



ASEAN Election Management Bodies' Forum
Inspiring Credible ASEAN Election Management Bodies

Opening Remarks of Andrew Ellis
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(IDEA)

3 October 2011

Your Excellency Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of the
Republic of Indonesia

Prof Dr Hafiz Anshary, Chair of the Election Commission of
Indonesia

Your Excellency Djoko Soejanto, Coordinating Minister for Political,
Legal and Security Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia

Your Excellency Hatta Rajasa, Coordinating Minister for Economic
Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia

Your Excellency Marty Natalegawa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the
Republic of Indonesia

Your Excellency Gamawan Fauzi, Minister of Home Affairs of the
Republic of Indonesia

Your Excellencies Ministers of the Republic of Indonesia

Your Excellencies Speakers of the House of Representatives and the
House of Regional Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia

Commissioners of Election Commissions of Member States of ASEAN

Your Excellencies Ambassadors of Member States of ASEAN

Fellow members of the global electoral community

Mr President

May I first thank you for opening this Forum today. The recognition
and commitment that you convey of the importance of credible
elections and credible electoral management provides an inspiring
message.

Democracy is a global value. It cannot be imposed from outside or
exported. It can only be built from inside a country. However,

democracy builders can learn from listening to and sharing each other's experiences, and learning from each other's successes and failures.

Democracy has spread and deepened across the globe in the last thirty years. There have been many new and imaginative ideas in the process of building democracy, and most of this innovation has taken place in the countries of the global South. There is now in Asia a huge volume of experience and expertise in democracy building. This depth of experience makes it imperative that Asians are active and equal partners – and seen as active and equal partners - in the global discussion on democracy and on the future of democracy. The new 'Century of the Citizen' cannot be complete without the contribution of democratic Asia.

IDEA is a global intergovernmental organisation formed and governed by countries which count themselves as democracies. The mission of IDEA is to support locally owned and sustainable democratic change worldwide. The membership of IDEA already includes 27 countries, coming from all continents of the world, and balanced between the global north and the global south.

Working worldwide, IDEA specialises in comparative knowledge and expertise in electoral processes, constitutions, participation and representation, and democracy and development. In Asia and the Pacific, IDEA's work is concentrated on regional organisations and democracy building, on responding to requests to provide independent and nonpartisan support to participants in political and electoral reform processes, and on citizens' assessment of their democracy and participation in their democracy.

Mr President,

In the last ten years, Indonesia's foreign policy has taken on an outward looking role. You have taken a leading role in this process, defining Indonesia as a 'bridge builder', and taking the initiative to establish and convene the Bali Democracy Forum. In the framework of regional cooperation, Indonesia as Chair of ASEAN in 2011 has adopted the theme of 'ASEAN Community in a Global Community of Nations' as part of the continuing work to give reality to the ASEAN Charter and the ASEAN Political and Security Blueprint. As part of this process, IDEA has been proud to work with the Republic of Indonesia and the Non-Aligned Movement Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation to pilot training materials for constitution building with participants from all ASEAN member states. IDEA is today equally proud to support the Republic of Indonesia and the General Election Commission of

Indonesia in bringing the ASEAN electoral community together here today, and to contribute its global base and networks of knowledge, experience and analysis towards continuing improvement in the credibility of electoral management.

For while democracy is not only about elections, it is critically about credible elections. Credible elections pose both political and technical challenges. Some of these challenges are well known; how to ensure everyone who is qualified to vote is registered to vote; how to ensure that political parties and candidates participating in elections can do so on a level playing field where everyone has a right to make their case; how to ensure that the complaints and disputes which arise in any election are resolved fairly, quickly and transparently. Others are new challenges; whether and how to harness advances in information technology to promote clean and transparent elections; how in an age of migration to enable all citizens, whether at home, living somewhere else in their country or living and working abroad, to participate in the choice of their representatives and their government.

I am greatly looking forward to listening to the real experiences of electoral managers from across ASEAN and to contributing to the discussions of the next three days. I hope that discussions which start this week will continue afterwards, through growing and strengthening networks of ASEAN electoral managers and of the wider electoral community across ASEAN. These networks will be a part of building the People Centred, People Oriented and People Driven ASEAN Community.

I can give IDEA's commitment to continue to support this process. I would like to wish good luck to the proceedings of this Forum.

Thank you very much.