

## INDONESIA SOFT POWER: TOBA CALDERA AS UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK 2020

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### Abstract

This research aims to describe analytically Toba Caldera's ability to become one of the UNESCO Global Geopark in 2020. The research used a qualitative research method and is done through literature studies, government documents, and internet sources. Researchers founded, there are inter-linkages amongst Indonesia's central and local government together with stakeholders' continuous contribution who concern with Toba Caldera's sustainable tourism development. Those concerning parties fought for Toba Caldera's recognition status as the UNESCO Global Geopark. From 2011 to 2020, for nine years, the Toba Caldera was finally named a UNESCO Global Geopark during the UN Cultural Body's 209<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session held in Paris on July 7, 2020. Toba Caldera Geopark was a worldwide tourist magnet as it was home to 13 sites with breathtaking views, namely: Tongging Sipiso-Piso, Silalahi Sabungan, Haranggaol, Sibaganding Parapat, Eden Park, Balige Liong Spige Meat, Situmurun Blok Uluan, Hutaginjang, Muara Sibandang, Sipinsur Bakti Raja, Bakara Tipang, Tele Pangururan, and Pusuk Buhit. A ceremony where the UNESCO Global Geopark placard will be formally given to the Toba caldera is slated to be held in Jeju, South Korea, by September 2020. According to a statement from the Indonesian Embassy in Paris, Toba Caldera is among the 16 new UNESCO Global Geoparks announced by the organization's executive board. North Sumatra provincial administration is hopeful that the recognition will help boost foreign tourist arrivals to the destination.

Keywords: Toba Caldera, UNESCO, Indonesia Soft Power, Sustainable Tourism Development, Tourist Destination

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## 1. Introduction

At present, in a world of globalization and in the midst of a pandemic COVID-19, development on an international scale as well as within a country requires an active role and participation of local governments even greater spearhead regional development. The objectives are to achieve national goals and objectives. Both regions expect their role local governments more actively engaged. Until now, it has been realized by various parties that the achievement of the country's development goals is largely on the shoulders of the provincial and regency/city governments. The fact is that on the expenditure side, the local government put forward charges for routine spending than spending for regional people's needs.

The central government in Jakarta cannot work alone to achieve the ultimate goal of the existing vision and mission without regional leaders in each province and also cities and regencies. The role of local government, thus, is expected to be able to support the central government to improve regional cities and countries. The local government has been given the responsibility and authoritative power to take care of their own region using the strategies and sustainable innovations, which are considered as regional needs. Those local governments also can work maximum; local governments should benefit from the private sector and the public.

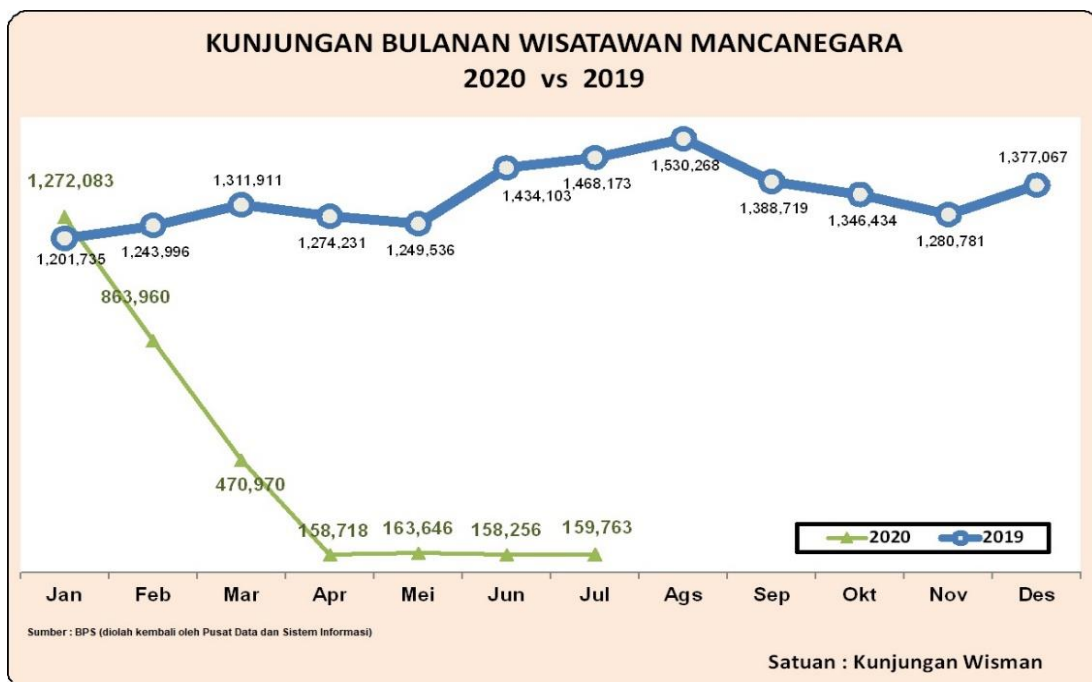
Nye (2008) defines soft power as a strategy to influence other countries through appeal or the state-owned attraction without using force or threats (J.S Nye, 2008: 94). The soft power comes from the values, culture, and policies that implement and apply to a particular area. Using hearts and minds, thus, is considered one of the keys to the successful unification of countries in the world without posing the threat of widespread conflict or war.

