

INDONESIA'S CHAIRMANSHIP OF ASEAN 2023: ADVANCING REGIONAL COLLABORATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL DIPLOMACY

Karunya Saka Listianto

Department of International Relations, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional "Veteran"
Yogyakarta

Email: 151220060@student.upnyk.ac.id

ABSTRAK

Indonesia, sebagai ketua ASEAN pada tahun 2023, fokus untuk mempromosikan ASEAN sebagai wilayah ekonomi yang tumbuh cepat, inklusif, dan berkelanjutan dengan tema "Epicentrum of Growth". Untuk mencapai tujuan ini, ASEAN menekankan perlunya kerangka kesehatan regional yang kuat, keamanan pangan dan energi, serta stabilitas keuangan. Namun, penting untuk disebutkan bahwa tema tersebut tidak secara khusus membahas isu-isu lingkungan, meskipun Indonesia berupaya memimpin inisiatif yang menangani masalah lingkungan di Asia Tenggara selama masa jabatannya sebagai ketua ASEAN. Tujuan paper ini adalah meneliti diplomasi lingkungan yang dilakukan oleh Indonesia pada saat menjabat sebagai ketua ASEAN pada tahun 2023. Diplomasi tersebut melibatkan promosi tindakan bersama untuk mengatasi perubahan iklim, melestarikan keanekaragaman hayati, dan mendorong pengelolaan sumber daya yang berkelanjutan. Indonesia secara efektif melibatkan negara-negara anggota ASEAN dalam upaya diplomasi lingkungan yang terkoordinasi melalui penyelenggaraan pertemuan penting, lokakarya, dan proyek kolaboratif dalam bentuk perjanjian kolaboratif dan inisiatif selama masa kepemimpinannya. Studi ini menggunakan metodologi studi kasus tunggal, dimana data dikumpulkan dari dokumentasi yang relevan mengenai keterlibatan Indonesia dalam menangani isu-isu lingkungan. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa Indonesia secara efektif menggunakan masa jabatannya sebagai ketua ASEAN 2023 untuk mempromosikan diplomasi lingkungan, meskipun tema "Epicentrum of Growth" tidak secara langsung membahas isu-isu lingkungan. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa pendekatan proaktif Indonesia terhadap diplomasi lingkungan memainkan peran penting dalam mendorong respons regional yang lebih kohesif dan tangguh terhadap tantangan lingkungan.

Keywords: ASEAN, Keketuaan ASEAN, Indonesia, Diplomasi Lingkungan

ABSTRACT

Indonesia, as the chair of ASEAN in 2023, focused on promoting ASEAN as a fast-growing, inclusive, and sustainable economic region with the theme "Epicentrum of Growth". To achieve the goal, ASEAN emphasized the need for a strong regional health framework, food and energy security, and financial stability. However, it is important to mention that the theme did not specifically address environmental issues, despite Indonesia's efforts to lead initiatives addressing environmental concerns in Southeast Asia during its time as ASEAN chair. The purpose of this paper was to examine Indonesia's role in environmental diplomacy while serving as the ASEAN chair in 2023. This diplomacy involved promoting joint actions to address climate change, preserve biodiversity, and promote sustainable resource management. Indonesia effectively involved ASEAN member countries in coordinated environmental efforts through hosting crucial meetings, workshops, and collaborative projects in the forms of collaborative agreements and initiatives during its chairmanship. The study employs a single case study methodology, wherein data collected from relevant documentation concerning Indonesia's involvement

in environmental matters. The study shows that Indonesia effectively used its 2023 ASEAN chairmanship to promote environmental diplomacy, despite the theme "Epicentrum of Growth" not directly addressing environmental issues. Consequently, the study concludes that Indonesia's proactive approach to environmental diplomacy played a crucial role in fostering a more cohesive and resilient regional response to environmental challenges.

Keywords: *ASEAN, Indonesia's ASEAN Chairmanship, Indonesia, Environmental Diplomacy*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia assumed the ASEAN Chairmanship for a one-year term commencing on January 1, 2023, and concluding on December 31 of the same year. This marked the nation's fifth tenure in this role, following previous chairmanships in 1976, 1996, 2003, and 2011 (Kominfo, 2023). With the challenges of post-pandemic recovery and a changing geopolitical environment, Jakarta's leadership was essential. Holding the chairmanship allowed Indonesia to influence regional priorities, promote collaboration, and strengthen its standing as a regional influencer.

