



12th BALI DEMOCRACY FORUM

Nusa Dua, Bali, 5-6 December 2019

CONCEPT PAPER

Background

The Bali Democracy Forum (BDF) was established in 2008 to create a progressive democratic architecture in the Asia-Pacific region. In the past decades, the Forum facilitated dialogues through sharing experiences and best practices in managing diversity that encourages equality, mutual understanding and respect. Throughout the years, this has become the foundation of the Forum. In doing so, the BDF has also been active in advocating the principles of democracy – namely that it must be developed based on internal initiatives (home-grown); that it upholds the values of pluralism and diversity; and that it must be inclusive.

Over the years, the BDF has succeeded in making democracy a strategic agenda in the Asia-Pacific. It has encouraged countries to establish a balance between economic and political development, between creating peace and security, and promoting human rights and fundamental freedom as well as respecting humanitarian values. All of which are reflected in the three founding pillars of the United Nations Charter.

The various themes that have been discussed in the BDF have resulted in new ideas being further promulgated and shared amongst countries. Thus, in its second decade, the BDF is expected to continue contributing to the region's peace and stability, to the promotion of human rights, and especially to further encourage the healthy balance between economic growth and political development.

Theme

The 12th BDF of 2019 will address the theme “Democracy and Inclusivity”. The theme is derived from the following endeavors:

1. In early 2019, a process of internal consultations, which was then followed by discussion with international experts, has resulted in several themes out of which some experts recommended “Democracy and Inclusivity” as the appropriate theme for the 12th BDF.
2. An empirical, and statistical study involving 209 states/entities, has been initiated by the Indonesian MoFA, to observe linkage between democracy and inclusivity. In this study, the linkage is measured at individual country basis by comparing scores calculated from overall score of Freedom Index 2018, the scaled score of Global Inclusiveness 2018 and the comensurate score of Fragile State Index 2018. The assumption is that there should be a correlation between the quality of freedom, inclusivity and fragility. State tends to be less fragile, if it has better

- freedom and inclusivity. And the vice versa, state tends to be fragile if it has less freedom and less inclusivity. The study has resulted in the following inclinations:
- a. About 16% of the total states studied show consistent linkage between freedom (democracy), inclusivity, and the level of fragility;
 - b. About 33% of the total states studied show a somewhat consistent linkage between freedom (democracy), inclusivity, and the level of fragility;
 - c. About 10% of the total states studied show an inconsistent linkage between freedom (democracy), inclusivity, and the level of fragility;
 - d. Unfortunately, about 41% of the total states studied show uncounted linkage due to the lack of data.

Nevertheless, combining the percentage of “consistent linkage” and “somewhat consistent linkage”, the total of which 49%, it can be inferred that there is an inclination towards the correlation between democracy (based on freedom index) and inclusivity (based on global inclusiveness index).

As such, this effort to promote inclusive democracy is premised on the notion that democracy is not confined to merely holding of elections, having parliamentary debates or enacting laws. The concept has a much wider meaning. Indeed, the real test of democracy lies in how inclusive it is.

Success of democracy is judged by the extent to which all people have the opportunity to contribute to democratic process; and the extent of their equal access in benefiting from the fruits of democracy. The welfare and care of every single member of the society, especially underprivileged, marginalized and the excluded, needs to be taken into consideration. Inclusive democracy must necessarily evolve into inclusive development; development not taken narrowly as only economic progress but also ensuring economic and social justice to every section of population.

Inclusive Democracy in accordance with UN SDG's

Inclusivity lies at the core of democracy and its underpinning principle of equal participation for all. The principle foundation of democracy is that all who are affected by a decision should have the right to participate in making that decision, either directly or through their chosen representatives.

This assertion is consistent with the United Nation's SDG's, as it concerns goal number 16, in particular targets 16.7 which in part promotes to

‘...ensuring inclusive, participatory and representative decision making at all levels...’ and ‘...ensuring full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making of women in political, economic and public life...’. This assertion implies the inclusion of all unique groupings in a particular society.

In order to guarantee inclusive democratic process in any society, that particular country/government must invest a great amount of resources, including financial, human, material or otherwise, in order to establish the right conditions necessary for fostering inclusive democracy which ensures peace, political stability and economic prosperity.

In a larger picture, despite the many challenges facing the Asia-Pacific, the outlook of democracy in Asia 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.

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. Between 2005 and 2018, the share of Not Free countries rose to 26 percent, while the share of Free countries declined to 44 percent. The pillars, principles, and values of democracy are being challenged in countries traditionally known as champions of democracy.

The press is being undermined, while 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?