The national tourism development supported by soft power usages, which is supported by the utilization of natural and human resources in tourist destinations, creating a desire for various stakeholders in the country and abroad related to the establishment of cooperation in order to strengthen the relationship that both existing and new relations to be built. One of the studies in international relations to the theory that is consistent with the use of soft power to achieve a goal, namely the theory of liberalism. Liberalism sees that the cooperation between the government, the community, and world institutions can create a good international order without causing conflict with one another. One of the efforts made by the North Sumatra provincial government in using soft power is through the development of regional tourism to generate international travelers visit.

Tourism becomes one of the leading sectors whose impact is quite influential for an area and is chosen as one of the leading regional development sectors. In 2019, the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism targeted foreign tourists to visit 18 million people. To achieve the national target, there is a need for cooperation between all parties, both government and non-government parties. Therefore the North Sumatra Regional Government participated in achieving the target by designing the strategies and policies of the North Sumatra region. The attraction that North Sumatra has through culture, culinary, tourist destinations, and hospitality of the people brings foreign tourists and archipelago tourists to this area. The tourism sector is one of the soft powers used by the North Sumatra provincial government, business entities, and local people in seeking cooperation and mutual benefit with various communities.

Foreign tourists visiting Indonesia through the whole entrance in December 2019 amounted to 1,377,067 visits or decreased by 2.03% compared to December 2018 amounted to 1,405,554 visits (Indonesia Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, February 10, 2020). By nationality, the number of visits by foreign tourists in December 2019 in 26 main entrance recorded the highest number of visits, i.e., number 239 783 visits Malaysia, Singapore number of 207 263 visits, China's number of 154 175 visits, Australia number of 125 624 visits, and a number of 106 643 visits East Timor. While the growth in the number of foreign tourists in December 2019 in 26 of the main entrance, when compared with the month of December 2018, recorded the highest growth, namely Vietnam amounted to 52.86%, United Arab Emirates amounted to 41.19%, Russia amounted to 31.35%, South Africa 23.38%, and Papua New Guinea 21.02%.

Table 1. Data on Tourist Visits (2020)



Source: (BPS 2020)

Foreign tourists visiting Indonesia through the whole entrance in July 2020 amounted to 159 763 visits, a decrease of -89.12% compared to July 2019, which amounted to 1,468,173 visits (Indonesia Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy/Tourism and Creative Economy Agency, September 1, 2020). Visits of foreign tourists at 3 (three) major entrances from 26 main entrances in July 2020 compared to June 2019, namely: Ngurah Rai decreased by -100%; Soekarno-Hatta declined by -98.83%, and Batam decreased by -98.81%. Based on nationality, the number of foreign tourist visits in June 2020 at all entrances recorded the highest number of visits, namely: Timor Leste with 85,280 visits, Malaysia with 58,610 visits, China with 2,747 visits, the United States with 1,398 visits, and Papua New Guinea with 1,295 visits.