Indonesia has outlined several key priorities as it assumes the role of Chair of ASEAN in 2023. The three main pillars of Indonesia's chairmanship theme, "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth," include ASEAN Matters, Epicentrum of Growth, and the implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (Kominfo, 2023). The theme "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth" reflects Indonesia's strategic priorities during its 2023 ASEAN chairmanship. The "ASEAN Matters" pillar focuses on maintaining ASEAN's relevance through enhanced capacity, unity, and centrality to address regional challenges and sustainability. Simultaneously, the "Epicentrum of Growth" pillar emphasizes fostering cooperation in health, energy, food security, and financial stability to position Southeast Asia as a dynamic economic hub. This approach aims to solidify ASEAN's status as a rapidly growing, inclusive, and sustainable region, aligning with the long-term vision of ASEAN 2045 to be more adaptive, responsive, and competitive, benefiting both the region and the world. (Kominfo, 2023).

While the stated theme of the ASEAN Chairmanship does not explicitly focus on environmental concerns, it is imperative to acknowledge the region's significant and growing environmental challenges. Southeast Asia, in particular, is grappling with a variety of environmental issues, mirroring global trends. The region's environmental challenges are further exacerbated by transnational issues. For instance, the recurring transboundary haze phenomenon, a consequence of land and forest fires, has emerged as a persistent irritant within Southeast Asia. In October 2023 as reported by Reuters, Malaysia officially communicated its concerns to Indonesia regarding the detrimental impacts of the haze, underscoring the need for a concerted regional response to this long-standing problem (Reuters, 2023). In May of the year 2023, NBC News reported the occurrence of severe heatwaves and air pollution impacting Southeast Asia. The temperatures rose to levels never

seen before, with Tuong Duong in Vietnam hitting 44.2 degrees Celsius, and Luang Prabang in Laos registering 43.5 degrees Celsius. Bangkok, Thailand, similarly faced an unprecedented heatwave, with temperatures peaking at 41 degrees Celsius. The combination of these extreme heat conditions along with dense smog in certain areas of Vietnam and Thailand presents notable health hazards, such as an increased prevalence of respiratory, cardiovascular, and renal ailments (Chow, 2023).

The increasing prevalence and severity of environmental issues in the ASEAN region underscore the significance of Indonesia's chairmanship in 2023. The country's leadership plays a crucial role in mobilizing collaborative efforts to tackle these urgent challenges and promoting a sustainable path forward for the region. Environmental issues constitute a critical challenge for the majority of ASEAN member states. The region's burgeoning energy consumption, predominantly reliant on fossil fuels, has accelerated carbon emissions, contributing to climate change. Moreover, the intricate interplay between climate change, resource constraints, infrastructure inadequacies, and external shocks has exacerbated food security vulnerabilities. These interconnected challenges necessitate comprehensive and coordinated regional efforts to mitigate climate change impacts, enhance resource efficiency, and bolster the resilience of food systems (Ding & Beh, 2022; Sundram, 2023).

In light of the significant environmental challenges confronting the ASEAN region, it is important to highlight that Indonesia, in its capacity as ASEAN chair for 2023, is actively pursuing Regional Environmental Governance. This initiative aims to tackle the environmental issues faced by ASEAN through various programs, treaties, and agreements established during its chairmanship. Consequently, Regional Environmental Governance is implemented through environmental diplomacy, which shares similarities in its execution.

Environmental diplomacy emerges as a critical instrument for addressing the complex environmental challenges confronting ASEAN. During its 2023 chairmanship, Indonesia prioritized the development and implementation of several key initiatives aimed at fostering regional cooperation and advancing environmental sustainability. This study will analyse Indonesia's approach to environmental diplomacy in the context of its chairmanship of ASEAN in 2023. The study offers a novel contribution by providing a comprehensive analysis of Indonesia's leadership in addressing pressing environmental challenges within the ASEAN context, thus filling a gap in the existing literature on environmental diplomacy in the region.

