

Indonesian Cultural Diplomacy Towards Vanuatu: Review of the 7th Melanesian Arts and Festival (MacFest) 2023 in Port Vila Vanuatu

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Abstract

This study aims to First provide an overview of how the relationship between Indonesia and Vanuatu has been so far; Second, Analyze the relationship between the two countries and the obstacles and prospects obtained in the cooperation between the two countries; and third objective is to illustrate the importance of cultural diplomacy carried out in strengthening relations between the two countries in the Indo-Pacific region. This research was conducted using the Qualitative research method, which describes the object under study by collecting direct or primary data by being an active participant in the 2023 Melanesian Arts and Festival activities in Port Vila, Vanuatu, as well as indirect data through library sources, laws, and regulations as well as through internet media. The data obtained is then processed using the triangulation method, which is tested for correctness of the data several times to be filtered and used as valid data. The output of this study found that the importance of cultural diplomacy built by Indonesia and Vanuatu as countries in the Indo-Pacific Region with populations also from Melanesia became a strong foundation for good relations between these two countries and minimized conflicts that might occur due to issues built by two countries in the country, one of which was the issue of human rights violations due to the independent Papuan separatist movement.

Keywords: Cultural Diplomacy, Indonesia, Vanuatu, Melanesian Arts and Festival 2023, Port Vila.

M Indonesia's relations with Pacific countries can be said to be going well. Many countries in the Pacific are geographically close to Indonesia, including several South Pacific countries such as Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Samoa, Salomon Island, Nauru, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Kiribati, Tuvalu, and Palau. Some countries, such as Papua New Guinea and Fiji, have quite good cooperative relations and are closely related to various forms of cooperation.

Indonesia's relationship with one of the countries in the region, such as with Vanuatu, can be said to experience ups and downs due to various human rights violations often committed by the Vanuatu state in international forums that disrupt relations between the two countries. In the practice of international relations, foreign policy taken by a country on an international issue certainly cannot be separated from the decision-making process within the country. This can also be observed in Vanuatu's foreign

policy, which supports the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP) to secede from Indonesia. In supporting Papuan independence, Vanuatu has asked countries in the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) to support its policy in submitting a resolution to the United Nations General Assembly to grant Papuans the right to determine their destiny (Putera, 2016).

Pioneering the historical process of Vanuatu's support for the issue of Papua, it can be seen that Vanuatu, which has similarities in Melanesian ethnicity with Papua, expressed its support for Papua to become independent from Indonesian colonization since 1980. Vanuatu raised ethnic and human rights issues to support Papuan independence. As a small country in the South Pacific, Vanuatu is interested in prioritizing the welfare of fellow ethnicities despite different regions. Vanuatu's actions are a form of solidarity that the founders of Melanesian countries have built through the principle of the Melanesian Way. Ethnic issues are closely related to human rights, especially in the support provided by Vanuatu, so ethnicity and human rights become domestic politics, which also affects foreign policy orientation. Vanuatu, positionally disadvantaged internationally, can use smart diplomatic tactics to convey its interests in Papua. Vanuatu's small-country diplomacy is clever because it utilizes certain issues to present international forums and mobilizes other small countries in the region to support Vanuatu's interests. In addition, Vanuatu's interest in supporting Papuan independence also involves Vanuatu's desire to become a Melanesian regional leader. The Melanesian Renaissance motivated Vanuatu to become a Melanesian regional leader. Although his position in international forums is small, his persistence in voicing the Melanesian Renaissance about decolonization made Vanuatu an active country compared to other Melanesian countries. Diplomatic efforts on human rights and ethnic issues are championed consistently by Vanuatu's leaders in every international forum to gain sympathetic support. In practice, support for

the Vanuatu government for Papuan independence cannot be separated from domestic politics emphasizing ethnic welfare, which is included in Vanuatu's parliamentary motion. This Parliamentary Motion is related to support for Papuan independence and investigating human rights violations in Papua. In addition, the Melanesian Spearhead Group cannot be separated from amplifying their voices by inviting all countries in the Melanesian region to support the independence of Papua, with Vanuatu as the driving force (Putera, 2016; Wardhani, 2023).