One of the key points to ponder is whether **democracy and its benefit has not been inclusive enough**. Many members of society remain marginalized. For instance, on the question on the inclusiveness of women in politics, the matter is not only about the increasing of actual numbers of women in politics, but rather whether the increasing women in politics would bring new paradigms and norms as alternative for the existing masculine based *realpolitik*. Another criticism relates to whether 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.

Working to achieve political inclusion is fraught with challenges. Foremost amongst these is the increasing difficulty by which the needs and aspirations of citizens can connect with accountable and representative political institutions. Democratic institutions and processes are often mistrusted. Some citizens, meanwhile, are not interested in voting or joining in a political party; a phenomenon known as political apathy. They arguably, and pessimistically, see no significant improvement in their life, economics, politics, and otherwise, whoever is in power.

Inequality of opportunity persists worldwide. Not all citizens in society feel represented in decision making process and thus many feel marginalized. For example, women, who constitute over 50 per cent of the world's population, continue to be under represented, in many societies, as voters, political leaders and elected officials. Democracy cannot truly deliver for all of its citizens if half the population remains excluded from the political arena.

In some cases, access to political institutions is not available or even feasible because the frameworks or modalities for inclusive citizen involvement and engagement are not being implemented or are simply not in place.

In short, democratic institutions are viewed as failing to be inclusive and that is why we see the erosion of public trust in democracy.

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.

What the world needs is **an inclusive democracy**. Democracy that unites, provides hope and empowers. In this connection, inclusive participation from all stakeholders is vital.

In this very context, the recommendation from the 11th BDF in 2018 is quite straight forward:

First, governments and civil societies should go hand-in-hand in promoting inclusive democracy. Inclusive democracy prerequisites strong state and strong civil society.

Second, 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.

Third, we must empower our millenials. 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. Their positive energy and creativity can spur innovation in democracy.

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.

Fourth, 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.

Outline of the Forum

The main objective of the forum is providing platform for sharing experiences among state actors and invited stakeholders to understand the challenges of making democracy that deliver prosperities. At the same time, lesson learned on policies and initiatives, as well as efforts to make democracy works would be further discussed.

To extend the initiative at the 11th BDF, this year's Forum will convene a Bali Democracy Student Conference (BDSC) where around 150 students, including the overseas ones, as well as from various universities in Indonesia will have the opportunity to deliberate and to express their views about various topics relevant to the theme of the Forum. The conference will be convened parallel to the main event of the Forum.

The Bali Civil Society and Media Forum (BCSMF) will also be conducted in parallel with the 12th BDF and BDSC 2019. It is intended to optimize the participation of the civil society and media as they are agents for prosperity as well.

The 12th BDF Opening Session will be attended by the 12th BDF, BDSC 2019 and BCSMF 2019 participants and will consist of the presentation of the reports by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the host country, as well as remarks by attending Heads of State/Government.

There are three main innovations characterized the 12th BDF. Firstly, there will be ministerial forum to signify the sub-theme of **“Women, Inclusivity, and the State of Democracy”**, derived from the general theme of **“Democracy and Inclusivity”**.

This dialogue focuses on the role of women leadership in making the inclusive democracy possible. The session first uncovers the obstacles faced by women in leadership roles. This obstacles and challenges often deeply grounded in culture, structure, and society consciousness. Often, the state and power arenas legitimize the functioning of institutions and enactment of policies constraint women’s leadership.

The daunting questions include the following. What are thoughts, innovations, and experiences to open access, mainstream understanding, and equalize discourses to make women roles in leadership supported? What are the consequences on women’s leadership on inclusive democracy? What conditions make the women’s leadership succeed or fail? Why inclusion is urgently needed in the current post-truth society and democracy disfigured? The session could discussed the aforementioned but not limited issues.

Following the ministerial forum, there will be four focused group dialogues with special theme engaging variety groups of participants of the BDF. (1) Dialogue on the Roles of State and Policy with the theme of **“Moving towards inclusive state building”** (2) The activity of Bali Civil Society and Media Forum 2019 with the theme of **“Rising exclusivity and Declining Democracy”**. (3) The activity of Bali Youth Conference 2019 with the theme of **“Youth and inclusive digital democracy”**. (4) Dialogue on Business and Economic Focus with the theme of **“Inclusive Economy”**.

After engaging participants in separate and focused group discussions to represent various elements of “Democracy and Inclusivity”, the forum will assemble on the second day for the discussion panel on **general election for inclusivity**, followed by closing session where representatives of each focused sessions would be panelists to report and share the main insights and tentative summaries of each dialogues. Dialogue Engaging All Participants will share ideas and experiences to **“Building Agenda for Inclusion and Democracy”**.

Jakarta, December 2019