

## TRANSCRIPT

### OPENING REMARKS BY THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA M. JUSUF KALLA

#### AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF WORLD PRESS FREEDOM 2017 AT THE JAKARTA CONVENTION CENTER 03 MAY 2017

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful,  
May the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you,  
Good morning,  
Prosperous greetings to all.*

Her Excellency, Madam Irina Bukova, Director-General of UNESCO,  
Honourable Ministers, Chairman and Deputy Chairman of House of Representatives  
(DPR)  
Distinguished Representatives of the Indonesian Press Council and Members of the  
Press,  
International Dignitaries and Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

First of all, I would like to congratulate all of us for this event, and I am grateful that Indonesia has been selected to host the commemoration of World Press Freedom Day today, which means strengthening the Indonesian position and views about the importance of a country to maintain a good and responsible press freedom for the benefit of and for supporting the progress of the nation. We are aware of the reform efforts around the world, especially in Indonesia. Twenty years ago, the media in Indonesia were closely supervised and monitored and heavily regulated, which hampered journalists from providing critical checks and balances for governments.

Since the reform era of 1998, Indonesia has been drastically reformed by three fundamental changes, namely democracy, -- freedom of speech, a democratic national system -- autonomy system and press freedom as one of the requirements for democracy and autonomy. Consequently, because of the 3 major changes in the country 20 years ago, Indonesia becomes a nation where press freedom truly respected and protected by the constitution based on Human Rights issue in connection with the

rights to express opinion. That is why the press freedom in Indonesia and those other important things is very fundamental, very important to us all to maintain. The government has provided a regulatory framework to support a responsible press freedom that supports the progress of the nation.

Many have questioned how Indonesia, as a predominantly Muslim country, can simultaneously implement democracy and press freedom. Many countries in the world cannot implement these three things: democracy, autonomy, and press freedom, simultaneously, but Indonesia can. We would like to thank the media for that. This leads to other major changes. If in the past a variety of licences such as printing presses and publishing licenses and so forth are required by the media, now such licence is no longer required to publish a media. Therefore, Indonesia currently has 2000 print media.

Also, because of ease of obtaining radio frequency allocation and licensing, Indonesia has 1100 radio stations. The 394 or almost 400 national and regional television stations and 43,000 online media at your finger tips, signifying a growing freedom of expression in this country. It is an expression of effective press freedom as a result of the three significant changes, democratic transition, and then development of different views and media industries in the country protected by the constitution and applicable law.

Freedom is a necessity for us in order to progress as a nation. Nevertheless, the press freedom has responsibility, not a responsibility toward punishment or censorship, but responsibility toward ethics and internal rules of media respectively. We hope that press freedom takes into account important justice and peace matters above freedom of opinion. Press freedom without peace will instead create conflict and media would be responsible for that. When injustices and conflicts occur, media should play a better role to take sides and clarify the matters to ensure that justice, peace and progress of the nation continue. Moreover, information technologies have transformed cross-border information flow and exchange of information process so far beyond state borders.

Where there is progress in every democracy, there is technological advancements within the country. People thought information was obtained from the outside. In China it was by fax, but what happens in the Middle East is all a result of Facebook. It means the technology in the media has both positive and negative effects on the nation's life. The media contributes to politics, economics, and sustainable development. The media

provides information so that we can overcome poverty. The media provides information so that we can see where the gap is. The free and open media will be beneficial and contribute to the progress of a country. That's what we all hope for.

Freedom of the press is needed for the common good, namely for advancing the life of the nation. Indonesia launched the Anti-Hoax Journalists Network (Jawarah) last week for combating the negatives arising from freedom of expression in highly open hi-tech media by engaging in self-censorship. In Indonesia, there is no censorship, but we expect media to conduct self-censorship for the nation's unity, democracy and justice. Therefore, public trust and confidence in the media will decline if self-censor is not executed because good media even more mainstream media need public trust. The trust can be obtained from objectivity or precision of press coverage as the outcome of that press freedom. Thus, we can describe it as multifaceted. We talk a lot about freedom, from what? Is it about freedom from censorships, permits, dependency? Why do we need to talk about freedom, for what? Freedom of the press is needed for the common good, namely for conflict prevention and resolution and creating justice and peace. We, all of us and the media, need to contemplate that very important point together. Therefore, I hope once again that the media will be able to maximize the benefits of freedom and technology available for the good of us all. Government everywhere needs criticisms and critical views. Critiques and criticism, the two things are guarding the direction of the country. Without criticism from the media that represents the public's views, the freedom of the media is of no great benefit.

A state, without a critical view, cannot carry out its mission to run a good and just state. Therefore, our hope today is how we can do everything well. To keep everything running well, the government ensures safety, ensures no intervention to the media, but the media must be objective in assessing the course of government.

This means mutual respect, the people maintain their freedom, the media also maintain its objectivity in order to maintain the unity of the people. That's what we all hope for. We are hopeful that the World Press Freedom Day, which is commemorated globally today, be part of our determination to make the press useful to all of us, with its ethical and responsible freedom.

Thank you.

*And may the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you.*