Vanuatu's support for Papuan independence can be said to have been consistent support and continues to be carried out by Vanuatu since the last few years, including in 2003 when the government of Prime Minister Barak Sope, Vanuatu hosted a Papuan independence movement event in Port Villa (Goessler, 2017). Then, in 2014, under Prime Minister Moana Carcasses, Katokai Kalosil Vanuatu officially condemned human rights violations committed by the Government of Indonesia in Papua at the 25th UN High Session of Human Rights (Pacific Media Center, n.d.). In 2016 and 2017, Vanuatu again raised the issue of Papua at the United Nations Forum, although Vanuatu's efforts received opposition from Indonesian diplomats in each of those years (Prihantoro Nugroho, 2017). Vanuatu's most recent support for the ULMWP in Papuan independence came in 2019 when a Vanuatu delegation on January 25 met with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland, to discuss developments in Vanuatu's human rights issues known as the Universal Periodic Review. Apparently, without the knowledge of the UN high commissioner for human rights, Vanuatu included Benny Wenda's name in his delegation. Benny Wenda himself is the chairman of ULMWP (Miles et al., 2014; Zahidi, 2020).

The relationship between Indonesia and Vanuatu due to the Free Papua separatist movement and wing organizations that support it, such as the ULMWP, has resulted in

complicated bilateral relations between the two countries. In its development, Indonesia has made various efforts to establish good relations with all countries in the Indo-Pacific Region, including Vanuatu. One of the efforts made by Indonesia is to conduct public diplomacy through cultural events that involve Indonesian cultural contingents in the Melanesian Arts and Cultural Festival organized by the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) for member countries. As is known, the 20th Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Summit in Honiara, Solomon Islands, on 24-26 June 2015, upgraded Indonesia's status from observer to associate member or member. Previously, Indonesia was an observer at the 18th MSG Summit in Fiji in March 2011. According to Indonesian Deputy Foreign Minister A.M. Fachir (2015), as an associate member, Indonesia is committed to continuing to promote close and concrete cooperation with MSG. where also said that Indonesia continues to explore potential and try to overcome the challenges that will be faced together in the Pacific Region with its participation as a member of the MSG as currently, Indonesia is home to 11 million ethnic Melanesians in 9 (Nine) Provinces in Indonesia namely Papua, West Papua, Mountain Papua, Central Papua, South Papua, Southwest Papua, Maluku, North Maluku, and East Nusa Tenggara.

Based on the description above, this study was conducted to obtain an in-depth analysis of Indonesia's cultural diplomacy in the 2023 Melanesian Arts and Cultural Festival activities in Port Vila, Vanuatu, and the positive impacts but also obstacles that occur so that they become capital in strengthening bilateral relations in the cultural diplomacy model with various countries, especially countries in the Indo-Pacific Region.

Theoretical Framework

Foreign Policy Theory proposed by K.J.Holsti assumes that foreign policy is the state's policy, attitude, or action, which is the output or output of foreign policy; the output is

the action or thought compiled by decision-makers to overcome changes in the international environment. Thus, foreign policy formed by a state describes a state action that leads to a certain situation that is influenced by conditions, space, time, and both domestic and international conditions. In addition, the goals that can be achieved through foreign policy are security, independence, and welfare, including status and prestige (Affianty, 2021; Holsti, 1919).

Meanwhile, George Modelski defines foreign policy as a system and activity developed by a state to change another state's behavior to adapt its activities to the international environment, including strategies, commitments, and tactics adopted and used to realize the goals and interests of the state (Bakry, 2017; Wangge & Lawson, 2023).

The concept of International Culturology, according to Yuri Lotman, Vyachhelaslav Ivanov, and Vladimir Toporov in the study of international relations decades ago, has expressed the importance of seeing Culturology as a branch of social science in analyzing and understanding cultural systems and activities as part of Sociology, Ethnology, and Anthropology. The connection with international relations is to understand the cultural diversity of various countries neighboring or in the same region and region with different ethnicities and the same ethnicity. This concept also expresses the importance of understanding, communicating, and achieving certain goals outside their culture and interacting well with similar cultures. This international culturology concept can achieve cooperative relations between all world communities (Bakry, 2017).

In addition, according to Yu Xintian, international cultureology as cultural research in international relations is very important because many international phenomena cannot be explained using geopolitical and geoeconomic points of view. Through culturology, the development and dynamics of international relations can be understood through cultural

approaches and cross-cultural relations (Xintian, 2004).

In addition to Foreign Policy Theory and the Concept of International Cultureology, this research also uses Public Diplomacy Theory, in which there is one component of Public Diplomacy, namely Cultural Diplomacy. Cultural Diplomacy, according to Nicholas J. Cull, is that cultural diplomacy is included in the component of public diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy is useful in attracting the international community by creating cultural resources that can be known by many people or through cultural exchanges with other countries. Furthermore, according to him, Cultural Diplomacy is an actor's effort to manage the international environment by creating cultural resources and their achievements known abroad and facilitating cultural transmission abroad (Cull, 2009).

