

Message from His Excellency Suryo Pratomo Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to the Republic of Singapore

Indonesia and Singapore are very close neighbours by geographical proximity. This setting has played a significant role in all aspects of interactions in our daily lives, from high political issues like borders and securities to people-to-people connections in arts, social culture, as well as education and research. As we all know, Indonesia, an archipelagic nation comprising over 17,000 islands straddling the Pacific and Indian Oceans, is the largest archipelagic country in the world. It has very diverse natural resources both on land and in the sea, which we can explore further for the benefits of scientific research and education.

Over the course of many years, Indonesia and Singapore have done extensive marine biology research and cooperation especially through deep-sea expeditions. The main purpose of these expeditions is to discover new species in a bid to expand our existing knowledge of Earth's biodiversity. Under significant RISING or RI-Sing cooperation, both countries have showcased tremendous efforts and perseverance in contributing new data and information to marine exploration and understanding of deep-sea ecosystems.

Further enhanced collaborations will continue to flourish not only in current projects but also in future ones by involving more young scientists and researchers from both countries. Deep-sea explorations and other scientific collaborations will bring the two countries closer in the areas of science, technology, and innovation.

I highly appreciate this initiative taken by respected research institutions, the National University of Singapore's Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum and Tropical Marine Science Institute, and the Indonesian Institute of Sciences together with their teams of excellence, to launch this expedition under the RISING and SJADES 2018 frameworks. They have accurately captured the magnificent lives and richness of biodiversity through deep-sea marine explorations of our oceans. Their extraordinary skills and exploratory adventures in Indonesia's deep waters have provided mind-boggling and eye-opening perspectives for us.

This bilateral marine biology research project is also relevant to other deep-sea activities such as deep-sea mining. The results play a crucial role in providing information that will ensure such activities are carried out without severely damaging the natural ecosystems. This deep-sea biodiversity expedition conducted together by Singapore and Indonesia has reaffirmed the strong diplomatic ties between the two nations.

I strongly recommend that this volume be one in your collections because it will enrich your knowledge and understanding about the natural underwater ecosystem and its history in Southeast Asia.

