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**Increasing Cooperation between Indonesia and Italy**

Approaching the 70th anniversary of bilateral relation between Indonesia and Italy, the cooperation in economy sector of both countries becomes wider. Italy is the third largest trading partner of Indonesia in the European Union.

As of November 2017, Indonesia-Italy bilateral trade reached more than US $ more than 3 billion, up around 16 percent compared than the same period in 2016.

“ The greater cooperation in economy sector between Italy and Indonesia makes me really happy. We want to use this positive trend to further enhance our bilateral economy and trade cooperation” , said Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno Marsudi during the visit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic Angelino Alfano at Gedung Pancasila located at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in Jakarta on Wednesday 7/2/’18.

On October 2017, Retno paid a State Visit to Rome, Italy. 4 months after, Alfano has paid back Retno’s visit by coming to Indonesia. “ Alfano’s visit shows the commitment of Italy to further expand bilateral relations between Indonesia- Italy” , said Retno.

She added, next year will be the 70th Anniversary of the diplomatic relation between Indonesia and Italy. “Because Italy has the creative economy power, we agreed to use a theme “ *Micro, small and medium enterprises and Creative Economy*”, said Retno.

According to Alfano, Italy regards Indonesia has a counterpart with the same democracy values. The position of Indonesia as a member of G20 is considered important.

**PALM OIL**

According to Retno, they also discussed various issues related to the efforts to increase bilateral relation, such as to export the Indonesian Palm Oil to Europe, to enhance the creative economy and to expand the interfaith dialogue.

Retno said “ Relating to the palm oil products, I again emphasize the Indonesia’s concern towards the ban of the use of the palm oil in biofuels starting 2021, which was issued by Europe. I already conveyed the said issue to Minister Alfano. The palm oil is an important issue for the sake of Indonesia”, said Retno.

According to Retno, Indonesia continues to take a balanced approach between economic development and environmental issues. Italy is Indonesia’s biggest crude palm oil importer. Italy is the third destination country for the Indonesia Palm oil’s export to Europe. For this reason, Retno said, Indonesia asked the attention of the Italian government during the dialogue between the parliament and the European Union Commission.

According to Alfano, economic is an important issue to strengthen bilateral relation. “The opportunities to forge partnership as well as to support each other in the sectors of economy, maritime, defense and so on, is still wide. Italian companies feature top technology in the world that is needed by Indonesia,” he said.

The two ministers also discussed several issues concerning region and international, among others is Palestine.