

**REMARKS BY H.E. NGURAH SWAJAYA, AMBASSADOR
EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF
INDONESIA TO THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE
AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF RI SING 50 FORUM**

Singapore, 8 December 2017

Ambassador Tan Chin Tiong, Director of ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute,

Bapak Duta Besar Soemadi D.M. Brotodiningrat,

Mr. Ian Mak, Director-General, South East Asia I Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore (*Tentative*)

Distinguished speakers and moderators,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Very good morning,

It gives me a great pleasure to extend my warmest welcome to all participants, the speakers, moderators and co-chairs to the first RISING 50 Forum, a dialogue to bring closer people to people interactions between Indonesia and Singapore. I wish to commend all parties involved in making this Forum possible and I am looking forward to a fruitful discussion on recent issues of our common interests.

As the RISING Forum will wind up our year-long activities that has been culminated in the Leaders' Retreat between President Joko Widodo and PM Le Hsien Loong, on September 7, in Singapore, we have seen a stronger commitment to bring the bilateral cooperation on many sectors to a new height.

The “*RISING 50*” represents lessons learned for the past 5 decades, celebration of progress achieved and momentum to continue strengthening bilateral cooperation. To chart our bilateral partnership for the next 5 decades, we have to embark into a new paradigm to ensure the bilateral cooperation to continue raising on mutual beneficial basis.

The forum we are organizing today is one strategy to bring closer people to people interactions, particularly on recent issues of common concerns. We are hoping that the interactions will not only contribute to developing better understanding among the peoples of the two countries, but also it should enable our peoples to tap the potentials to enhance cooperation on many sectors.

At the Leaders retreat last September, our Leaders have laid down a firm commitment to further bilateral cooperation on many fields. One of the priority sectors for cooperation includes tapping the potentials of digital economy and smart city initiatives. It is within this context, I wish to welcome the topics selected for this forum which includes liveable and smart cities, creative economy and peoples to peoples contacts.

The discussion on liveable and smart cities, we are hoping that we can learn from each other on the development of liveable and smart city initiatives. As an international hub, Singapore has got many to share to the Indonesian cities that have taken their respective initiatives. Utilizing technologies, innovation, creativity, in shaping the cities to be more liveable and smart is also essentials. We do hope, our deliberation on this issue could also lead to more mutually beneficial cooperation involving many Indonesian cities.

On the creative and smart economy, notably digital economy, our two leaders have agreed to promote cooperation on this sectors. Indonesia’s target to create 1000 techno-preneurs and Singapore’s Smart Nation initiative fits for the mutually beneficial cooperation on digital economy to

tap its potential in years to come. As financial hub and important international networking, Singapore is in the best position to collaborate with Indonesia with its big talents, improved infrastructure and growing middle income population. It is even more essential if the cooperation could be promoted to tap the ASEAN Community growing market.

On people-to-people contacts, the big number of two way visits by the people of both countries indeed contribute to the better understanding of each other potentials. However, dialogues such as this forum would provide greater opportunities to understand more on each other, and thus this could also contribute to enhancing mutually beneficial cooperation on many fields.

As President Joko Widodo said during his visit to Singapore last September, “we are neighbours NOT but choice, but by destiny and we chose to be good friends”. His message is very clear, that friendship and partnership is our destiny and to be a good friend is our choice. Therefore, developing better understanding, trust and confidence are crucial. This “people-to-people contacts” topic is, therefore, suited to Leaders’ Retreat theme, which is “Trusted Partners RISING together”.

To conclude, I would like to convey my thanks to ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore for the wonderful cooperation in preparing this Forum with the Embassy, as well as to the practitioners and representatives of think-tanks from Indonesia and Singapore who have availed their precious time to come to this place and share their views and thoughts. I wish also to take this opportunity to extend our deepest appreciation to all institutions involved in supporting this event. My appreciation also goes to all speakers, moderators and participants of the Forum. My special thanks also to the CO-Chairs. We do hope, this is not going to be the first and the last forum, but a continuous process of discussions of the peoples of both countries.

I wish you all for the fruitful and successful Forum!

Thank you.
