

**OPENING REMARKS BY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA  
AT THE 15<sup>TH</sup> BALI DEMOCRACY FORUM  
8 DECEMBER 2022**

**Bismillahirrahmanirrahim,  
Ministers, Ambassadors, Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Welcome to the 15<sup>th</sup> Bali Democracy Forum.

Before I begin, I would like to express my deepest condolences to the victims of a heinous attack yesterday in Bandung and their families.

We wish a speedy and full recovery to those who are injured. We condemn the attack in the strongest terms. Violence is not compatible and has no place in a democratic system.

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We are gathered here today because we believe in democracy and its capacity to create a just, equitable, and inclusive society.

These days, it is very easy to lose faith in democracy. The world is changing faster than ever before, and it brings along unprecedented challenges.

Crisis after crisis continues to test the foundations of our democracy. But the challenges to democracy do not only come from the outside. They also come from within.

Last month, the International IDEA reported that, once again, democracies are either declining or stagnating. Even the so-called established democracies are at risk.

Freedom House documented 16 consecutive years of democratic decline, whereas checks on power abuse and human rights violations have eroded.

Meanwhile, V-Dem Institute found the average quality of democracy has dropped to the same level as around 30 years ago.

In Asia-Pacific, democratic space has narrowed. Political rights and civil liberties have been constrained by ethno-nationalism, political patronage, and military intervention in politics.

Therefore, it is only natural to ask whether democracy can survive all these challenges? and how we can sustain democracy in this rapidly changing world?

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In the midst of pessimism in democracy, many are still counting on it, including Indonesia.

Democracy contributes to Indonesia's relative success in dealing with the pandemic and its impacts. The principle of solidarity dictates our pandemic responses.

That is why we tirelessly sought the right balance between containing the virus and keeping the economy running.

That is why we designed a community-based program to donate and distribute food to people affected by the pandemic.

And that is why we embarked on one of the world's largest COVID-19 vaccination drive.

More than 174 million citizens had received their full doses. The country's leadership does not only see the pandemic as a tragedy but also as a momentum to strengthen our health resilience.

In October, President Widodo launched our first home-grown COVID-19 vaccine. It's an important milestone for vaccine independence.

On international level, we also championed the issues of equitable distribution of vaccine and health financing support for developing countries.

**Pak Hassan yang saya hormati,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am confident that democracy would also enable us to withstand the difficult year of 2023. Inflation remains high, driven by rising food and energy prices and impending recession continues to haunt as the crises are yet resolved.

The Asian Development Bank cut the projected growth in developing Asia, from 5,2% to 4,3% in 2022, and from 5,3% to 4,9% in 2023.

In this difficult situation, Indonesia managed to record a 5,72% growth in the third quarter this year, and the projection for 2023 is 5%.

This does not mean that our peoples are immune from the socio-economic impacts of this pandemic.

Data from our Statistical Agency indicates that 4,15 million workers of productive age are still affected by the pandemic.

The principle of solidarity plays a huge part in guiding our recovery efforts. If you were here last year, you would remember that I said “we have to democratize opportunity for recovery”. No one should be left behind.

That is why we reach out to those hit hardest by the pandemic. That is why we strengthen our social protection roll-out. And that is why we implement an ambitious National Economic Recovery program.

**Bapak Hassan yang saya hormati,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am not saying that we never struggled during this pandemic because we did. Like other countries, we also went through a series of trials and errors.

But democracy helped us improve our pandemic responses because it guarantees freedom of expression and listens to the will of the people. Because it provides a space for meaningful dialogue, including on effective policies. And because it allows for checks and balances to the government’s pandemic response.

I know democracy is not perfect and it is hardly infallible. But Indonesia’s experience shows that democracy works and democracy delivers.

If we really want to serve the interests of the people, democracy would be the best way to govern.

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I want to add one more final thought before I conclude. Democracy is not an end in itself but it is a means to an end.

At the end of the day, democracy must bring direct benefit to the peoples and contribute as part of the solution.

In the midst of a multitude of global challenges, democracy can go either way. Democracy may toughen up and prove itself or it may weaken and disappear into irrelevance.

The choice is ours, whether we want to give democracy a chance or we want to give up on it.

For Indonesia, the choice is very crystal clear. We must nurture the spirit of democracy and strengthen our democratic foundations.

That is why we are hosting this Bali Democracy Forum. That is why we are providing capacity-building in democracy and good governance. And that is why we insist democratic values must be the foundation of friendly relations among nations.

International norms and global governance cannot be shaped by a handful of countries. The fate of the world cannot be decided by a handful of countries.

Only by recommitting ourselves to democracy, we can ensure democracy survives all challenges thrown at it and sustain democracy in this rapidly changing world.

So, I do hope this answers the questions I posed earlier.

**Colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Once again, thank you very much for attending this meeting, especially my colleagues, the ministers who flew long way to Bali to attend this meeting. And thank you very much for all participants at this meeting.

Let us celebrate our democracy.

On that note, I am now honored to declare the 15<sup>th</sup> Bali Democracy Forum officially open. And may we all have a fruitful discussion.

I thank you very much. Terima kasih banyak.