



Opening Remarks

Rector of Universitas Indonesia

Distinguished Speakers and Participants,

It is my privilege and great pleasure to welcome you all to the 7th International Symposium of Journal Antropologi Indonesia, and I would like to send our gratitude for all of your participation. I would like to say as well my appreciation to the many people who worked on planning and executing this symposium that you will see this week.

Ladies and gentlemen, International Symposium of Journal Antropologi Indonesia is perhaps one among many other symposia in Indonesia that has a long history. First initiated in 2000, with the title: *The Beginning of the 21st Century: Endorsing Regional Autonomy, Understanding Local Cultures, Strengthening National Integration*, it followed afterward another five symposiums that were being held in various location in Indonesia. The symposiums were covering national, regional, and global themes of interest and involved many international collaborators and as well as diverse disciplinary background. It addressed up-to-date issues and responding both theoretical and applied interests.

Today, we are witnessing the seventh symposium about to be started almost twenty years after its first launch. This year's conference recalling again one of the important remark on the first symposium titled: *National Integration*. Reflecting on the increasingly polarized and divisive Indonesian political campaign of 2014 and 2019 Presidential election, many anthropologists start to realize the urgency to discuss the threat to diversity and the predicament brought by the engineering of hatred and sectarianism in our political experience during the last decade. The general elections have already heightened socio-political tensions marked by heated debates on the national ideology, on rising socio-economic inequality and its consequences, as well as rising sectarianism that has already openly entered formal political processes. Many fear that these developments will lead to the 'disintegration' of the Indonesian nation-state project.

Ladies and gentlemen, Indonesia provides a comprehensive anthropological case of a highly diverse geographical, cultural and social formation that is hardly an ideal setting for nation-building. The symposium, in its 7th event, will be used as a momentum for reflection by the anthropological community to critically re-examine assumptions, concepts and theories as well as seeking academic engagements in response to the future of the Indonesian nation-state project. Besides reflecting national problems mentioned before, the symposium as well aim to disseminate and discuss contemporary research findings based on anthropological as well as multi-disciplinary studies undertaken in Indonesia in a comparative inter-local as well as inter-regional basis; to link local anthropological debates and scholarship to a wider international academic community.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Participants of the Conference, please allow me now to wish you all the best for the next four days of this important gathering of social sciences scholars. I hope that you find this year's symposium welcoming, exciting and inspirational.

Prof. Dr. Ir. Muhammad Anis, M.Met
Rector of the Universitas Indonesia