Previous research has explored ASEAN and Indonesia's environmental diplomacy, providing valuable insights into the region's efforts to address environmental issues. Robertua and Sigalingging (2019) contend that Indonesia plays a crucial role in addressing regional and global environmental challenges, such as forest fires and transboundary haze. They further assert that the ratification of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution and the creation of the Peat Restoration Agency are key components of Indonesia's renewed commitment to environmental diplomacy. Elliott (2003) posits that environmental cooperation in Southeast Asia is a multifaceted challenge shaped by both environmental and political

dynamics. The interconnected ecological systems of the region demand unified efforts to address resource depletion and environmental degradation. ASEAN plays a vital role in fostering cooperation through knowledge exchange, norm development, and conflict resolution. Nonetheless, efforts to achieve environmental cooperation are intertwined with broader regional identity-building and the intricate balance between national sovereignty and collective action. This interaction between environmental needs and political factors significantly influences the success of ASEAN's environmental initiatives.

ASEAN's environmental initiatives are closely associated with regional environmental governance (REG). Lian and Robinson (2004) argue that ASEAN's environmental policies are informed by the region's specific ecological needs, highlighting key strengths such as effective policy formulation and a strong foundation for implementation. The consensus-building process within ASEAN has successfully led to the creation of a cohesive regional environmental policy framework. For example, the Working Group on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity has drafted an ASEAN framework agreement on access to genetic resources, which could promote a unified approach among member states and serve as a basis for new regional legal instruments, thereby minimizing the potential for trade disputes related to these resources. Huang (2021) mentioned that ASEAN's approach to regional environmental governance, often encapsulated in the concept of the "ASEAN Way," emphasizes non-interference, consensus-building, and collaboration among member states. This method has enabled ASEAN to engage its diverse member countries in addressing transboundary environmental issues, such as haze pollution and climate change, while respecting their sovereignty. Despite significant strides in regional cooperation, challenges remain, including corruption, lack of capacity, and varying levels of commitment among nations. Recent geopolitical shifts, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and tensions between major powers, further complicate the landscape, necessitating enhanced collaboration with environmental NGOs and external partners. To strengthen its environmental governance framework, ASEAN must adapt its strategies to incorporate these new challenges and foster a more integrated approach that aligns environmental protection with economic development.

An example of Indonesia's environmental diplomacy at the ASEAN level is its advocacy for a collective commitment among ASEAN member states to combat marine plastic waste. Hendar et al. (2022) argue that Indonesia plays a role in every stage of environmental diplomacy within ASEAN, from initiation and problem definition to initial position statements, framework development, final negotiations, and implementation. This culminated in the launch of the ASEAN Regional Action Plan for Combating Marine Debris in ASEAN Member States 2021-2025. Indonesia recognizes that addressing this issue requires international cooperation and commitment (Hendar et al., 2022). Gaora et al. (2023) contend that Indonesia's involvement in global climate change mitigation is vital due to the severe negative impacts on its natural resources, which can impede its economic growth and welfare development. Indonesia's engagement in climate diplomacy is essential for influencing global

decisions and policies on climate change, thereby promoting a fair and sustainable global future (Gaora et al., 2023).

Therefore, this study explores how Indonesia leveraged its 2023 ASEAN chairmanship to advance environmental diplomacy, even though the theme "Epicentrum of Growth" did not explicitly focus on environmental issues. It examines the strategies employed by Indonesia to integrate environmental concerns within its broader economic agenda, highlighting the initiatives and collaborations that underscored its commitment to sustainable development. Additionally, the paper analyses the impact of Indonesia's leadership on regional environmental diplomacy and its role in fostering collective action among ASEAN member states and partners. Through this exploration, the paper aims to provide insights into the effective use of diplomatic platforms for environmental advocacy.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Regional Environmental Governance

The concept of regional environmental governance (REG) is used to explain how ASEAN, under Indonesia's chairmanship in 2023, addresses environmental challenges and fosters cooperation among member states. Haas (2016) contended that the main approach to REG had been legal in nature, involving institutions and treaties that are structured within functional regimes (Haas, 2016). The central features of REG include: a growing number of regional environmental agreements that adopt a broad perspective on sustainable development, an increasing recognition of the multilevel dimension in REG, which enhances the understanding of institutional interactions, and a heightened emphasis on participatory processes in international environmental cooperation, incorporating non-state actors and subnational governments (Balsiger & VanDeveer, 2012).

