

Check against delivery

SPEECH BY

DR. SUSILO BAMBANG YUDHOYONO

AT THE ASIA AFRICA PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

Jakarta, 23 April 2015

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

May peace be upon us all,

Your Excellency Setya Novanto, Speaker of the Indonesian House of Representative,

Excellencies Speakers of the Parliaments of Asian-African Countries,

Bapak Try Sutrisno, Former Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia,

Honourable Dr. Nurhayati Ali Assegaf, Chairperson of the Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation Committee,

Honourable Members of the Parliaments

Distinguished Guests,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by extending my warmest welcome to the Parliamentarians from the great civilizations of Asia and Africa.

You have all come here in peace and friendship, and I am sure that you shall return with renewed confidence and greater hope.

We gather here to commemorate 60 years of the Bandung Conference, the day the leaders of Asia and Africa and brought new light to a world in distress.

As Indonesia's sixth President, I was honored to host the 50 year anniversary of the Bandung Conference in 2005. Back then, the conference agreed to launch the New Asia Africa Strategic Partnership. Today, I am pleased to see how this Partnership has continued to grow. Perhaps in 2025,

when we commemorate 70 years of Asia Africa conference, we shall have an achievement card to keep score of our on-going progress.

Indeed, we are now celebrating "Bandung" under much better circumstances, and with new set of challenges. The Cold War has long ended. The threat of a nuclear holocaust no longer haunt us. Proxy wars have dramatically receded. Globalization has become pervasive. And in that process, hundreds of millions of Asians and Africans have been lifted out of poverty.

Yet, despite these hopeful signs, the world peace that the humanity aspires for remains elusive. We still live in turbulent times, and 6 decades after the ground-breaking Bandung conference, the search for peace, justice and prosperity continues. The post-Cold War order remains fluid and is still searching for the right equilibrium. The United Nations Security Council still has not changed much in terms of its permanent membership. And to add to our concern, we are seeing the deterioration of relations among major powers.

What makes us hopeful is that today Asia and Africa have evolved from continents of poverty to continents of opportunity.

This is why people are talking about the "Asian Century", because Asia is now home to some world's largest economies : China, Japan, India, Indonesia, South Korea, and others.

This is also why people are talking about the "African century", because Africa is now home to some of the world's fastest growing economies. Ethiopia, Rwanda, Bostwana, Angola, Mozambique, and others.

So the call of Asia Africa today is much more than "solidarity", it is about harnessing and seizing "opportunity".

How do Asia and Africa move from the beautiful concept of "solidarity" to the practical concept of "opportunity" ?

In my view, there are 3 major issues that we must grapple with. If we can effectively address these strategic issues, then we will change the fate of Asia Africa for good.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The most immediate that comes to my mind is : poverty.

Significantly, worldwide, extreme poverty in our time has been pushed down to a historic low of 20 %, compared to 80% in 1950's.

Still, poverty remains a stubborn problem, including here in Indonesia. In Asia and Africa, some 700 million people still live under a dollar a day. Many have died due to HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Many are feeling the crunch of water crisis and food shortages.

The answer to this is economic growth, which quality growth.

Asia and Africa need to seize the post-2015 development agenda, which will be finalized and launched this year by the United Nations.

The good news is that, overall, many Asian and African countries have done well in attaining the EIGHT millennium development goals (MDGs), since it was set by the UN as a global target in 2000.

And on top of that, the number of middle-income countries in Asia and Africa today has proliferated.

2015 is the year when the Millennium Development Goals will reach its final mark, and subsequently the community of nations will embark on the next global development agenda.

And of course, that post-2015 development agenda, whatever the outcome, must continue to change the face of Asia and Africa as its biggest stake-holders. That post-2015 must bring about empowerment and equal opportunity to the hundreds of millions of Asian and Africans that are still deprived of them.

I am honored to have played a role as co-chair of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons assigned by the UN Secretary General to contribute inputs to that next phase of sustainable development.

While we are still waiting for its final form, in my view the post-2015 development agenda must be considerably more ambitious than the MDGs. It must build on the achievements and lessons of MDGs. It must lead to the positive transformation of our societies.

And most importantly, it must be supported by better international collaboration.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Indeed, that is one of the main challenges of Asia Africa today : to deepen our inter-regional and intra-regional cooperation, especially in the context of South - South cooperation.

We are much better placed to do this, than our forefathers in Bandung in 1955. Today, Asian and African countries are a lot wealthier and have a lot more resources to share than before. Both Asia and Africa have become not just users but also sources of innovation, which can be readily shared among us. We have much better infrastructure and connectivity. We have mechanisms of bilateral, trilateral and regional cooperation.