Indonesia tourism and creative economy also support the regular event of a cycling tour entitled "Toba Caldera Geobike # 6" to promote Toba tourism in the new normal era (Indonesia Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, September 9, 2020).

Activities organized by Rumah Karya Indonesia on 4 to September 6, 2020, aims to promote the return of tourism Lake Toba as a tourist area that featured on an international level as well as to introduce the Toba Caldera UNESCO Global Geopark in a new era of normal adaptation. Cycling tourism activities in the open, such as the geopark area, have great potential to be developed and optimized for the benefit of the people around Lake Toba because they are in line with the trend of a healthy lifestyle that is currently loved by the community.

It was also expected to attract local tourists to visit the neighboring provinces of North Sumatra. In 2019, by making Lake Toba one of the super-priority destinations by President Joko Widodo is visited by foreign and domestic tourists (Sindo News, September 5, 2019). It will have an impact on the country's tourist destinations that are not only centered in several regions that are already well known as tourist destination locations such as Bali, Borobudur Temple, and Yogyakarta. Thus, it takes an active role supported by local governments to cooperate and develop local tourism and economic empowerment of the creative, innovative community.

On July 2, 2020, Toba Caldera, or well-known as Toba Lake has been determined as UNESCO Global Geopark at the 209<sup>th</sup> UNESCO Executive Council meeting in Paris, France (travel.tempo.co, July 12, 2020). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Executive Board (UNESCO), on July 7, 2020, fully agreed on Toba Caldera as a UNESCO Global Geopark in the 209 Session of the Executive Council of UNESCO in Paris. These executive board members set 16 new UNESCO Global Geopark in 2020, including Toba caldera located in Indonesia North Sumatera province (Indonesia Foreign Ministry, July 8, 2020).

Indonesia Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, Wishnutama Kusubandio stated:

"Lake Toba has become one of Indonesia's super priorities tourist destinations that certified worldwide by UNESCO Global Geopark (UGG), thus, made Lake Toba is more infamous on an international level, and the most important thing is beneficial for local people."

Toba Lake will become a profitable source for surrounding communities that able to generate destination enhancement, especially in terms of combining geo-diversity, biodiversity, and culture diversity. Rationally, Toba Lake has a contributing role in supporting the national tourism sector. Through consistent and committed sustainable geo-tourism, it will develop local people to generate opportunities and economic benefits in enhancing local ancestor culture, and traditional cultural products such Batak people traditional cloth or Ulos (Sandra Niessen, 2009), along with opening more job employment.

Further, Hutasoit and Dermawan also founded that Samosir Music International Festival 2018 had utilized the role of mass media as a daily communication (Hutasoit and Dermawan, 2019: 1). Thus, in creating more efficient and targeted communication, the Samosir government regency had conducted a series of events and the Indonesian music community as a strategic communication medium. In the end, the relationships between related actors, such as national and international music communities, artists, and media partners, were the supporters of the creation of sustainable long-term relations.

