WELCOME REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR BARRY DESKER
DEAN, S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

LAUNCH OF THE BAKRIE PROFESSORSHIP IN SOUTHEAST ASIA POLICY
AND THE BAKRIE GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP SCHOLARSHIP FUND
18 NOVEMBER 2010, 9.30AM, AT THE CHINESE HERITAGE CENTRE

Bapak Aburizal Bakrie, Chairman, Partai Golkar,

Professor Bertil Andersson, Provost of NTU,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my privilege to welcome all of you to the Launch of the Bakrie Professorship in Southeast Asia Policy and the Bakrie Graduate Fellowship scholarship fund made possible by a generous donation by the Bakrie Center Foundation under the capable leadership of its Founder and Chairman Bapak Anindya Novyan Bakrie who will also be our principal speaker for today’s Launch event.

We are honoured to have the Bakrie family here today, we appreciate your interest in RSIS, and we salute your dedication to education.

With a gift of S$3 million, the Bakrie Center Foundation has established and endowed a new Professorship in Southeast Asia Policy at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS). With matching funds from the Singapore government, the core endowment will total S$6 million.
In addition to the establishment of the Professorship, I am also pleased to announce the creation of the Bakrie Graduate Fellowship scholarship fund. Starting from the 2011/12 Academic Year, four scholarships worth $30,000 will be given out to deserving young scholars from the ASEAN region, including two from Indonesia, over the next five years.

RSIS has focused on establishing an endowment fund which will fund a number of professorships aimed at policy relevant research. Until recently, all our donors were local institutions. This is the first time we have received a donation from a foreign donor for a Chair at RSIS. It is a reflection of the international partnerships that we have developed through our research programmes.

The endowment for the Bakrie Professorship and the Bakrie Graduate Fellowships also reflect our commitment to deepen the partnership between Singapore and Indonesia. As neighbours and regional partners we are bound together by shared interests and shared outlooks.

Area studies are a critical aspect of RSIS’ research repertoire. We currently have research programmes which concentrate on Indonesia, Malaysia, China, India and the United States. The Bakrie Professor in Southeast Asia Policy will have to think out of the academic box, present alternative viewpoints, challenge ‘sacred cows’ and facilitate broad and free-flowing discourse on issues and developments related to Southeast Asia.

Our donor and speaker at this morning’s launch Bapak Anindya Novyan Bakrie is the Founder and Chairman of Bakrie Center Foundation. Pak Anind also heads VIVA, a media group whose channels have over 170 million viewers. At the same time, he is CEO of Bakrie Telecom, the largest CDMA wireless company in Indonesia with over 100 million subscribers.

His is the third generation of the Bakrie family business empire which includes mining, oil & gas, plantations, telecommunications, media, property & infrastructure. Its publicly listed companies have a combined market capitalization of about USD 10 billion and a daily trading volume equivalent to 40 per cent of the Jakarta Stock Exchange.
After earning a Bachelor of Science from Northwestern University and an MBA from Stanford University, Pak Anind cut his teeth in investment banking with Salomon Brothers in New York, before returning to Indonesia to join the family business. After spearheading the Bakrie Group’s foray into different media platforms, he became the Chief Operating Officer of the Group's private equity fund, Capital Managers Asia. He is also Vice Chairman of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

I now have the honour to invite Pak Anindya Bakrie to address us.