According to Balsiger & VanDeveer (2012), there are at least three critical elements for analysing REG: agency, substance, and territoriality. Agency pertains to the coordinating or rule-making bodies involved in a regional initiative, which can include both formal intergovernmental cooperation and a variety of state and non-state actors. Despite their increasing influence in recent years, non-state actors have traditionally not played a significant role in the coordinating agencies of REG. Substance pertains to the range of issues addressed within the framework of REG, encompassing both single-issue agreements and broader mandates focused on sustainable development. Territoriality refers to the jurisdictional aspects of an agreement's spatial scope. Although alignment with nation-state borders remains a significant approach, REG has increasingly aimed to harmonize political and ecological boundaries.

Environmental Diplomacy

This study adopts an environmental diplomacy framework to examine Indonesia's environmental leadership during its 2023 ASEAN chairmanship. Ali and Vladich (2016) observe that the concept of "environmental diplomacy" is still a subject of ongoing discussion and has not been fully developed. From the perspective of scholars in the field of International Relations, it focuses on the discussions and agreements between countries concerning environmental management. On the other hand, scholars from various disciplines have a broader view, considering it as encompassing conflict resolution related to natural resources and utilizing the environment as a means to settle disagreements and promote peace (Ali & Vladich, 2016). Nicholas and Kallab (2021) argue that environmental diplomacy emerged in response to a range of climate-related security challenges, including water and food security, rising sea levels, climate change, migration, and environmental conflicts. Consequently, environmental issues have ascended to a position of paramount importance in the realm of state-centric foreign policy, commonly referred to as "high politics" (Nicholas & Kallab, 2021).

Environmental diplomacy is influenced by international and global diplomatic practices and is shaped by the nature and structure of governing rules. In this context, the realization of environmental diplomacy necessitates a focus on security and environmental frameworks, emphasizing bond-based indices that integrate the axes of diplomacy and environmental concerns (Tayebi et al., 2016).

Environmental diplomacy originated from traditional diplomatic processes, where nation-states engaged in bilateral or multilateral negotiations (Ali & Vladich, 2016). Hence, environmental diplomacy is executed through international commitments and agreements. At the global level, instruments such as international agreements, conventions, and protocols are utilized to foster international relationships. These tools encompass funding, new governance structures, and leadership initiatives aimed at supporting conservation efforts (Atisa, 2023). In practical terms, nations are required to engage in environmental diplomacy by fostering collaboration, implementing preventive strategies, resolving conflicts, and undertaking peacemaking initiatives (Nicholas & Kallab, 2021).

Environmental diplomacy operates on a consensus rule, emphasizing the importance of collective action. Most decisions are presented to all diplomats and adopted unless there is explicit opposition from a government, making voting rare. This consensus approach, along with the practice of "silence means consent," is theoretically inclusive, allowing various interests to be voiced (Orsini, 2020).

In summary, environmental diplomacy involves collaborative efforts between nation-states and international entities to address global environmental challenges. It has evolved from traditional methods to focus on environmental management in global affairs, aiming to establish frameworks for sustainable development and resource conservation. The ultimate goal is to align national interests with the shared objective of preserving the environment for future generations. Key strategies include international agreements that impose binding

obligations on countries, financing mechanisms, and conflict resolution to promote environmental protection and cooperation.

In other terms, environmental diplomacy is also referred to as green diplomacy. This approach underscores the integration of environmental concerns into the broader diplomatic agenda, highlighting the importance of sustainable development in international relations. Ioan (2013) argued that the transboundary nature of pollution and global ecological challenges, such as the greenhouse effect, climate change, ozone depletion, biodiversity conservation, and desertification, necessitated specialized international cooperation at bilateral, regional, or global levels. The primary instrument for fostering this cooperation is a novel form of diplomacy known as "green diplomacy" or "ecological diplomacy," characterized by its technical, flexible, and direct approach. Green diplomacy operates at multiple societal levels, encompassing social, political, educational, philosophical, and international collaboration spheres.

