



**KEYNOTE SPEECH BY  
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AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
“ERADICATING POVERTY THROUGH AGRICULTURE AND PLANTATION INDUSTRY TO  
EMPOWER PEACE AND HUMANITY”**

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**I. Opening.**

**His Eminence Cardinal Peter K.A. Turkson,**

**Excellencies Ambassadors,**

**Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen**

**Very Good Morning to all of you**

1. At the outset, I would like to **extend my gratitude and highest appreciation to the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and to the Indonesian and Malaysian Embassies to Holy See for jointly organizing this conference.** I am very pleased to see you all here, thank you for your participation in this conference.
2. **This conference is a very important forum for intellectual exercise and exchange of views in an open and transparent dialogue among all stakeholders** representing government and non-government organizations as well as think tanks, academicians, palm oil industry, and member of the civil society. **The theme of the conference is also very relevant to the current issue of achieving the 2030 agenda** for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where poverty eradication becomes imperative in placing SDGs at the center of humanity and in empowering peace all over the world.
3. On this occasion, allow me to express a very deep concern with the recent incidents that brought a number of casualties because of the act of terrorism. **I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to His Holiness Pope Francis for his expression of sympathy and condolences to all those affected by senseless act of violence in Surabaya,**

**Indonesia.** We are also very concerned with what happened recently in Paris. **My thoughts are with all those who have lost loved ones or been injured in these terrorist attacks, and we will continue to unite ourselves to deal with this situation.**

4. I believe, we are all here because **we share similar view that we all should be at the forefront in reducing poverty and promoting peace and humanity in every single way of our life. I hope our discussion today would generate a common understanding among us and provide a solid foundation** for further cooperation and collaboration to promote poverty eradication, peace, and humanity

## **II. Indonesian Economic Condition and the Importance of Agriculture Sector Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

4. Let me explain briefly about Indonesia. Indonesia is the **largest archipelagic state** in the world. It comprises of **6.3 million square kilometres, 8 hours flying time** from the eastern most to western most of Indonesia, more than **17.000 islands, 3 different time zones**, and 260 million people. Indeed, Indonesia is a maritime country. Agriculture, however, has become one of our main economic pillars for decades.
5. **Our economy has performed quite well.** Over the last decade, our economy grew on average by around **5.7%**, the third fastest in the world, after China and India. We are quite optimistic about our economic prospects. Some institutions have even predicted that in 2030 – 2050, Indonesia will become **the world 5th largest economy in the world.** Over the last decade Indonesia has contributed significantly to the global engine of growth. Those economic performance was not likely to occur without **significant contribution of our agricultural sector.**
6. **Indonesia's total land area is around 190 million hectares, some 52 million hectares of which are agricultural**, the rest are forest. Of the agricultural land, 24 million hectares consist of arable land, with 20 million hectares under permanent crops. Around 7 million ha, or 30%, of the total arable land are irrigated. The Agriculture sector contributes significantly to our economy. **GDP from Agriculture sector averaged 4.1 Billion Euro annually in the period of 2010 to 2018.**

7. **A significant number of our population works in the Agriculture sector.** And Agriculture is the **main source of employment in rural areas**, where poverty is most prevalent. In 2014, agriculture sector employed around 40.12 million people, or around 33% of Indonesian labour force.

### III. Toward Sustainable Palm Oil

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. As I have just mentioned, **the Agriculture sector is very important to Indonesia**, and especially to our population. Let me emphasize in this occasion that currently palm oil is the biggest contributor to our agricultural sector. It also contributes significantly to our exports, where in 2017 total exports of this product reached **around 15.5 Billion Euro**.
9. This, of course, also means that **palm oil has significant influence on livelihood of millions of Indonesia's populations**. The total area of palm oil plantation is around 11,26 million hectares. More than 41% of those areas are managed by smallholders. I would like to emphasize that **there are 2.3 million palm oil smallholders in Indonesia**. The smallholders are also supporting more than 6.9 million lives in Indonesia.
10. **In term of job creation**, palm oil sector provides 5.5 million direct employees and 12 million indirect employees. As such, **around 17.5 million people are currently working in palm oil industry**. The data strongly suggest that Palm oil has a very significant role in job creation as well as poverty alleviation among our small farmers.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. The Government of Indonesia understands by heart that **palm oil production must take into account social and environmental aspects as core elements of SDGs to promote a sustainable growth**. We do not want to deplete our resources and punish our future generation. Indeed, our constitution stipulates loudly that all of natural resources must be utilized

fully for the greatest benefit and welfare of Indonesian, both for the present and for the future generation.

**12. Indonesia has been taking part actively in the deliberations of reaching the SDGs. We have established a number of policies and regulatory frameworks to ensure environmental and social protection** applied in production of many Indonesia's natural resources exports such as from fisheries, timber products, and agriculture.

**13. Strong measures against IUU Fishing and sustainable fisheries measures, moratorium of deforestation, and peat land restoration have been implemented over the last several years.** The acknowledgement of the rights of native community over its faith and its natural resources in accordance to its custom has also been accommodated in our national policy, resulting in the creation of customary forest and community based marine protected area in many regions across the archipelago. As a vibrant democracy, Indonesia has strong labour and farmers organizations and human rights activists to monitor all government policies.

**14. As a matter of fact, Indonesia is the first country in Asia that has adhered to the standard set by the EU for its forest and timber products.** Indonesia has also established its own Palm Oil Sustainability Standard and fully adheres to market-based certification scheme. Indeed, palm oil is one of the most highly regulated export commodities in Indonesia. **This means all that of our Palm Oil export has been recognized as 100 % sustainable.**

**15. All efforts I mentioned above, show that Indonesia is fully committed, has implemented, and will continue to implement sustainable development program,** especially in relation to agriculture and plantation industry.

#### **IV. Closing**

**Excellency, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

**16. Indonesia supports strongly the pursuit of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations by 2030.** I believe that it is timely for us to make sure that our Agriculture sector is in line with the SDGs, which will balance out economic and social growth with protection of

the environment, including in this respect the palm oil industry. Therefore, **rather than implementing policies that would hurt the Palm oil sector, we have been focusing ourselves in promoting sustainability in the sector.**

17. Indonesia believes that **all countries, including the EU, must not ignore the serious efforts implemented by the Indonesian government to make sure the Palm oil industry is promoting sustainable development.**

18. Let me reemphasize that **oil palm cultivation has contributed significantly to poverty eradication through job creation and increasing income of Indonesian rural small farmers. Indonesia is of the view that integral human development shall stand at the very core foundation of sustainable development. This will in turn promote peace and stability**

19. We hope that the conference could make a fair and practical conclusion as well as policy recommendations in addressing the issue of palm oil as our common efforts in achieving the SDGs 2030.

**Thank you very much**