In this cultural diplomacy, there are two characteristics, namely the participation of the state both in the implementation of ideology and financial support and the following characteristic is that the target of cultural diplomacy is to attract public attention and interest so that the issue is low politics. Cultural diplomacy can shape the image of a country to foster state confidence in the country's achievements and potential, which will then affect national interests in various fields, such as economics and politics, and especially the image of the country to be more positive as seen from the number of people who follow the culture of a country. Cultural diplomacy is the exchange of ideas, information, art, language, and other cultural aspects among nations and their peoples to foster mutual understanding between two countries or parties to diplomacy (Cummings, 2003).

Literature Review

According to Siti Afifah Khatrunada and Gilang Nur Alam (2019), this is how Indonesia packs the principles of cultural diplomacy, namely the Principle of Transmission, the Principle of Acceptance, and the Principle of

Coexistence through the International Gamelan Festival 2018 in Solo so that it affects Indonesia's image in the world. Cultural Diplomacy by Indonesia through the International Gamelan Festival 2018 is aimed at foreign participants participating in the festival activities. The results of this study show that the implementation of the International Gamelan Festival 2018 has an influence on Indonesia in increasing positive views of foreign audiences, especially foreign participants, through cultural content contained in the festival. In addition, this diplomacy can also help Indonesia provide knowledge and introduction about Indonesian culture to foreign participants who participated in the 2018 International Gamelan Festival in Solo (Khatrunada & Alam, 2019).

Meanwhile, Lidya Desriyanti wrote that Wayang Kulit diplomacy is one of the steps to introduce Indonesian culture through Wayang Kulit in the United States and that abroad, the echo of Wayang is getting bigger, and the fans are increasing. For example, Wayang and gamelan owners currently number more than 150 people in the United States. In Asia Pacific countries, many cultural centers collect puppets. Neighboring Malaysia even bought large puppets and gamelan to distribute to schools. As a work of art, Wayang is indeed a special object. The efforts made by Indonesia to succeed in Wayang Kulit's performance activities as diplomacy is carried out by all circles, both government and non-government institutions, as well as citizens and communication media who cooperate. Wayang Kulit's diplomacy efforts in the United States are supported by the R.I. Embassy in Washington, D.C., which always helps all Indonesian arts and culture activities. Wayang Kulit's performance activities aim to introduce Indonesian art and culture abroad, especially in the United States. This is Indonesian diplomacy channeled through art and culture, and this shadow puppet performance is one of its weapons.

This shadow puppet diplomacy has an educative function with its style of speech and

uniqueness. Therefore, the values of beauty and the moral message it conveys to society are more effective. Wayang is not just a spectacle, but also guides the form of moral teachings through the various characters it plays (Desriyanti & Iskandar, 2017).

Next is research from Leonardo on South Korean Cultural Diplomacy and its Implications for South Korean bilateral relations that South Korea conducts cultural diplomacy for the spread of culture and market expansion in Indonesia. Hallyu carried out as an instrument for implementing cultural diplomacy, has a positive influence in the economic, political, social, and cultural fields. Indonesian people are very fond of Korean celebrities and their music, so the South Korean government, in collaboration with Korean companies, uses K-Pop celebrities' strategy as icons of promotion of Hallyu culture and Korean products such as Samsung and LG. This is done considering the consumptive Indonesian people with a fever for Korean culture. Not only that but typical Korean food is also spread in Indonesia. Good political relations between countries will naturally bring cooperation in other fields will be included. Because of the interest of Indonesian people in K-Pop, the music industry in Indonesia began to change the pattern of music by following Korean-style music. It can be seen that Korean-style Indonesian boy groups and girl groups are starting to emerge. The genre of music created by boy groups and girl groups also follows the Korean style but the Indonesian version (Leonardo, 2019).

Meanwhile, Melyana R. Pugu, in Sports Diplomacy as one of the tools of public diplomacy towards South Pacific countries, said that diplomacy could be done in various ways, including culture and sports, because exercising can strengthen relations between two countries. Where in his research, it was found that sports diplomacy can be a tool of Indonesian public diplomacy in dealing with South Pacific countries related to the issue of independent Papua because sports diplomacy can strengthen

kinship relations between two countries and negative views related to Indonesia and the Papua problem can be minimized or even lost and on the other hand certainly improve Indonesia's diplomatic relations with South Pacific countries (Pugu, 2022).