METHOD

This paper employs the case study method, specifically a single case study. This approach allows for an in-depth analysis of the subject, providing valuable insights and understanding of the complexities involved. According to Creswell (2015), the case study method is a qualitative approach in which researchers explore a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) through detailed, in-depth data collection involving various sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, documents, and reports) and report a case description and case themes (Creswell, 2015). Curini and Franzese (2020) emphasize that case studies concentrate on specific phenomena of interest. It is crucial—though sometimes overlooked—to identify the smallest possible unit of analysis based on the chosen theory. This approach enables the observation of the theory in action (Curini & Franzese, 2020).

The case study research begins by identifying a specific case, which could be a tangible entity such as an individual, small group, organization, or partnership. The aim is to understand a particular issue or concern. A thorough case study includes a detailed description of the case, leading to conclusions drawn by the researcher about its overall significance (Creswell, 2015).

This paper employs single case studies to delve deep into one specific example, exploring whether a theory holds true or determining the causal connections within that particular circumstance (Curini & Franzese, 2020). Single case studies provide comprehensive accounts of specific phenomena and are frequently favoured for the examination of individuals or groups (Gustafsson, 2017).

Data collection utilizes document-based research, focusing on primary documents such as official documents. These official documents are published or released by governments, organizations, or business groups and can take various forms, such as

comprehensive research reports, policy statements, interview or speech transcripts, official memos or emails, budgets, staffing, or personal files. The essence of primary documents is that documents are not written to inform historians or political scientists but are created solely for actionable purposes. Additionally, secondary documents, which reference or analyse primary documents, is also be used (Bakry, 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The year 2023 represented a pivotal moment for Indonesia as it took on the role of ASEAN Chair, thereby creating an opportunity to influence regional priorities and reinforce its leadership position within the organization. This role allowed Indonesia to play a significant part in the development of ASEAN's strategic trajectory. Indonesia's chairmanship in ASEAN aims to establish the region as a stable and peaceful anchor of global stability. The focus is on strengthening ASEAN into a rapidly growing, inclusive, and sustainable economic area while enhancing its capacity to address future challenges. Indonesia seeks to ensure ASEAN remains essential and relevant for its people, the Indo-Pacific, and the world (ASEAN, 2023a). According to press release held by Ministry of Communications and Informatics, Indonesia emphasized the theme "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth," which encompasses three pillars: ASEAN Matters, Epicentrum of Growth, and the implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific/AOIP (Kominfo, 2023). Indonesia's Chairmanship offers ASEAN a chance to actively contribute ideas and solutions for regional peace and prosperity. As Chair, Indonesia seeks to bolster economic recovery and position Southeast Asia as the global engine of sustainable growth (ASEAN, 2023b).

The main focus of this study is that, within the grand theme of Indonesia's 2023 ASEAN Chairmanship, environmental issues were not explicitly addressed. However, in practice, Indonesia successfully engaged in environmental diplomacy throughout its tenure. This illustrates Indonesia's capacity to weave environmental concerns into its leadership agenda, thereby underscoring its commitment to sustainable development despite the initial thematic oversight. Furthermore, this engagement reflects broader principles of REG, which emphasizes collaborative approaches among ASEAN member states to address shared environmental challenges. Through initiatives aimed at fostering cooperation in areas such as climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable resource management, Indonesia not only advanced its diplomatic efforts but also reinforced the significance of regional partnerships in tackling pressing environmental issues. This dual focus on environmental diplomacy and REG highlights the intricate interplay between national priorities and collective action, affirming that effective leadership in regional contexts must encompass a comprehensive strategy that prioritizes environmental sustainability alongside economic and social development.

ASEAN is a large community comprising multiple countries. To address and advance regional cooperation, Indonesia organized several meetings with ASEAN partners, including Russia, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the United States. These meetings aimed to strengthen collaborative efforts and foster mutual understanding among member states and partners, enhancing the region's collective progress and stability. The meetings concluded with several joint statements and leaders' declarations, which significantly emphasized the environmental challenges faced by ASEAN member countries and their partners.