## **2. Results and Discussions**

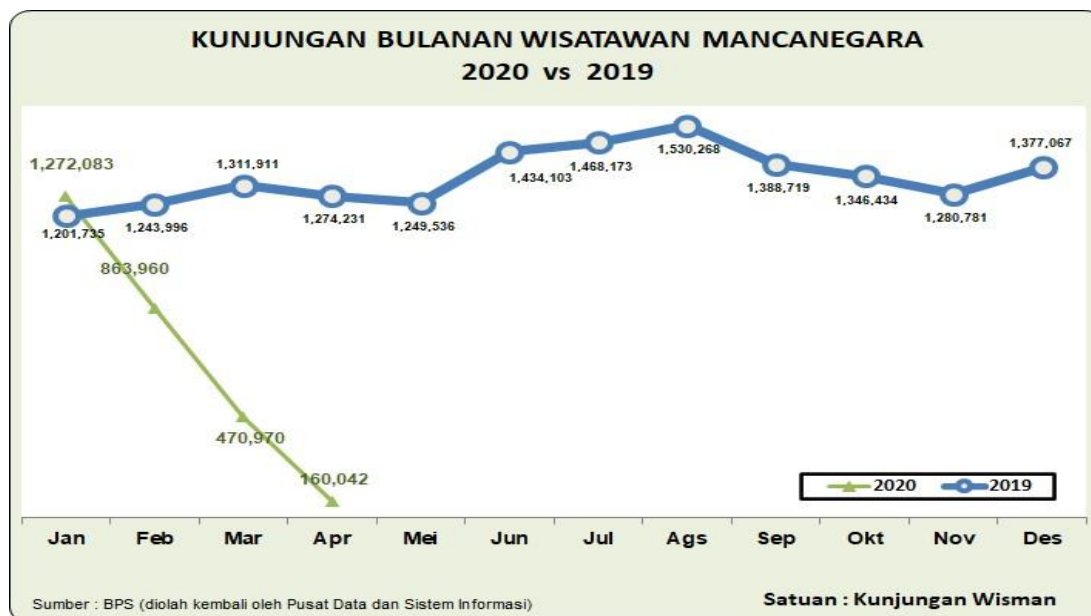
### **2.1 Indonesia National Super Priorities Tourist Destinations**

Indonesia's current diplomacy challenges related to the management of foreign relations to focus more on diplomatic efforts in the form of soft power diplomacy. Indonesia's foreign policy priorities are focused on four things, one of which is economic diplomacy to sustain national economic independence. It is important and necessary. Thus, implementation of proactive public-diplomacy, down-to-earth diplomacy provide direct benefits to the people and diplomacy for the people.

Those stakeholders and policymakers in the region should further enhance coordination and synergy in order to explore and build on the potential areas that have opportunities for cooperation with neighboring countries in the Asia Pacific region (tabloid diplomasi, November 25, 2016). It should stick to the purpose of the national promotion and enhancement of local economic growth and strengthening the economic empowerment of local communities.

It can be done in the form of virtual interactive dialogue such as regular virtual talk-show, by raising topics which include soft power Indonesian diplomacy, maritime diplomacy, economic diplomacy, and the role of public relations in the implementation of foreign relations policy. In October 2019, Indonesia's national tourism was projected to be a core economy and the nation's largest foreign exchange earner for the next five years ahead (Indonesia Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, October 15, 2019). In May 2020, foreign tourists visiting Indonesia through the entire national entrance amounted to 163.646 visits, a decrease of -86.90% compared to May 2019 amounted to 1,249,536 visits (Indonesia Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, May 2020). Foreign tourist arrivals at 3 (three) major airports and seaports from 26 main entrances in May 2020 compared to May 2019, namely: Ngurah Rai decreased by -99.99%; Soekarno-Hatta declined by -99.75%, and Batam decreased by -98.76%. Meanwhile, based on nationalities, the number of foreign tourists visiting in May 2020 at all entrances recorded the highest number of visits, namely: Timor Leste with 81,486 visits, Malaysia with 66,385 visits, China with 1,878 visits, the Philippines with 1,819 visits, and Singapore with 1,335 visits.

Based on data from the World Travel & Tourism Council, tourism in Indonesia is to be the fastest-growing ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in the world, number three in Asia, and number one in Southeast Asia. This achievement in the tourism sector was also recognized by the British media company, The Telegraph, which listed Indonesia as "The Top 20 Fastest-Growing Travel Destinations" (The Telegraph, September 27, 2019). A record 1.401 billion overseas trips were made by travelers in 2018, according to the latest statistics from the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). It represents an increase of nearly six percent in 2017, and up from around 900m a decade ago in 2007.



Source: (Indonesia Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy 2020)

Since 2019, the tourism sector has been designated as the leading sector in contributing to the nation's economy by the government surpassing crude palm oil (CPO) exporting products (Indonesia Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, October 15, 2019). It improves significantly, particularly since President Joko Widodo and Vice President Jusuf Kalla lead the world's largest archipelagic state from October 20, 2014, to October 2019. Indonesia has thousands of tourist destinations, both of which are already popular names, as well as those that still need optimal improvement. Moreover, the development of national infrastructure continues to be encouraged. Thus, it is not impossible that the Indonesian tourism sector will become a major investment for state revenue.