According to Risky Novialdi and Saddam Rasanjani in their article Assessing the Opportunities and Challenges of Paradiplomacy practices, local governments in Indonesia in the Indo-Pacific Region show that in addition to the importance of cultural diplomacy, the Indonesian government, which is part of countries in the Indo-Pacific region, must be bolder in delegating their foreign policy practices to sub-state actors such as Provinces and Municipalities. Through the involvement of these sub-state actors, foreign policy goals, especially for regional interests, will be easier to achieve. However, of course, some challenges must be faced by these opportunities. Provinces that want to secede from the central state, giving too much power to practice para diplomacy, can be abused or called proto-diplomacy (Novialdi & Rasanjani, 2022).

Based on the literature review above, the practice of diplomacy carried out by state stau against other countries can be carried out using public diplomacy involving state parties, namely the government not only at the central level but also the region needs to be involved and other actors such as culturalists, actresses, academics so that cultural diplomacy brought by one country to another will succeed and strengthen relations between two countries.

Research Methods

This research uses the Qualitative Research Method with data analysis using the Analysis Interactive Model technique developed by Miles and Huberman. The purpose of this method is to unite ideas or ideas with facts obtained during research. The process of processing data to be presented in the form of research results is carried out with several parts: data collection, data reduction, data presentation (data display),

and conclusion drawing or verification (conclusions) (Miles et al., 2014). This study also describes the object under study by collecting direct or primary data by participating actively in the 2023 Melanesian Arts and Festival activities in Port Villa, Vanuatu, as well as indirect data through library sources, laws, regulations, and internet media. The data obtained is then processed using the triangulation method, which is tested for correctness of the data several times to be filtered and used as valid data.

Result and Discussion

Vanuatu Overview

The first European to discover Vanuatu was Fernandez de Quiros, a Portuguese explorer who worked for the Kingdom of Spain. Quoted from the book *A Loose Canon: Essays on History, Modernity, and Tradition* (2007) by Brian J. Coman, on May 4, 1606, De Quiros anchored on an island now part of Vanuatu. The area was then made a colony by the Kingdom of Spain, which was still united with the Portuguese (from 1580 to 1640). Until then, Vanuatu fell to France and Great Britain or Britain in 1880. Towards the end of 1906, writes Felix Speiser in *Ethnology of Vanuatu* (1999), France and Britain agreed to form a joint government or condominium called the New Hebrides. While most Asian nations became independent after World War II, Vanuatu remained a French and British colony. The independence movement in Vanuatu only emerged in 1970. Until finally, on July 30, 1980, Vanuatu gained independence. However, it was still a British Commonwealth country connected to the United Kingdom and a member of the Francophonie, an organization consisting of French-speaking countries (Wardhani, 2023).

Vanuatu celebrated independence from French and British occupation on July 30, 1980, 42 years ago. The history of the island country located in the South Pacific was indeed attached to the colonization of European nations. Vanuatu also supports West Papua becoming independent and independent from the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). The country

covers an area of only 12 thousand square kilometers with a population of 270 thousand people, and its capital is Port Villa. Vanuatu is east of Australia, west of Fiji, and south of the Solomon Islands. The indigenous people of Vanuatu are Melanesians, a group with Papuans in Indonesia, Aborigines in Australia, some Timorese and Papua New Guineans, and indigenous peoples of other countries in the South Pacific region such as Fiji, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, and Samoa. The term Melanesia was first used in the 19th century by European explorers to reference an ethnic group and classification of islands in the South Pacific and beyond. However, as quoted from the *Journal of Pacific History* (2003), classification with a racial perspective is now considered inappropriate, so Melanesia is only used in a geographical context. The territory of Vanuatu is only almost the size of the Maluku Islands in Indonesia, with 843 islands. This country is an earthquake-prone area because it is adjacent to tectonic plates. For example, on November 20, 2017, and December 5, 2018, Vanuatu was rocked by magnitude 7 and 7.5 earthquakes. In addition, a row of volcanoes or ring of fire also crosses Vanuatu, so this country has many volcanoes that are still active. In 2018, one of Vanuatu's volcanoes, Mount Manaro, erupted, so more than 11 thousand residents had to be evacuated to safer places (Zahidi, 2020).

