

Comments on Pak Aris Ananta's presentation

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First, how is Indonesia doing in tackling COVID-19?

- We don't know how many cases and deaths are missed in the official figures, but according to those figures, cases per million population and deaths per million population in Indonesia are way below the COVID-19 epicentres.

Country	Cases per million	Deaths per million	Deaths as % of cases	Testing per million
United Kingdom	4,511	632	14.0	122,424
Italy	3,950	573	14.5	83,585
USA	7,323	373	5.1	89,291
Brazil	5,418	248	4.6	11,814
India	331	10	3.0	5,173
Indonesia	175	9	5.1	2,444
Australia	294	4	1.4	83,154
Malaysia	265	4	1.5	21,487

Indonesia's dilemma

- A dilemma faced by all countries, but especially by low-income countries
- How to balance the need to lessen the spread of the virus against the need to enable low income, informal sector workers, living in crowded housing, to survive economically?
- A complete lock-down is not going to be the answer
- Indonesia has extremely low numbers tested for the virus. Without a lockdown, the strategy needs to be to increase testing and contact tracing, with a view to isolating identified cases and their immediate contacts.
- As far as possible, good hygiene, hand washing and social distancing should be supported and promoted throughout the society.

Comments on Pak Aris' presentation

- We have to expect that COVID-19 will be around for a long while. We must find ways of dealing with it. I agree.
- He emphasized building resilience at the family level – return to basics, build healthy and environmentally friendly life styles
- Spend only on basic needs
- Improve diets – stop smoking, lessen consumption of meat, sugar, salt, etc., raise consumption of vegetables and fruit. Again, I agree. A key aim should be to strengthen our body's immune system.
- But government must also help – ADB just forecast Indonesia will suffer contraction of GDP (-1%) this year. Programs for the poor will be hard to sustain, but this MUST be the key focus of government policy

Demographic dividend

- A few comments.
 - Demographic dividend
 - Demographic Bonus
 - Window of opportunity
- I think we CAN distinguish between them. There is an **opportunity**. But **absolutely no certainty that this opportunity will be utilized**
- It's often been stressed – the “demographic dividend” can be a “demographic disaster” if
 - Productive jobs aren't available for the potential workers
 - Young people can't complete education that will yield them good jobs
- There is a real risk that COVID-19 will lead to exactly those outcomes in Indonesia and in many other countries

Demographic dividend (continued)

- Pak Aris raised some measurement issues – and I agree – population aged 15-64 as the potential working ages is far from reality
 - Women's involvement in the workforce can change dramatically
 - Young people delaying entry to the workforce
 - Old people not dropping out
- But his concern about the demographic dividend went much deeper than that – let's focus on the key points he raised.

Demographic dividend (continued)

In the current situation, the key issue is the need to keep as many workers as possible in productive employment. What proportion of the population are potential workers is **not** the issue.

A second key issue is how to help young people complete their education (i.e. invest in human resources), so they can find suitable work.

What proportion of the population is in arbitrarily defined productive ages – or indeed, in arbitrarily defined ages of entering the workforce – is NOT the issue. **So the demographic dividend is not a relevant concern in the current situation.**

Building social responsibility

- BKKBN can help build social responsibility to limit the spread of the virus.
- There are important issues of inter-generational solidarity here.
- The virus infects people across the age range; but older people are far more likely to die when infected
- So younger people must take steps to limit the spread, in the interest of saving lives of the elderly, even though they themselves are unlikely to die from COVID-19
- But young people's future likely to be severely compromised by the steps taken to limit the spread of the virus
- And older people must realize that a complete lockdown to limit their risk of death will seriously affect the wellbeing of young people trying to make a living and raise a family
- So – inter-generational compromise is an essential element of COVID-19 policy

Thank you for your attention