

RI SING 50 FORUM

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Friday, 8 December 2017

1. In spite of the countless visits that I have made, I always feel good to be in Singapore. Particularly here and now that I find myself among such a distinguished crowd, gathering for a very special occasion. Therefore, I would like first to thank the organizers, ISEAS with Ambassador Tan Ching Tiong and the Indonesian Embassy under the leadership of Ambassador Ngurah Swajaya, for the kind invitation. I am also humbled by my appointment as Co-chair of this RI-Singapore 50 Forum. But then, I feel relieved to see the list of prominent speakers and moderators who will surely alleviate the burden of the Co-chair.
2. We are used to human habit to commemorate anniversaries, still, a golden jubilee of 50 years relationship does give us a good reason for a special celebration. More particularly when the 50 years relationship is garnished with rich substances and decorated with amazing progress. Indonesia has established relationships with around one hundred and fifty countries. Many of them have reached fifty years or even more. But only very few, if any, of these relationships that can match our relationship with Singapore in terms of substantive content. Or the successful manner with which we have injected concrete substance into our friendly relations.
3. Started with a single negative word “konfrontasi”, our relationship did completely reverse and over the years has rapidly developed into hundreds and hundreds of pages of compendium containing positive and substantive interactions in all areas. Yes, as in any other relationship there have been ups and downs along the way. If we look at the lines in the chart we will indeed see fluctuations, but

if we watch the overall curve we will find that it has been consistently climbing upward.

4. Problems we have had plenty, some of them are even difficult ones. And we will continue to have. But with the process of maturation in our relationship we have also come to learn each other's sensitive nerve spots. We do not avoid addressing problems, but in doing so we try to respect those sensitivities. It is the essence of the widely recognized ASEAN way of handling problems, this brings me to my next point.
5. I find it worthy to also mention that the strength of Indonesia-Singapore relationship is not only based purely on bilateral foundation, but also anchored in a solid pad rock of regional structure which is the ASEAN institutional system. With such a set up our relationship is not only framed as a scheme geared for good neighbourliness and reciprocal benefit, but also a vehicle for collective role in and joint contributions to, the maintenance of peace and stability as well as the advancement of development and prosperity in the region and the world.
6. Being forward looking is also a character that can be detected from the vast array of Indonesia-Singapore cooperation. And it is indeed gratifying that this character is duly reflected in the theme and topics of this celebrative forum. "Liveable and Smart Cities", "Creative Economy" and "People to People Connectivity" are currently topical issues that have significant impact on the future.
7. Urbanization is now a living reality. The percentage of people living in the cities keeps increasing. Serious efforts are certainly needed for cities to continue to be, or even more, liveable. The advent of creative economy brings enormous promises for economic growth and prosperity. But the realization of these promises entails changes of paradigms that may take certain time. Meanwhile we have to grapple with the risk of paradigmatic dichotomy between

this economic novelty and the conventional one. People to people connectivity via peaceful and orderly manner remains an ideal objective of current international relations. But without proper handling this ideal objective could trigger serious problems.

8. Addressing those issues by outstanding expert speakers that we have fortunately with us today will be more than fitting to celebrate the golden jubilee of Indonesia-Singapore relationship. A relationship that we hope to last as many future golden jubilees as possible.