ADDRESS BY DR. KUNTORO MANGKUSUBROTO
“POST-DISASTER AND POST-CONFLICT REBUILDING:
LEARNING FROM ACEH AND NIAS”

International Conference on the Post-2015 Development Agenda:
‘Development for all: Stop conflict, build states and eradicate poverty’

Dili Convention Center, Dili, Timor Leste – Wednesday, 27 February 2013
SPEECH WAS DELIVERED WITH ACCOMPANYING SLIDES

Your Excellency Bapak Taur Matan Ruak, President of Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste,

Your Excellency Bapak Vicente Guterres, President of the National Parliament of Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste,

Your Excellency Bapak Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister of Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste,

Your Excellency Bapak Claudio Ximenes, President of the Court of Appeals of Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste,

Your Excellency Anote Tong, President of Republic of Kiribati,

Your Excellency Gordon Darcy Lilo, Prime Minister of Solomon Islands,

My dear friend Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

My dear friend Your Excellency Minister Emilia Pires, Minister of Finance of Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and Chair of g7+,

Excellencies Ministers and leaders of g7+ member states and Pacific countries,

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

1. First and foremost, allow me to congratulate the Government of Timor-Leste for hosting this very important conference. Thank you to Your Excellency Prime Minister Xanana
Gusmão for inviting me to this event. President Yudhoyono sent his warmest regards to Your Excellencies President Taur Matan Ruak and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão, and he wishes for even stronger bilateral cooperation between Timor Leste and Indonesia.

2. This conference is of critical significance to our region and the world, and I am truly honoured to be in the company of such a distinguished group of thinkers and world leaders. I would like to pay particular tribute to my dear friend Excellency Emilia Pires whose leadership role in the g7+ is now enriching the wider global debate on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Through her contributions as one of the members of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on Post-2015 Development Agenda, co-chaired by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom, members of the g7+ have a powerful voice in this process.

Ladies and gentlemen,

3. We all know from our own unique experiences that it is impossible to have development without peace, security, and justice. Here I would like to define peace, security, and justice in their widest sense. People who live in situations of great civil, military or violent political conflicts obviously do not enjoy peace, security, and justice. People who are forced to live on the margins of society – facing discrimination, alienation and exclusion from mainstream opportunities and rights – also do not enjoy peace, security, and justice.

4. People whose homes, communities and families have been destroyed by a sudden natural disaster – flood, hurricane, volcano, earthquake or tsunami – also do not enjoy peace, security, and justice. People whose livelihoods are being threatened by a slow but sure change in their living environment such as desertification, rising sea levels, deforestation or rising salinity of the water supply also face a slow erosion of peace, security, and justice.

5. The common outcome for all people facing any of these kinds of threat is poverty. I believe if we can attack and address the underlining causes of these actors threatening peace, security, and justice, we will surely make a major advance in eradicating poverty – poverty in all its dimensions and forms.
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

6. Kindly allow me to share my own personal experience in facing those challenges to development.

7. In 2009, President Yudhoyono asked me to join the Cabinet as the Head of the President’s Delivery Unit for Development Monitoring and Oversight. For the first time in history of Indonesia, such unit was established in the government, reporting directly to the President. Basically I was responsible for consistency and synchronization of development action plans. Our core tasks could be summarized into 2 elements: supervision of strategic initiatives and performance measurement of national priorities. To do those, we follow a quarterly cycle: from planning and execution, to reporting, to monitoring and verification, to performance discussion on Cabinet Meeting, and then back to step one of planning and execution.

8. We promote *thematic and cross-sectoral approach*. All strategic action plans are put together along the President’s 14 National Priorities, for example health. Under this system, achievement of this national priority of health sits not only within the responsibility of the Minister of Health. The Ministers of Public Works, Disadvantaged Regions, as well as the Coordinating Minister of People’s Welfare each also have specific responsibilities. Using this approach, we fight against silo mentality and bureaucratic red tape. We also ensure that every action plan has measurable target. If you can not measure it, you can not improve it.

9. We promote the *usage of simple yet powerful technology* to monitor national priorities. Google Earth Engine, an application that is easily accessible anytime and anywhere, is used to monitor the latest state of strategic projects. From the highly sophisticated development of floating storage regasification unit to the widely conducted internet training for students. To push that more, we introduced LAPOR – which literally means “report” – a mobile phone application through which every citizen can report development progress from anywhere in Indonesia by simply using a basic mobile phone.

10. We also continuously *monitor the realization of budget* of all government agencies, including those in the provinces. By doing this, we can ensure that the government budget is spent well and on-time throughout the year so that no national priorities are
left behind. Budget monitoring fosters financial transparency which consequentially prevents corruption.

Dear friends, ladies and gentlemen,

11. I owe what I do now to my 4 years leading the Agency for the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh and Nias. Firstly let me apologize because I will use some words which are best fit to describe the post-disaster and post-conflict context of Aceh and Nias.

12. On 26 December 2004, one day after joyful Christmas celebrations, Aceh, the westernmost province of Indonesia, was struck by one of the biggest tsunami in human history. This tragedy caused an unprecedented loss of life and the obliteration of whole communities. For those who survived the initial earthquake, their homes, livelihoods, and prospects for the future were swept out to sea. A national disaster was declared, just 2 months after President Yudhoyono started his first term, and the world watched in disbelief. The challenges were immense and multifaceted.

