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## **SOUTH KOREA TO STRENGTHEN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA, ASEAN**

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The South Korean Government under President Moon Jae-in's administration is trying to strengthen South Korea's diplomatic relations with Indonesia and other ASEAN member countries, said Choe Won-gi, Head of the Korean National Diplomatic Academy.

The statement was delivered by Won-gi at the Public Diplomacy Dialogue, "Indonesia-Korea Toward a People-Centered Community of Peace and Prosperity", held at the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs here on Monday.

"Under the administration of President Moon Jae-in, South Korea began to attach importance to ASEAN as a partner and sought to improve relations and cooperation with ASEAN member countries," he said.

Won-gi pointed out that traditionally ASEAN has never been a priority for South Korea's foreign policy and diplomacy. The South Korean foreign policy and diplomacy have been more focused on the major countries around the country, such as the United States, Japan and China.

"Our relations with the ASEAN are very important, but our diplomatic relations have been heavily focused on big countries surrounding us, particularly the United States, Japan, and China," he noted.

Therefore, he further noted the President Moon administration's "New Southern Policy" began to lead to the development of South Korean diplomacy in relation to Southeast Asia and ASEAN.

"We (South Korean) need to re-balance our diplomatic relations to other countries, especially ASEAN member countries," he said.

Won-gi added the South Korean government in particular would also seek to further strengthen diplomatic relations with Indonesia, which is considered important as an ASEAN leader.

"More specifically, South Korea will strive for closer relations with Indonesia. The close relations with Indonesia will bring South Korea closer to ASEAN," he continued.

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