The first Prime Minister of Vanuatu, Walter Hadye Lini (1980-1991), stated that Vanuatu's independence would not be complete until the entire Melanesian nation and region was free from colonialism. This is the origin and reason Vanuatu supports West Papuan independence. Bernard Narokobi in *The Melanesian Way* (1983) mentions that Melanisia includes Papua or West Papua, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, and Fiji. On this basis, Vanuatu continues encouraging Papua/West Papua to become independent from the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). Until now, the Vanuatu government has often brought human rights issues to

international forums, including the United Nations (UN) General Assembly. Vanuatu Prime Minister Charlot Salwau's statement at the UN Forum in 2017 was that there was torture, murder, exploitation, sexual violence, and arbitrary detention of West Papuan citizens carried out by Indonesia. This accusation was again made at the 73rd UN General Assembly in October 2018 (Putrohari et al., 2015; Wati et al., 2018).

Melanesia is not a name that refers to a region or country; it is a popular name referring to the population and its residential areas. This word comes from two words: *melas*, which means black, and *nesoi*, which means islands. The name was coined by a French botanical sailor in 1832. It was used to refer to the population of black people who inhabited the archipelago from the western tip of the Pacific Ocean to Fiji (Putrohari et al., 2015). The existence of racial similarities between Vanuatu and Papua, namely the Melanesian race, is one of the causes of Vanuatu's continued support for Papua. Ethnic closeness impacts the emotional connection between Papua and Vanuatu, commonly called the Melanesian Connection (Leonardo, 2019).

Indonesian Cultural Diplomacy at the Melanesian Arts and Cultural Festival 2023

Indonesian Cultural Diplomacy through Indonesia's participation in the 7th Melanesian Arts and Cultural Festival in 2023 in Port Vila as part of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) activities of which Indonesia is a member. Looking at the history of the establishment of the MSG, this organization was formed in 1988 with the signing of the Agreed Principles of Co-operation among Independent States of Melanesia in Port Vila, Vanuatu. The MSG officially became a sub-regional organization on 23 March 2007 through the Agreement Establishing the Melanesian Spearhead Group (Putrohari et al., 2015). The establishment of MSG by the MSG Vision that the author notes from the official secretariat office of MSG in Port Vila is a strong, integrated, bound, happy,

prosperous, safe, and caring community. At the same time, the objectives of the MSG are political stability, economic prosperity, social equality, inclusivity, and sustainable development (Pugu, 2022).

MSG memberships are Fiji, Front de Liberation Nationale Kanak et Socialiste (FLNKS), Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Indonesia, which has a Melanesian population of around 13 million people, was accepted as an Associate Member (AM) at the 20th MSG Leaders' Summit in Honiara, Solomon Islands, in June 2015 after being an observer at the 18th MSG Leaders Summit in Fiji, March 2011. The MSG Secretariat was established in Port Vila, Vanuatu, in May 2008. The current Director General of SG is Dr Leonard Louma, OBE of PNG (Lusiani, 2019; Nurhapsari, 2020).

The local community warmly welcomed Indonesia's participation in the 7th Melanesian Arts and Culture Festival (MACFest) 2023. The performances of two teams of Indonesian artists, namely Papua in Love and Leisplang from Maumere, East Nusa Tenggara, received appreciation from the community in Port Vila, where MACFest 2023 was held. The Papuan in Love artist team, consisting of Papuan singers Michael Jakarilimena, Lala Suwages, Frans Sisir, and Boii Soasoa, entertained Vanuatu residents with Melanesian music tinged with Indonesian music characteristics. The songs "Kawarine", "Wayawai Windawe" and "Diru Diru Nina O" as well as several songs sang together. In addition to musical performances, it was also enlivened by dance performances by Kasbi Dance, who are members of this team.

There were many attractions in the Macfest 2023 activity, so the audience was amazed by the performance of the Leisplang village music group from Maumere, East Nusa Tenggara, who performed the dance "Ikun B'eta" followed by the songs "Sora" (Song For Children) and "Gemu Fa Mi Re". The combination of sounds originating from various traditional musical instruments, such as Gong, Waning, Sa'your,

Jimbe with Terren Bass, Juk (Ukulele), Benyol (Benjo), and violin becomes an extraordinary harmony with the verses of the songs performed. Markus Maryolys Verrystanto, often called Erik, revealed it was the Leisplang group's first appearance abroad. "We are very proud of this opportunity, and it makes us more enthusiastic about preserving traditional music," he said. Erik added that it shows that Indonesian traditional music has received appreciation abroad. In line with Erik, Putri Nere, a team of artists from Papua, revealed that participation in this festival was a proud and fun experience because it could show that Melanesian culture is a living culture that is an inseparable part of cultural diversity in Indonesia and the Pacific. At MACFest 2023, Indonesian artists performed with artists from the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) member countries. The 7th Melanesian Arts and Culture Festival (MACFest) 2023 will run until July 30, 2023. The performance of this cultural diplomacy mission is a collaboration between Indonesian Government institutions, including the Directorate General of Culture of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (Wardhani, 2023; Wati et al., 2018).