Table 1. Joint Leaders' Statements and Joint Statements issued by ASEAN and its partner countries during Indonesia's 2023 ASEAN Chairmanship

Country Partner	Joint Leaders' Statement/Join Statement	Environmental Issue/Challenges Addressed
India	ASEAN-India Joint Leaders' Statement on Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition in Response to Crises	Acknowledge the importance of climate resilience in safeguarding global food security, enhancing biodiversity, and reforming the agri-food system.
Canada	Joint Leaders' Statement on ASEAN-Canada Strategic Partnership	Promote a sustainable future by aligning ASEAN Community Vision 2025 with the UN 2030 Agenda. Enhance cooperation on environmental protection, resource management, and clean technologies. Strengthen collaboration on biodiversity conservation and improve capacity building and technology transfer for sustainable forest management and fire prevention.
United States of America	ASEAN-U.S. Leaders' Statement on Cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific	Align ASEAN Community Vision 2025 with the 2030 Agenda to advance Sustainable Development Goals by focusing on food and health security, gender equality, human rights, clean energy, climate action, sustainable cities, and the rule of law. Collaborate on a just energy transition and climate change mitigation.

New Zealand	ASEAN-New Zealand Joint Statement on Cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific	Commit to maintaining ASEAN as a growth epicentre by building resilience and mitigating climate change. Support regional energy transition and sustainable energy development. Cooperate on climate change adaptation, water management, biodiversity conservation, and marine resource sustainability, including tackling marine plastic debris.
China, Japan, Republic of Korea	ASEAN Plus Three Leaders' Statement on Developing of Electric Vehicle Ecosystem	Promote the development of electric vehicles as a key strategy for ASEAN Plus Three countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, accelerate just energy transition, and achieve carbon neutrality while enhancing energy security. Support the creation of a regional electric vehicle ecosystem to facilitate electric vehicle adoption and complement power sector decarbonization efforts.

Source: (ASEAN, 2023)

Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of key commitments related to environmental issues as extracted from various Joint Leaders' Statements and Joint Statements issued by ASEAN and its partner countries during Indonesia's 2023 ASEAN Chairmanship. The successful compilation of these statements offers a valuable foundation for analysing the region's collective stance on environmental challenges and identifying potential areas for further cooperation.

This underscores the critical role of collaborative efforts in addressing complex environmental challenges, including food security, climate change, water management, biodiversity conservation, and marine resource sustainability. It emphasizes the necessity of sustained dialogue among ASEAN member states and their partners to develop and implement effective strategies. By scrutinizing the commitments outlined in Joint Leaders' Statements and Joint Statements, stakeholders can gain valuable insights into the region's priorities and devise appropriate solutions to foster sustainable development and environmental resilience.

ASEAN, under Indonesia's chairmanship, has demonstrated a strong commitment to aligning regional goals with global sustainability objectives. The integration of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into these official documents signifies a concerted effort to advance progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the ASEAN context.

Haas (2016) argued that the primary approach to REG has been legal, focusing on institutions and treaties. Table 1 highlighted various joint statements and leaders' declarations, which stressed the environmental challenges faced by ASEAN member countries and their partners. According to REG, the members and partners of ASEAN—such as India, Canada, the USA, China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea—can be considered institutions. Additionally, the joint statements and declarations by the leaders of ASEAN member countries and their partners serve as treaties. Balsiger and VanDeveer (2012) noted that key features of REG include a rise in regional environmental agreements, increased recognition of its multilevel nature, and the involvement of non-state actors and subnational governments. Table 1 showed that under Indonesia's chairmanship, ASEAN has increased the number of regional environmental joint statements and declarations. Additionally, the table highlighted the understanding among ASEAN member countries and between ASEAN and its partners, with a stronger focus on participatory processes in issuing these statements and declarations.