Further, Toba Caldera is the world's largest volcanic lake. If COVID-19 ends soon, around 1 million Chinese tourists will visit Bali tourist destinations, and hopefully, it will also attract a less similar amount of incoming foreign tourists visit Lake Toba tourist regions. The theme of the Geo-park is Super-volcano Caldera, a volcanic caldera as the result of massive explosive volcanic eruption > 8 VEI ('supervolcano') and erupted 2,800 km<sup>3</sup> magmatic material (> 1000 km<sup>3</sup>), occurred 74,000 years ago (Toba Caldera Geopark, 2019: 3). This is a product of the largest caldera eruption in the Quaternary Age (the last 2 million years). This area is locally inhabited by Toba Batak, Simalungun, Karo, and Pakpak ethnics.

The Toba Caldera or Toba Lake is located in North Sumatra province formed by the explosion of a supervolcano 74,000 years ago. The base of the caldera is filled with water and is the largest lake in Indonesia. The beauty of the natural panorama of the Toba Caldera and the cultural richness of the Batak tribe owned has made Lake Toba one of the mainstays Indonesia tourist destinations, which is included in the list of '10 (ten) New Bali'. Furthermore, after waiting for nine years, from 2011 to 2020, finally, Indonesian Ambassador to France concurrently Andorra, Monaco and UNESCO, Armanatha Nasir after the establishment of Toba caldera, stated clearly (en.antaraneews.com, July 8, 2020):

"Through this decision, Indonesia can develop Geopark Toba caldera through a network of Global Geoparks Network and the Asia Pacific Geoparks Network, especially in terms of empowerment of local communities."

The Indonesian government has succeeded in convincing international organizations such as UNESCO that Toba Caldera has a high geological connection and heritage of ancestral traditions with the local community, specifically related to the efforts

of all stakeholders in preserving culture, biodiversity and strengthening local wisdom of the Batak people. Therefore, in this context, UNESCO member states fully support Toba caldera preservation and protection as part of UNESCO Global Geopark.

Toba Caldera finally succeeds in getting the UNESCO list after procedural assessment and decided by UNESCO Global Geoparks Council on the 4<sup>th</sup> UNESCO Global Geoparks International Conference in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, held from August 31 to September 2, 2019. Suppose Toba Caldera's decision as a UNESCO Global Geopark will provide many business and investment opportunities and challenges as well as continuous support of Indonesia government responsibility, mostly on local community economic empowerment. Also, it is able to generate regional economic growth and sustainable natural environmental development in the tourist destination. Thus, through the development of sustainable geo-tourism, there are opportunities created for local communities to maintain and accelerate culture promotion, local products preservation, boosting human resources development, as well as the creation of broader employment for people living and settled around Lake Toba (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2013).

On July 1, 2020, Lake Toba tourist destination is also one of government priority to be restored after it collapsed during Covid-19 pandemic, which followed by Silangit international airport reopening in June 2020 after closed temporarily for three months due to Coronavirus spread nationally (medan.kompas.com, July 2, 2020). A new order of implemented local policy or new normal life expectancy rises into the tourism industry in North Sumatra province, particularly Lake Toba. Local or domestic tourist visits are the main target in national stakeholders' efforts to recover the national tourism sector. The North Sumatra provincial government's target until December 2020 is only to attract more incoming local tourists to visit Lake Toba tourist destination. Obviously, how to inviting local people coming to Lake Toba, instead of expecting the Jakarta people, for example, which they still facing pass a strict COVID-19 health protocol headed there.

Hence, this development of tourism innovation should also be made, for example, through supporting virtual tours with specific discount rates, as well as the use of non-travel service transactions in cash. Currently, the North Sumatra region in transition, so that there have been several destinations opened. However, there is still 30 percent of Lake Toba destinations area being tested by implementing changes opening new normal habits.