According to Hilmar Farid, who is the Director General of Culture of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, Indonesia's presence at Macfest brings a message of the spirit of togetherness and commitment to cooperation, the Government and the delegation also strive to glue interactions between Melanesian communities in Indonesia and communities in Pacific countries, especially the Melanesian sub-region. This aligns with Indonesia's commitment to strengthening cooperation with Pacific countries through the Pacific Elevation vision. In addition, it will also further enhance Indonesia's positive image as a plural country that prioritizes unity values, where the Macfest 2023 Event started on Tuesday, 25 July 2023, until 30 July 2023 at Port Villa Vanuatu (Khatrunada & Alam, 2019).

The 7th Melanesian Arts and Cultural Festival (MacFest) can be described as follows based on the author's direct review when the implementation of the activity was the Indonesian Delegation, which was a delegation of arts and farmers from Papua and East Nusa Tenggara departing from Jakarta and Denpasar divided into two lotters to Port Villa via Sydney, Australia. All preparations were carried out properly by the Indonesian government, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Polhukam, Secretariat of the Vice President, and other Ministries and technical institutions, including the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra, which participated in this activity as well as the MSG and its secretariat. The Indonesian delegation arrived and prepared various performances according to the rundown prepared by the MSG secretariat as the organizer of the 7th MacFest. The involvement of the Indonesian delegation was seen in the display on several stages prepared by the MacFest committee, ranging from dances to singing traditional songs of two Melanesian regions in Indonesia involved in this activity. In all performances, the Indonesian deglaze was welcomed by the organizing committee and the indigenous people of Vanuatu. Even the Indonesian delegation was welcomed and was full of kinship with the largest tribal chief in Vanuatu, the Ambrym Tribe. Regarding people-to-people contact diplomacy, the culture has united the Indonesian Melanesian people with the Vanuatu Melanesian people as a large Melanesian family because they physically have the same characteristics.

For the author, this diplomacy is very good and successful in maintaining Indonesia's relations with countries in the Pacific Region, especially those that have the same race, both Melanesian, Polynesian, and Micronesian so that the Indo-Pasisik Region as a large cluster of these races can be maintained kinship and kinship relations so that the problems faced do not become high politics issues but can be solved by low politics methods including various

cultural and artistic festivals as well. It is possible to hold friendly or sports matches as part of Indonesia's public diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific Region.

Of course, when looking at the Indo-Pacific Region today, the Indo-Pacific is a sexy region and in demand by major countries such as the United States, China, Taiwan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and India as sea trade routes. The strong, friendly relations between small countries in the Pacific and Indonesia, of course, strengthen Indonesia's trade routes to the Pacific through these regions. International relations built in the region with public and cultural diplomacy will carry every country's national interests and make the Indo-Pacific Region a developed, strong, and prosperous region with good neighborliness and peace. Once again, the cultural diplomacy carried out by Indonesia in its participation in MacFest 2023 is important to show Indonesia's concern as a Melanesian brother with Vanuatu and other MSG member countries.

Conclusion

The Cultural Diplomacy carried out by Indonesia in its participation in the 7th MacFest in 2023 in Port Vila, Vanuatu, has positively impacted Indonesia's relations with Vanuatu. This can be seen from the people-to-people contact diplomacy carried out by the Indonesian delegation with the Vanuatu community and other Melanesian communities who attended the Macfest in Port Villa and the establishment of kinship with the head of the Ambrym Vanuatu Big Tribe with the Indonesian delegation from Papua showing a sense of brotherhood due to ethnic and cultural similarities. This closeness is expected to foster mutual trust within the Ambrym community (Vanuatu) and the Papuan people (Indonesia). This kinship relationship makes us brothers and strong enough to maintain good relations between the two countries jointly. It is hoped that people-to-people contact diplomacy minimizes negative issues often heard in the international environment (Fora) regarding the issue of Papua so that the region's stability is well maintained in the corridor of humanist and peaceful interstate relations.

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