Balsiger and VanDeveer (2012) identified three critical elements for analyzing Regional Environmental Governance (REG): agency, substance, and territoriality. In this context, the ASEAN members and their partners represent the agency element. Substance relates to the focus on sustainable development initiatives. Table 1 illustrates the environmental issues and challenges addressed during Indonesia's 2023 ASEAN Chairmanship. Territoriality concerns the jurisdictional aspects of an agreement's spatial scope, which, as shown in Table 1, pertains to ASEAN. This framework underscores how regional collaboration and governance structures are essential for addressing environmental challenges effectively.

Environmental diplomacy stems from traditional diplomatic methods, where nation-states participate in bilateral or multilateral negotiations, influenced by international and global diplomatic practices (Tayebi et al., 2016; Ali & Vladich, 2016). In the context of the United Nations framework, a multilateral negotiation concerning sustainable development matters typically commences when governments, either independently or in collaboration, identify a specific issue or a range of issues that require attention (Kamau et al., 2018). Indonesia's environmental diplomacy in its capacity as the ASEAN Chair in 2023 reflects the conventional paradigm of nation-states engaging in cooperation via bilateral or multilateral discussions. This is demonstrated by the result of joint statements and declarations from leaders that tackle various environmental issues. Within the United Nations framework, multilateral negotiations on sustainable development typically commence when governments identify pressing environmental concerns. This process parallels the ASEAN Leaders' Statement on Developing an Electric Vehicle Ecosystem. The latter document underscores the recognition

of electric vehicle technology as a critical component in achieving broader sustainable development goals, aligning with the UN's overarching framework for addressing global challenges through multilateral cooperation.

Table 2. ASEAN Leaders' Joint Statement/Declaration issued by ASEAN during Indonesia's 2023 ASEAN Chairmanship

ASEAN Leaders' Joint Statement/Declaration	Environmental Issue/Challenges Addressed
ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on ASEAN as an Epicentrum of Growth	ASEAN recognizes the urgent need to address climate change and its associated disasters. The bloc aims to integrate climate resilience across all cooperation areas, enhance disaster management capabilities, and develop resilient infrastructure. To mitigate climate change, ASEAN commits to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by mid-century and promoting sustainable investments. Recognizing the interconnectedness of environmental sustainability and human well-being, ASEAN underscores its commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, aiming for a healthy, inclusive, and sustainable region.
ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Sustainable Resilience	ASEAN aims to strengthen national and local capacities for disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. This includes building resilient infrastructure, promoting climate change adaptation, and implementing disaster risk management strategies. A particular focus is on protecting vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and the elderly, by integrating their needs into disaster resilience policies.
ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Developing Regional Electric Vehicle Ecosystem	ASEAN affirms the crucial role of electric vehicles in reducing emissions, accelerating energy transition, and enhancing energy security. The bloc will foster cooperation with external partners

	to develop a regional electric vehicle ecosystem. Commits to developing a regional electric vehicle ecosystem to boost electric vehicle adoption and industry growth. This includes harmonizing regional standards for technology, safety, infrastructure, and charging. facilitating trade, and ensuring seamless cross-border mobility.
ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change to the 28th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP-28)	ASEAN reiterates its dedication to fulfilling the objectives set forth by the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, with a particular emphasis on mitigation, adaptation, and financial mechanisms. The organization underscores the significance of equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, while acknowledging the necessity for increased assistance from developed nations. ASEAN also points to the essential role of collaboration, technology transfer, and capacity building in tackling the challenges posed by climate change. Furthermore, the bloc voices its apprehension regarding the escalating effects of climate change, especially on vulnerable populations, and highlights the critical need for international cooperation in devising effective solutions.

Source: (ASEAN, 2023)

Table 2 presents a summary of environmental issues mentioned in ASEAN Leaders' Joint Statements/Declarations over time, showing the priorities during Indonesia's upcoming chairmanship of ASEAN in 2023. Specifically, the table outlines key commitments and initiatives related to climate change, biodiversity, sustainable development and environmental protection that have been referenced in these annual joint statements issued after the annual ASEAN Summits.

Environmental diplomacy emerged as a response to pressing climate-related challenges such as food and water scarcity, sea-level rise, and environmental conflicts (Nicholas & Kallab, 2021). During its 2023 ASEAN Chairmanship, Indonesia addressed these issues despite the main theme not explicitly focusing on the environment. This can be seen through the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on ASEAN as an Epicentrum of Growth. The

declaration outlines a comprehensive approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation, including disaster management, sustainable investment, and the pursuit of sustainable development goals, demonstrating ASEAN's commitment to environmental sustainability.

