



**INAUGURATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP GROUP (GKSB)
BETWEEN INDONESIA WITH FRIENDLY COUNTRIES**

PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY: DIPLOMACY WITH A DEMOCRATIC MANDATE

by DR. FADLI ZON

The Chairperson of the Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation BKSAP DPR RI

Jakarta, 26 February 2020

Your Excellency, Dr. Puan Maharani, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia; and Vice Speakers – Dr. Azis Syamsuddin and Mr. Rachmat Gobel;

Honorable Mr. Mahendra Siregar, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia;

Honorable, Members of the Indonesian Parliament;

Excellencies, Ambassadors, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Distinguished Media Partners and Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Afternoon!

Assalaamu'alaikum Warahmatullaahi wabarakaatuh.

It gives me great pleasure to gather with our distinguished guests here to renew our friendship and collaboration. On behalf of the Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation (BKSAP) of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI), let me extend a warm welcome to all guests, Members of Indonesian Parliament, the ambassadors, representatives, and members of diplomatic corps who have joined our event this afternoon. My sincere thanks also go to our representatives from various Indonesian ministries. I am most grateful for your strong support to our parliament's foreign relations.

The House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI), for over four decades, has actively exercised significant roles in diplomacy. It is because the centrality of parliaments



in shaping a wide range of fields, including relations among nations around the world. While the world today is more like a small home than a small village, driven by unprecedented ICT advancements, there are opportunities and challenges facing the nations. They have become more interconnected, and influence each other than ever before. Therefore, it is essential to respond such situation appropriately. In this regard, more collaboration and cooperation among all stakeholders is needed.

Based on such framework, the Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation (BKSAP) promotes, develops and enhances friendly relations of the House of Representatives with parliaments of other countries at bilateral and multilateral levels, as mandated in our law. Parliamentary diplomacy is arguably as important as of what the government exercises. Parliamentary diplomacy, to some extent, also has specific advantages in comparison to executive diplomacy, including more flexibility in establishing contacts with various stakeholders, as well as communicating with fewer constraints and on more sensitive issues.

Considering the pivotal role of bilateral cooperation in achieving prosperous and peaceful world, BKSAP puts a high priority on the establishment and implementation of, among other diplomatic strategies, the Parliamentary Friendship Group. As well, BKSAP has identified strategic plans for the next 5 years, as a reference for the House of Representatives to conduct diplomacy with other nations.

First and foremost, BKSAP strongly believes that DPR RI leaders must be on the frontline in conducting diplomacy. The leaders need to engage with other leaders in international relations, and discuss crucial issues, at the bilateral and multilateral level, to secure national interests.

Furthermore, to optimize our diplomatic efforts, BKSAP encourages the Parliament to play a more active role in regional and international forums. By becoming a member of parliamentary organizations, DPR RI has the opportunity to directly involve with the international community, participate in global debates, and build networks as well.

In that regard, strengthening Indonesia's position in international and regional forums is also one of the strategic plans. It must be emphasized that occupying important positions in inter-



parliamentary organizations, and hosting important regional or international meetings, can boost cooperation as well.

Our strategic plan affirms and advances our commitment to strengthen and foster bilateral relations between Indonesia and other countries – and the establishment of the Parliamentary Friendship Group has further demonstrated our aforementioned commitment.

The strategic plan also underscores the pivotal role of individual diplomacy – in other words, Parliament members can engage in meaningful discussions with other nations, and conduct their diplomatic mission individually. This will provide an opportunity for each individual member of the Indonesian Parliament to explore information and issues related to their work in the Parliament.

Subsequently, BKSAP prioritizes the enhancement of parliamentary role in support of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 goals. Nonetheless, we cannot achieve SDGs, in particular SDG 16 without good governance. Hence, in 2018, the Indonesian Parliament announced the launch of Open Parliament initiative – the first in Asia, which aims to encourage our parliament to be more open, transparent, accountable and inclusive.

Strengthening Parliamentary Cooperation in the Framework of South-South Cooperation and the Pacific Region is also included in our strategic plan for diplomacy. South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) is key for the Indonesian Parliament to strengthen relations between Indonesia and the Pacific countries.

Distinguished Guests,

It is our precious tradition in the parliament to hold the launch of the establishment of the Parliamentary Friendship Group at the beginning of the new-five yearly session. Spearheaded by BKSAP where I am the current Chairman, the Indonesian House is keen on maintaining its full commitment to increase bilateral relations with friendly parliaments across the globe. In the past five years, the House has established the Parliamentary Friendship Group with 53 parliaments. Now, we are set to expand our relation with 102 parliaments. The house is looking forward to improving and strengthening cooperation with more parliaments. We wish to have



'more room and time' to deepen dialogues and share best experiences in support of collaboration on many aspects, including trade and investment, security, defense, education and culture. We want to share a common interest, and secure world peace and stability.

I recognize that there are many parliaments that have not been included among the 102 parliaments who have gathered here today. It merely is due to our scope of limitations and possibilities. However, we are very open, and welcoming all heads and diplomatic representatives accredited in Jakarta, Indonesia. We are keen to deepen and strengthen our relation with all of our friends, and we are looking forward to having you here. Indonesian Parliament is your second home.

I do believe that Your Excellency's presence here sends a clear message on your full commitment in supporting our work. I am very confident that ambassadors and diplomatic corps gathered here today will encourage their respective parliaments to collaborate in the framework of the parliamentary friendship groups.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Indonesian Parliament is committed to maintaining transparency and accountability for all its activities including the Parliamentary Friendship Group. There are mechanisms made and also Rules of Procedure adopted that all Members of Indonesia Parliament should comply with. We really want to keep this mission moving on the right path – especially each group will also hold intensive communications with diplomatic representatives' offices accredited in Indonesia as part of the arrangement and preparation of the diplomatic missions.

Through the Friendship Group, I am very confident that we are able to explore many more new opportunities and cooperate for the mutual benefit of our people. I look forward to continue working with you all to broaden and deepen our ties as trusted partners.

I wish you all continued good health and success. To conclude, let us renew our determination to exert all efforts for a peaceful and prosperous world. Thank you.