

Public Lecture by Dr. N. Hassan Wirajuda

on

“Indonesia’s Diplomacy on the Promotion of Democracy in Southeast Asia and the Pacific Region”

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University of Ljubljana

Indonesia’s diplomacy on the promotion of democracy and human rights is relatively a new agenda and a reflection of confidence of the progress it made since ‘the Reformasi’ in 1999, in particular the success of its democratization process. As early as 2002, Indonesia’s diplomacy started to project its democratic values without having to console on the perfection of democracy. Indonesian diplomacy was ahead of its time, despite the wide ranging of progress in various areas of reform. As the democratic roots grew deeper by 2004, Indonesia reached a point of no return. It was not without challenges to introduce a concept of openness to a region which experienced deficit of democracy.

By 2003, after the ASEAN Summit held in Bali, the promotion of democracy and human rights are enshrined by the ASEAN Charter in 2008. Indonesia expanded its outreach and successfully developed the Bali Democracy Forum (BDF), now the premier world forum on democracy, which at its first meeting countries of the Asia Pacific Region agreed to place the promotion of democracy as a strategic agenda.

Indonesia’s experience also showcased the importance of a balance concept of development. Like many of its East Asian neighbours, Indonesia was among the nations which weighed economic development more than political. As shown by the Indonesian political crisis of 1997-1998 and the Arab Spring since 2010, economic development alone cannot guarantee a nation’s or a region’s political stability and security. The promotion of democracy would help create peace and stability in the increasingly important Asia-Pacific region and, consequently, in the world at large.