Environmental diplomacy relies on international treaties and agreements to establish global cooperation. To achieve this, countries must work together to prevent environmental issues, resolve disputes, and promote peace through collaborative actions (Atisa, 2023, Nicholas & Kallab, 2021). Indonesia's 2023 ASEAN Chairmanship effectively positioned the bloc as a regional leader in environmental governance. By spearheading the development of the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Sustainable Resilience and the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Developing a Regional Electric Vehicle Ecosystem, Indonesia demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing pressing environmental challenges through concerted regional action. These declarations serve as foundational documents for fostering collaboration among ASEAN member states, promoting sustainable development, and enhancing the region's resilience to climate change and other environmental threats.

The adoption of these declarations' underscores ASEAN's recognition of the interconnectedness between environmental sustainability, economic growth, and social well-being. By prioritizing these issues, ASEAN has solidified its role as a key player in global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Indonesia is also addressing environmental issues during its 2023 ASEAN chairmanship by implementing programs that empower the younger generation. A notable example is the ASEAN Youth Movement Sustainability Week, which saw young Indonesians declare their support for sustainable energy. This initiative underscores the government's commitment to fostering a new generation of environmentally conscious citizens. By involving youth in the energy transition, Indonesia aims to accelerate progress towards a net-zero emissions future and strengthen its position as a regional leader in sustainability (ASEAN, 2023c). Another commitment to addressing environmental challenges in the context of energy transition is demonstrated by Indonesia's strategic use of the 43rd ASEAN Summit to highlight its dedication to this cause. Specifically, Indonesia exclusively utilized electric vehicles for official transportation during the summit, thereby showcasing its commitment to promoting sustainable energy practices. This initiative, backed by the national automotive sector, not only diminished the carbon emissions associated with the summit but also acted as a concrete illustration of the nation's advancements in establishing a sustainable transportation framework (ASEAN, 2023d).

Indonesia's initiatives to promote electric vehicle adoption and engage youth in sustainability initiatives underscore the country's active participation in environmental diplomacy. By championing these programs, Indonesia has exhibited a robust commitment to establishing comprehensive frameworks for sustainable development and resource conservation within the ASEAN region. Such efforts not only align with regional environmental

goals but also enhance Indonesia's standing as a pivotal leader in the global transition toward a more sustainable and environmentally responsible future.

CONCLUSION

Indonesia's 2023 ASEAN Chairmanship, anchored on the theme "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth," underscored the region's pivotal role in global development. The concept of regional environmental governance (REG) was employed to illustrate how ASEAN, under Indonesia's leadership, addressed environmental challenges and fostered cooperation among member states, despite the overarching theme not explicitly addressing environmental issues. This was achieved through a multifaceted approach, including the negotiation of ASEAN Leaders' Joint Statements/Declarations and Joint Leaders' Statements/Joint Statements with ASEAN partner countries, as well as the implementation of targeted programs. By doing so, Indonesia demonstrated its commitment to sustainable development and environmental stewardship, positioning ASEAN as a regional leader in these critical areas.

This study also shows that REG and environmental diplomacy are correlated, with environmental diplomacy serving as a tool for REG. By leveraging diplomatic efforts, ASEAN can enhance cooperation and implement effective environmental policies across member states. This approach not only strengthens regional ties but also promotes sustainable development, positioning ASEAN as a leader in addressing environmental challenges. Through strategic negotiations and collaborations, ASEAN can effectively integrate environmental considerations into its broader development goals, ensuring a balanced approach to growth and environmental stewardship.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that Indonesia's strategic leadership during its 2023 ASEAN Chairmanship significantly advanced regional environmental cooperation. By prioritizing environmental diplomacy, integrating sustainability and combining it with the REG into the core of ASEAN's agenda, Indonesia catalysed a more unified and robust response to pressing ecological challenges. This proactive approach has positioned ASEAN as a leading force in global efforts to achieve environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

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