13. First, the enormous scale of destruction. Over 200,000 people dead or missing, including many civic leaders. Another three quarters of a million people lost their homes and livelihoods. Everything along 800 km of coastline were destroyed – further than the distance from Dili to Darwin, Australia. Already the 4th poorest province in the country before the tsunami, the disaster pushed Aceh to become the 2nd poorest province.

14. Second, the history of conflict in Aceh. For more than 3 decades, Aceh faced armed conflicts, causing upheavals and violence. In many respects for the 130 years prior to the tsunami, Aceh has known more times of conflicts than peace. This has left terrible scars on the social fabric of the society.

15. Third, Indonesia’s poor reputation on corruption. In 2004, Indonesia ranked 133rd of 145 countries on Transparency International’s corruption perception index – 2nd worst of all Asia Pacific countries. I had to prove from the beginning that my agency was committed to prevent any misuse of funds. Any perception that the reconstruction program was corrupted would force donors and the NGOs, who contributed more than two thirds of committed fund, to pull back on the very generous offers of support made after the tsunami.
16. For four years, I fought against those who want to misuse the funds. Everyday was a battle. My agency managed 7.2 billion USD and coordinated 992 organizations from more than 50 countries. My agency oversaw the implementation of more than 12,500 projects. Ultimately our target was not only to build back, but to build back better.

17. Aceh-Nias Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency ended its work in 2009. Significant progress happened on all aspects of life. New houses were built; agricultural land were restored; roads, seaports, and airstrips were established; schools, hospitals, and government buildings were erected. Aceh’s Human Poverty Index in 2008 is 40% lower than it was before tsunami, decreasing at much faster pace than ever. The silver lining behind the cloud of darkness of the tsunami was that all sides put down weapons and came together to produce a peace agreement in August 2005, finally ending decades of conflict in Aceh. With the kind help extended from all over the world, once devastated communities are again vibrant with the rhythm of human life.

**Dear friends, ladies and gentlemen,**

18. Post-disaster and post-conflict reconstruction and recovery are far beyond infrastructure building. I learned 5 things from my experiences in Aceh-Nias.

19. **First, having a contextually relevant process is necessary to achieve quality results.** Disasters and conflicts are obviously not business-as-usual situations, therefore they demand business-unusual process. High flexibility is needed to support fast decision-making process. Forcing business-as-usual process is a guarantee of delayed, or even failed, results – something that we could not afford at all cost in post-disaster and post-conflict situations.

20. **Second, public participation is key to sustainable outcome.** We introduced participatory development planning to rebuild each and every tsunami-affected village. Every member of the village, including women and former combatants, could voice his or her views. This resulted in strong ownership and rebuilt social cohesion, which consequently accelerated the village reconstruction. This approach was a breakthrough not only for Indonesia, but also for the traditionally patriarchal Aceh society. This included guaranteed property rights for women, a matter that also meant securing support from the ulama (religious leaders) of Aceh.
21. **Third, economic development sustains peace resolution.** We involved all the former combatants in the reconstruction of Aceh. We ensured their livelihood through job creations. Some of them had spent decades in the woods so we trained them first. Some of them had entrepreneurial spirit, so we gave them seed funding, such as this former combatant who became a farmer with our support.

22. **Fourth, investment in human resources is as, if not more, important as investment in hard infrastructure.** From the beginning we realized that my agency would not stay in Aceh-Nias forever. The local government and communities had to continue the work. We also realized that Aceh-Nias could not depend on its natural resources all the time. So we sent as many people as possible to study overseas in top universities around the world, preparing them to lead Aceh-Nias development after reconstruction. Some of them even had not been able to speak English, so we had to send them to study the language before going abroad.

23. **Last and my ultimate learning: trust is at the utmost importance.** The conversion of pledged to committed fund for Aceh-Nias effort was 102%, the highest of any disaster recovery and reconstruction effort in the world. The committed fund was higher than the pledge. This would never happen if there was no trust from both the international community and the people of Aceh and Nias. Anti-corruption and transparency are integral to achieve this trust. We became the first government agency to have an autonomous and independent anti-corruption unit. We applied the integrity pact to all staff, not only procurement-related ones, and all projects. We invested in robust monitoring and evaluation system – all projects were transparently tracked and monitored, complete with pictures and GPS coordinates, through our database. All of these initiatives reduced dramatically the capacity for people to manipulate the system to obtain unfair or illegal benefits.

**Distinguished guests, dear friends, ladies and gentlemen,**

24. As the Co-Chair of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on Post-2015 Development Agenda, President Yudhoyono promotes “sustainable growth with equity”. In the spirit of equity, fragile and conflict-affected states deserve sustainable growth. Let me reiterate that it is impossible to have development without peace, security, and
justice in their widest sense. Eliminating the threats to peace, security, and justice will advance our fight to end poverty in all its forms and dimensions.

25. Let me close my address by calling for a change in thinking: conflicts and disasters are not even remotely close to business-as-usual situations. As a result they demand innovative business-unusual breakthrough as solutions.

26. I look forward to the valuable inputs that will be shared at this conference. I thank you very much.