Ahead of the implementation of the new normal implementation in the opening of the regional tourism sector, there have been several tourist attractions opened such as Hutaginjang nature tourism and Christian religious tourism, 'Salib Kasih.' Nonetheless, the ongoing coronavirus pandemic has forced a global experiment that could highlight the differences between, and cost-benefit trade-off of, the suite of services offered by Batak local communities and the competitiveness of ultra-low-cost tourist destination.

Nature tourism activities have a low risk of transmitting the Coronavirus. It makes the opening of the tourist destination becomes more possible, especially in tourist areas that are not affected, or green or yellow zone. Thus, it needs sustainable progress of creating a good image of the Lake Toba region as a safe area from the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Also, it is important to maintain the protocol principle of cleanliness, health, safety, and environment (CHSE) in the tourist regions.

Meanwhile, with the world's recognition and full attention on Toba Caldera, at the same time, Indonesia central government, local communities, and all stakeholders are required to have an intention concern in improving and maintaining environmental

sustainability and the integrity of the integrated Toba Caldera region in a sustainable, measurable, and transparent manner. Joseph Nye in 2012, international relations scholar at Harvard University, explained that with soft power, "the best propaganda is not propaganda," further explaining that during the Information Age, "credibility is the scarcest resource" (Joseph S. Nye Jr., May 8, 2012).

In international politics, soft power is the ability to attract and co-opt rather than coerce. In other words, soft power involves shaping the preferences of others through appeal and attraction. According to Nye, a defining feature of soft power is that it is non-coercive; the currency of soft power includes culture, political values, and foreign policies. This term also has been used in changing and influencing social and public opinion through relatively less transparent channels and lobbying through powerful political and non-political organizations and through economic influence. In 2012, former South Korean President Park Geun-hye also stated: "In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, culture is power" (Yonhap News Agency, 2012). "Hallyu" or also known as the "Korean Wave," is a neologism referring to the spread of South Korean culture since the late 1990s. The spread of South Korean entertainment has led to higher sales of other goods and services such as food, clothing, and Korean language classes (Anthony Faiola, August 31, 2006).

Image 1. Toba Caldera Scenic Panorama



Source: (Indonesia Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020)

Thereafter, in the development of regional tourism facilities and infrastructure, for example, such as the construction of the Tebing Tinggi toll road to Pematangsiantar, this is completed by the end of 2020. Along with the certainty of the sustainability of the construction of crossing ports in Ajibata, Tigaras, and Simanindo, to the finalization of the construction of the Samosir ring road, which is targeted to be completed at the end of December 2020.

The Samosir regency is the only green zone in the Lake Toba region. There were no Covid-19 patients in the district (regional.kompas.com, June 21, 2020). Gradually, only local tourists from North Sumatra province may wish to visit the largest volcanic lake in the world. Tourists from outside the province and foreign tourists can only be



allowed to enter the tourist destination of Lake Toba at the end of 2020 by applying the strict COVID-19 health protocol of the tourism sector.

Image 2. Toba Caldera: Indonesia New Global Geopark (2020)

**ANTARA NEWS**

# KALDERA TOBA GEOPARK GLOBAL BARU INDONESIA

UNESCO menetapkan Kaldera Toba sebagai Geopark Global pada Sidang ke-209 Dewan Eksekutif UNESCO di Paris, Prancis pada 7 Juli 2020. Penetapan itu diharapkan dapat memberi kontribusi positif bagi peningkatan sosial dan ekonomi daerah.

## PROSES RATH GEOPARK GLOBAL

- 2014** Diusulkan kepada UNESCO.
- November 2017** Mulai pembenahan kawasan.
- Desember 2017** Mengirimkan laporan ke Komisi Nasional Indonesia untuk UNESCO. Kunjungan penasihat dari UNESCO.
- April 2018** Penilaian oleh UNESCO.
- September 2019** Laporan hasil penilaian dari UNESCO.
- Agustus 2019** Masuk dalam daftar UNESCO.
- Juli 2020** Ditetapkan sebagai Geopark Global UNESCO.

### KALDERA TOBA

Terbentuk dari letusan dahsyat gunung berapi pada 74.000 tahun lalu.

Danau vulkanik terbesar di dunia.

