

# Observing Imported Batik Products Policy

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Since 2009, batik has been named as Indonesia's cultural heritage by the UNESCO. As a response, Indonesian government issued a Trade Ministry Regulation that regulates limits of imported textiles as well as batik textile and batik motif products.

Institute of International Studies (IIS) of International Relations Department UGM hosted a discussion to know how far the UNESCO naming batik as a cultural heritage can justify protectionist policy. The event went on Thursday (24/5) at IIS conference room at Faculty of Social and Political Sciences UGM.

Shofi Fatihatun Sholihah, resource person, said in the discussion that batik can be seen as a commodity and culture. In terms of commodity, batik becomes export and import goods. In terms of culture, batik has the value that needs to be preserved.

"Activities between buyers and sellers have indirectly preserved the culture of batik," said Shofi.

Increase in batik consumers, according to Shofi, was due to the naming of batik as a cultural

heritage. She said batik production in the country is not parallel with the existing number. The slower process of batik making than that of batik motif textiles has triggered imports of batik from abroad. "Imported batik phenomenon is feared to shift the perspective of community on the existing batik," she said.

But government has responded to the matter by issuing Trade Ministry Regulation No. 15 Year 2015 on policy on imported textiles, batik textile and batik motif products.

Shofi also observed how UNESCO International Cultural Heritage Safeguard (ICHS) can be used to justify limits of imported textiles as well as batik textile and batik motif products. Shofi opined that ICHS was weak to justify such policy in terms of economy due to aspects such as *like product*. But she saw that normatively, use of ICHS is important to enhance the batik product protection.

"This issue is accommodated in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Article XX (f) General Expectation on imposed to protect national treasure, supported by the acknowledgment of batik as a cultural heritage," she said.

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