



**OPENING SESSION**

KEYNOTE SPEECH AND OFFICIAL OPENING

BY

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REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

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***Our Guest of Honour, President of the Republic of Nauru,  
Ministers and Vice Ministers, Ambassadors,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Pimpinan dan Anggota Komisi I DPR RI  
Wakil dari DPD, Gubernur Lemhanas,  
Ibu dan Bapak sekalian***

***Welcome to Bali, the Island of God,  
Welcome to Indonesia, the third largest democracy in the world, and the  
land of diversity,***

I want to begin with an experience that brought me great optimism.

Yesterday, I met and addressed **138** students from **57** countries participating at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bali Democracy Students Conference.

The youths are the future of our democracy and I have a strong confidence in them.

Democracy may be under pressures in many fronts but our future remains bright, thanks to our youths!

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This year marks the 11<sup>th</sup> year of the Bali Democracy Forum, a unique Forum that Indonesia has been hosting annually.

In other words, I can say that this is the first year of the second decade of Bali Democracy Forum's journey. Starting from this year, the format of the meeting will be adjusted to provide more interaction discussions.

Why I said BDF is a unique forum. Because it is a forum that embraces and strengthens democracy without finger pointing exercises.

We all know it well, democracy is not one-size-fits all, and it is true. Democracy must be developed upon homegrown values, and it is true. Democracy must create good governance and effective government. These are all the reasons behind our idea of having democracy.

However, ultimately democracy must bring prosperity to the people.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Indonesia began to embrace democracy only in a not-too-distant past, just two decades ago starting in 1998.

It is true that before 1998, the economic growth was high, and once reached 8 – 10 %.

But Indonesian people needed more by launching a *Reformasi* or reform. It was because they needed democracy, transparency and good governance.

We have learned that high economic growth does not always mean equality nor prosperity for all.

That is why Indonesia chose democracy as a new path of development. We wholeheartedly believe that a democratic system will allow every individual to participate and thrive in the process of development and nation-building.

We are confident that a democratic system will allow inclusiveness, not exclusiveness. We trust that a democratic system will allow checks-and-balances. We proved that a good democratic system could prevent corruption.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In a larger picture, despite the many challenges facing the Asia-Pacific, the outlook of democracy in our region has been positive with net democratic progress has surpassed all other regions around the globe.

*The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index*, for example, notes that for the past 10 years, the average score for democracy in Asia has increased from 5.44 in 2006 to 5.74 in 2016.

I hope the Bali Democracy Forum played its part in strengthening democracy in the region.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On the other hand, the state of democracy globally portrays a different image. In its 2018 report, **Freedom House** cites that in the last 12 years, democracy has in fact regressed.

The pillars, principles, and values of democracy are being challenged in countries traditionally known as champions of democracy.

Several countries have chosen to turn a deaf ear on the voice of the people, *vox populi*.

The press is being undermined.

Social media is being used to spread hoax and hate speeches for narrow political interests.

More alarmingly, democracy and democratic institutions are being misused to spread anti-democratic values, making a shift towards **Illiberal Democracy**.

Aside from that, there is also a global question why is democracy experiencing a standstill, and to an extent, even regress?

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

There are perhaps a number of causes to this dire situation.

But in my view, one of the key reasons is that **democracy and its benefit has not been inclusive enough**. Many members of society remain marginalized. Democratic institutions have been failing in providing a sense of security for all, an equitable prosperity for all, and a protection for pluralism and diversity.

In short, democratic institutions are viewed as failing to deliver the fundamental needs of the people.

That is why we see the erosion of public trust in democracy.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Against the background, our collective duty is to ensure that the positive development of democracy in the Asia Pacific continues to grow by rectifying view that democracy has failed and by restoring people's trust in democracy.

Even though democracy is not a perfect system, democracy provides sufficient space for all voices to be heard.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

What the world needs is **an inclusive democracy**. Democracy that unites, not divides. Democracy that provides hope, not fear. Democracy that empowers, weakens.

In this connection, inclusive participation from all stakeholders is vital.

### **First, the private sector must contribute in creating an inclusive democracy.**

The private sector must become the driving force in achieving inclusive prosperity. Not only a partner in development, the private sector can become government's reliable partner in the strengthening of democracy.

The private sector must be at the frontline in providing a solution.

### **Second, we must empower our millenials.**

As I mentioned earlier, the future of our democracy belongs to the youth, the millenials. They provide the much-needed new energy and new life for inclusive democracy. Therefore, we must prevent the youth from being apathetic towards democracy.

Millenials can make democracy more colorful. Their positive energy and creativity can spur innovation.

Facing **the Fourth Industrial Revolution**, our millenials' technological savviness and exposure to social media create new opportunities in achieving inclusive democracy.

Today's technology enables closer and more direct contacts between the people and their leaders. Through social media, millenials can directly communicate their aspirations, criticisms, and circumvent bureacratic red-tape, to which governments are able to understand and address the needs of its people more effectively, more quickly, even in real-time.

### **Third, women must become a strong pillar in inclusive democracies.**

Women play an important role in social transformation.

Furthermore, women have natural qualities in garnering consensus and peaceful solutions. These are the keys to resolving political stagnation, enabling democracy to provide beneficial results for the people.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As the Bali Democracy Forum enters its second decade, with ever greater challenges to democracy, the BDF will also need to rise to the occasion, to help the region meets these challenges.

The convening of BDF chapter Tunisia and Berlin in the last two years is one example of BDF rising to contribute to the democracy discussion in other regions.

I am confident BDF will to continue to evolve to meet todays challenges. For this, I call upon all of us to guard democracy for the interests of our peoples. This is a high time for us all to unite in the strengthening of our democratic path. I am confident that through the right path, our people will continue to thrive and prosper.

May I now invite H.E. Honorable Baron Divavesi Waqa, President of the Republic of Nauru, to kindly join me at the stage to officially open the 11<sup>th</sup> Bali Democracy Forum.

I thank you.

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