

Speech of Mr. La Ode Svafiuiddin,
a senior director of the Indonesian statistics agency

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is a very happy occasion. I am honoured to be here to receive, on behalf of the Government of Indonesia, this special award given to our National Human Development Report.

The Indonesian National Human Development Report is the outcome of the close collaboration among several government institutions: the National Planning Board, the Central Bureau of Statistics, and a number of line ministries such as health, education and social welfare.

Just as critical to the preparation of the final report were a series of detailed consultations, organized by the National Planning Board, on each aspect of the report. These incited comments and criticisms from key stakeholders ranging from the private sector and civil society to parliament, academic institutions, regional governments and the international community.

The Report is also unique in being the first of its kind to take the measurement of human development down to the district level. It is for this reason that the NHDR has come to wield great influence down to the district government level on issues relating to social expenditure and policy.

I am very grateful to the UNDP for giving the Bureau of Statistics an opportunity to make a significant contribution towards the statistical background for this report. The UNDP is also to be congratulated for providing the assistance of a UNDP/GOI project, the United Nations Support Facility for Indonesian Recovery (UNSFIR), to assist the drafting team. Dr Satish Mishra, who headed that team, is here with me today.

The great merit of the Indonesian National Human Development Report lies not just in the comprehensiveness of its analysis or in the painstaking effort made to bring together in one document a range of human development indicators. The force of the Report lies in the directness and the power of its main message. Like many powerful messages it is also a simple message.

The Indonesian National Human Development Report argues that consolidation of democratic institutions, based on a notion of citizen's rights, is the most fundamental requirement for a revised vision of future development priorities. This is because severe economic crises are by their very nature socially divisive. Democracy is the most effective way of creating an institutional framework for containing disagreements peacefully. It is also a way of creating a consonance between the economic decentralization of a competitive market economy and the political decentralization inherent in checks and balances of an effective democracy.

Those of us here who know Indonesia will appreciate the deep resonance that such a message has with the common aspirations of the ordinary Indonesian citizen. It is for that reason that the Indonesian National Human Development Report has excited such interest and goodwill among a diverse segment of the Indonesian community.

The recognition given to the NHDR by the panel of judges today is a great encouragement to us as we prepare for the 2003 Report. We certainly did not expect such recognition. Neither did we work to receive an international award. We tried to use the National Human Development Report as a way of understanding the Indonesian human development situation and what we could do to improve it. I am very happy that in doing so we have touched a chord in the minds of others struggling with similar dilemmas.

Thank you.