IEA). On the last day of the 5-day event, the Congress had a panel about “Translating Evidence into Action, the Delicate Dancing Between Policymakers and Knowledge Makers”. This panel was chaired by CEO Asakreativita Vivi Alatas, with speakers Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Nadiem Makarim, Vice Minister of Finance Suahasil Nazara and Director of the Center for International Development Sumitomo-FASID Professor of International Finance and Development Prof. Asim Khwaja.

Challenges in the policy-making process can come from differences in the working process of bureaucrats, academics and the private sector. In the Ministry, according to Nadiem, bureaucracy works in a very different way compared to when he was still working in the private sector. To improve the condition, he needs to break up the silos that come from the ministry, academia and private sectors.

On the same occasion, Suahasil mentions the importance of academics and bureaucrats to understand each other, because each of them has a quite different sphere. “Not only bureaucrats must change, academics must also be able to see the differences in this sphere. For example, academics must be able to present ideas that are acceptable to bureaucrats, keeping in mind that there will be a political connection in the bureaucratic process. On the other hand, bureaucrats must also begin to be able to accept various ideas from academic research, to increase knowledge for the benefit of policy making,” said Vice Minister of Finance.

Next, to increase collaboration between the two, Suahasil also highlighted the importance of data access. Data that are owned by Government and related Institutions such as State Budget, Socio-Economic Survey (Susenas), National Workforce Survey (Sakernas), Village Potential (PODES), and other data funded by Government should be publicly available, free of charge, and accessible to all.

Meanwhile, Prof. Asim also supports the thoughts of the speakers, noting that these academics, practitioners and bureaucrats stand on their own “island”. In addition, academics themselves have various groups with different disciplines. Therefore, it is important to keep them connects with private sectors and bureaucrats.

To increase cooperation among these sectors, the Ministry of Finance seeks to encourage Indonesian human resources to collaborate at the international level. Indonesia is a country that is rich in data, which is an important aspect for Indonesia to attract various researches on a global scope. The Indonesian government has allocated scholarship program and research budget through the LPDP, to improve the quality of Indonesian human resources so that they are ready for international collaboration. “Then, we can give access to policy making. I'm sure many researchers are very interested to see if their ideas can be translated into real policy,” he said.

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