

## Message from His Excellency Anil Kumar Nayar Ambassador of the Republic of Singapore to the Republic of Indonesia

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The Indonesian term for ‘homeland’, *tanah air*, translates literally to ‘land’ and ‘water’. It is a recognition of the inseparable and symbiotic relationship between sea and shore, and evokes the compelling imagery of Indonesia as a vast archipelagic nation with more than 17,000 islands. It is a concept that strikes a chord with Singapore, given how international trade is our lifeblood. The shared respect for the sea and the desire to uncover its mysteries provide the foundation for our two scientific communities to forge strong cooperation and enduring friendship over the years.

In 2017, Singapore and Indonesia commemorated 50 years of diplomatic ties with the theme “RISING50”, an amalgamation of “RI” for Republic of Indonesia, “SING” for Republic of Singapore, and “50” for half a century of friendship and cooperation. That year saw the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Collaborative Research on Marine Science between the National University of Singapore (NUS) and the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), which in turn set the stage for the South Java Deep-Sea Biodiversity Expedition (SJADES) 2018.

On 23 March 2018, a joint research team from our two countries set sail from the port of Muara Baru in Jakarta and embarked on a 2,200-kilometre voyage to survey the waters beyond the depth of 2,000 metres in the Sunda Strait and southwestern Java. The remarkable expedition discovered new species of marine life and expanded our

knowledge of the rich marine biodiversity and heritage that our region holds. The collaboration reflected the strong people-to-people ties that continue to underpin the depth and diversity of Singapore–Indonesia relations. The outcomes of the expedition, as documented in this volume, not only make for an intriguing read, but more importantly, pave the way for future research and partnerships between our two countries. The efforts of the joint research team from NUS and LIPI are truly commendable.

Singapore and Indonesia desire to do more together, and in 2019, the National Research Foundation of Singapore (NRF) and LIPI signed an MoU Concerning Scientific and Technological Cooperation to strengthen cooperation in the fields of marine research infrastructure, marine biodiversity, and marine plastics. I am confident that there will be more joint ventures and explorations in the years ahead. We will come to better understand the world that we live in, and work together to protect our common natural heritage for future generations.

May this volume inspire our brightest minds to continue exploring the unknown together.



