Prof. Dr. Ahmad Syafii Maarif presented a scientific speech in front of thousands of the first-year common program (TPB) students at Graha Widya Wisuda, Darmaga Campus (22/9). This Open Session in the context of the 51st Anniversary of IPB deliberately invited a national figure known as Buya Syafii Maarif to voice his thoughts on the state of education and Indonesia, especially in agriculture. In his speech, Buya Syafii raised the theme "Character Education, Elite’s Behavior and Small Farmers of Indonesia". He explained that if a nation loses its character it means the nation has lost everything and can be the “toys” of other nations. The concept of character includes the moral values and ethical qualities, honesty, tenacity, courage and integrity.

"The signs have started to appear. The reform of 16 years ago that declared war against KKN (Corruption, Collusion and Nepotism), is now dormant, despite being compensated by the phenomenal role of KPK (Corruption Eradication Commission). Even collusion and nepotism has not much changed, but even relapsed. Recently a sucking generation has appeared (gaining a political position through blood ties with parents or family relationships). This generation has a fragile character; hard to be expected to have personal integrity and a strong self-confidence," he said.

In his view, it is the result of the failure in the character education in the school system in Indonesia. When power is in the hands of the elites who are all with no characters, do not expect the fate of the common people, such as small farmers, will be considered. Indonesian politics is currently in the hands of those who lack of idealism.

"It is vain if we expect too much from the elites to pay attention to the rights of ordinary people and small farmers who had been neglected for a long time. Even our inner sensitivity to the plight of the people and farmers has long withered. Especially for agriculture, those having the most authority are the government and IPB. The campus, which has reached the age of 51 years, must always speak out without fear to defend and fight for the fate of farmers. Thus, IPB’s educated alumni should be equipped with the patriotic spirit so that they can come up as tough fighters to defend and enlighten the farmers. Finally, for IPB students and alumni, in addition to having a strong character and becoming a true fighter, I think I need to add this expression: Life is too short to be mocked and only once, meaning after that is the death," he said.

In the peak event of this anniversary, IPB Rector, Prof. Dr. Ir Herry Suhardiyanto, MSc describes seven steps to rescue Indonesian farmers from destruction. The first is the alignment of the perception on agriculture and economic development from the resources-based economy into a knowledge economy. The second is prevention of land conversion into residential and industrial areas, offices and highways. The third is the focus on excellent commodities and the right location. The fourth is upstream-downstream integration. The fifth is the optimum and modern development of agribusiness model. The sixth is the need for affirmative policies to establish banks for farmer and fisherman. The seventh is the
need for acceleration. (Mtd)