In recent years, for example, Indonesia has trained hundreds of Palestinian officials in capacity-building programs, so that they will be able to effectively run what would be the Government of an independent Palestinian state -- something that we have all been struggling for a very long time.

One of the key tasks for us is to advance the work of the Indian Ocean Regional Association -- IORA. IORA can serve as a platform to establish closer

links between Asia and Africa, and hopefully contribute to making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace, and not a new arena of geostrategic competition in the 21st century.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Yet, it must be said that all the efforts of inter-regional cooperation will not mean much unless we learn from this critical lesson : that development and progress come from within. I repeat: development and progress come from within. No amount of external aid, no amount of south-south cooperation can change a nation's destiny if it does not want to do it on its own. It can only be shaped by its own people.

This is why Asia and Africa must always emphasize the importance of "governance".

Whatever the political system a country adopts, whatever the economic model a nation embraced, without governance, it will falter and with governance, it can achieve anything.

Governance in the 21st century is an evolving concept.

It means openness, transparency and accountability.

It means developing politics and economics driven by a system, rather than personal power.

It means democracy and rule of law, and leadership.

In my book, it also means following the low-carbon development path of green growth.

Governance can be that 2 or 3% difference in economic growth.

It can be the difference between progress and regression, between war and peace, between hope and despair, between development and decay.

I believe that the job of Governments and Parliamentarians around the world is to ensure that governance rules. Parliamentarians, as representatives of the people, can work with their Government to ensure correct policies are taken to deliver the highest standard of services to the people.

Once governance spreads throughout Asia and Africa, our future will be even brighter.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The second major issue pertain to peace and security.

This is a critical time for Asia Africa is to spread peace and security as far as possible, and as fast as possible.

If one thing is different about Asia and Africa today, it is the fact that the guns are silent in many places where there used to be war.

South Africa has ejected the divisive poison of apartheid forever.

Cambodia ended the civil war and is not a peaceful ASEAN member.

Vietnam ended a vicious war long ago and have become a vibrant Southeast Asian economy.

Angola and Mozambique ended their internal conflict and now belong highest growth economies in Africa.

Rwanda has fully recovered from the deadly ethnic conflict in the 1990's.

Indonesia, too, after years of internal conflict and separatist threats, is now peaceful and united.

Indonesia and Timor Leste, after years of stress, also have become the best of neighbours, living side by side in peace and cooperation.

These vast areas of peace and stability must be continuously expanded.

They must be expanded to areas which are still experiencing conflict.

We must end the conflict in Syria. We must realize the dream of an independent Palestinian state. We must find a peaceful end to the violence in Yemen. We must check the spread of false teachings of ISIS into our free and tolerant societies. We must help Afghanistan achieve peace and democracy.

I am, of course, referring only to some of the wider security challenges in Asia and Africa. Things may get worse before they get better. But we may take comfort in knowing that in past decades, there are plenty of places within Asia and Africa where peace and brotherhood have replaced conflict and hatred.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

The third strategic challenge is : can the nations of Asia and Africa excel and leap forward together ?

They sure can, but in order to do so they have to place entrepreneurship, innovation and technology at the heart of their national way of life. They have to build their human capital, which are the best assets for any nation. They have to be open-minded and reform-oriented.

With these qualities, they can accelerate and catch up economically much faster than any previous generation.

I know this can be done.

We are seeing many innovation centres now coming out of Asia and Africa. We see the rise of a large army of entrepreneurs. We see the emergence of a large pool of human capital.

We see diasporas returning to their home country and become agents of change. We are seeing brands from our continents go global : Samsung, Huawei, Lenovo, Tata, Toyota, Nando's, Indofood, Shangri-La, and many more.

6

I would like to see more Asian and African innovators connect and if possible collaborate with one another. Technology transfer can occur not just between North and South but also between the south. I would also like to see more investments among Asian and African companies. And certainly we all would like to see more investments in the human capital on both sides.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Asia Africa have come a long way, but we have still have far more to go.

We need stronger solidarity, partnership and cooperation -- not only in terms of politics but more importantly in economic policy and the improvement of people's welfare.

Today, we salute the vision of our founding fathers who 6 decades ago in Bandung resolved to awaken the spirit of Asia Africa in order to rebuild the world anew.

Let us inhale that wonderful spirit deep into our hearts.

Let us build on their good work, and leave no country behind in this great march forward.

Let us realize the promise of a new age of peace and progress, for Asia and Africa, for all of us, and for humanity.

Aamian. I thank you.

Wassalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh

Jakarta, 23 April 2015