Kedalaman danau **505 m**, panjang **87 km**, lebar **27 km**.

Terletak di ketinggian **904 mdpl**.

Masuk dalam daftar "10 Bali Baru".

Dikelilingi **7** kabupaten.

Memiliki **16** situs geologi.

### KEUNTUNGAN

- Menjadi destinasi pariwisata super prioritas tersertifikasi tingkat dunia.
- Semakin terkenal di tingkat global.
- Mendorong pengembangan perekonomian dan pembangunan berkelanjutan di daerah.
- Masyarakat setempat berpeluang meningkatkan budaya, kesenian, produk lokal, dan penciptaan lapangan kerja.

**Penetapan ini memberi kesempatan plus tanggung jawab bagi Indonesia, untuk mendorong pengembangan perekonomian dan pembangunan berkelanjutan di kawasan sekitar.**

Wishnutama Kusubandio  
Menparekraf RI

### REKOMENDASI

- Pengembangan hubungan antara warisan geologis dengan warisan teritorial lain.
- Pengembangan strategi metodologi dan kriteria untuk menjadi mitra akomodasi, katering, penyedia transportasi, dan produk lokal.
- Perkuat keterlibatan aktivitas Jaringan Geopark Global dan Jaringan Geopark Asia Pasifik.
- Pengembangan strategi pendidikan bekerja sama dengan Geopark Global UNESCO (UGGP) lain.
- Peningkatan pendidikan mitigasi kerusakan alam dan perubahan iklim di sekolah serta masyarakat setempat.
- Perkuat keterlibatan UGGP dalam penelitian, konservasi, serta promosi penduduk asli, budaya, dan bahasa setempat.

DATA UNESCO/KEMENPAREKRAF FOTO ANTARA RISET MOENG GRAFIS ULFA EDITOR BAYU

Source: (Antara News 2020)

The new normal standard operating procedures will be applied to start from tourist attractions, hotels or accommodations, homestay, restaurants, food stalls, entertainment services, and hot springs. Currently, there are at least 18 (eighteens) attractions managed by the local government in the area of Lake Toba (Samosir). These six objects are

managed by the local community or village, three attractions are managed by the community, and three objects are managed by the private sector.

Image 3. Local people daily activities, April 22, 2014



In fact, the Toba caldera designation as a UNESCO Global Geopark is a long process of joint efforts of various stakeholders, including local and central government together with local people who live in the area of Lake Toba.

Image 4. At Samosir Island, April 16, 2014



Indonesia has had 4 (four) other sites UNESCO Global Geopark, namely: Batur, Cileteuh, Gunung Sewu, and Rinjani, beside the infamous Toba Caldera. Indonesia also has a lot of natural and cultural resources are included in the UNESCO list include ten cultural heritage objects, 9 (nine) cultural and natural heritage sites, and 16 (sixteen) biosphere reserves that have been listed in UNESCO.

### **3. Conclusions and Recommendations**

Indonesia's central and local government has worked hard to prioritizing the preparation process since the beginning until getting UNESCO recognition for Toba Caldera. It emphasizes consistency, serious commitment, and good cooperation from all stakeholders all over Indonesia since the beginning of the process, collecting reliable and valid data, holding various workshops, preparing and negotiating nomination documents to be submitted to UNESCO.

Toba caldera has made it into the list of UNESCO after being appraised and decided upon by the UNESCO Global Geoparks Council at the International Conference of UNESCO Global Geoparks-IV in Lombok, Indonesia, from August 31 to September 2, 2019.

Indonesia's government demarcates the area meant for tourism, the area meant for the people, and that designated for other purposes. Lake Toba development tourist resort began in 2019 and is expected to be completed in one year (Antaraneews.com, July 31, 2020). Supporting facilities and infrastructure to boost tourism in the Lake Toba area were already constructed in 2018. This development is worth Rp3.5 trillion, and the allocation has been done in Indonesia National State Budget (APBN), according to President Joko Widodo in a press statement released by the Presidential Secretariat. Sooner or later, expecting that, it will attract more private investments whose values are expected to be three to five times bigger than the government's investment for Lake Toba.

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