

Statement delivered by,
His Excellency the Honourable Baron Divavesi Waqa M.P.,
President of the Republic of Nauru

At the Opening Segment of the Bali Democracy Forum X
“Does Democracy Deliver”
Jakarta, Indonesia, 7-8 December 2017

Your Excellency Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia,
Your Excellency Mrs Retno L.P. Marsudi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of
Indonesia,
Distinguished Heads of Delegation,
Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset allow me to offer my appreciation to the Government of Indonesia for its
initiative in convening this tenth Bali Democracy Forum -- a rare occasion for discussing
the most fundamental political issues here in the Asia-Pacific region.

Allow me also to congratulate Vice President Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, for convening this
decennial meeting. The longevity of the initiative is a testament to its success.

The question that has been posed to us -- “Does Democracy Deliver?” -- is timely given
the political upheaval we have seen in many places around the world.

The most enduring virtues of democracy--respect for individual freedoms, protection of
citizens’ rights, the final say of people in their own self-government, and a system to
check the power of any one person or faction —these foundational features of
democratic governance are in a sense independent from the issue of effectiveness. We
see them as fundamental values to be safeguarded and cherished, irrespective of
whether or not a different system might also be able to “deliver.”

However, we see threats to democratic governance multiplying, even in some of the
world’s most venerable democracies, often rooted in feelings of deep dissatisfaction and
alienation.

For democracy to thrive, it must deliver. And we know it can deliver.

Whether economic prosperity drives the creation of stable democratic institutions or vice
versa remains a difficult question, with scholars arguing for both sides of the issue.
More clear is that these two trends can often work together, hand in hand, with
sustainable development and stable political institutions emerging side by side.

We also know that these twin efforts must be managed in a constantly changing and
often volatile global context. Crisis in one part of the world can breed intolerance and

regressive policy in another. Likewise, equitable economic cooperation and development partnership can deliver quality of life improvements and greater faith in democratic institutions.

Development assistance can be critical in helping build domestic institutions. However, dollars for democracy are often anything but – coming with damaging and prescriptive strings that can actually undermine democratic governance in the long run.

Likewise, if we are to deliver on democratic promises, the international community must satisfy its multilateral commitments, particularly the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and its promises to eradicate poverty, combat the damaging impacts of climate change, and partner for sustainable development.

The future of democracy in the Asia Pacific Region and beyond will depend on the achievement of international commitments. We welcome initiatives like this to ensure that we keep the momentum forward.

I thank you.