



**Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia
2020 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20036**

**Tel : (202) 775-5200
Fax : (202) 775-5365**

PRESS RELEASE

Indonesia's Ambassador to United States

Sudjadnan Parnohadiningrat Visits Denver, Colorado

February 21-23

Indonesia's Ambassador to the United States Sudjadnan Parnohadiningrat visited Denver, Colorado on 21-23 February to highlight Indonesia's ongoing relationship with United States and to foster stronger relations and cooperation. The Ambassador met Governor Bill Ritter, Senator Wayne Allard, Congressman Tom Tancredo and the chief of staff of Congressman Mark Udall. Gatherings with the region's business community were also held. One of the business events was co-hosted by the Newmont Mining Corp. The Ambassador also met with members of the Indonesian community in Denver and the surrounding areas. The University of Denver also held a reception for the Ambassador.

In Denver, the Ambassador conveyed the story of the new Indonesia. He stated that Indonesia now stands taller as it progresses in its democratization and reform. In 2004, out of 120 million eligible voters, 67 million voted peacefully in the country's first ever direct presidential election, choosing President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Following similar elections for national parliament offices, Indonesia has also held direct elections for local government positions. Recently, both national and local parliaments have passed numerous laws and regulations embracing democracy and reform.

The Ambassador also highlighted the need for higher economic growth to reduce unemployment, alleviate poverty, and improve the welfare of the people. Such economic growth is crucial in strengthening the democratic transition that is now taking place in Indonesia. For this purpose, Indonesia will continue to improve its business and investment climate. In February 2006, for instance, the government issued a new comprehensive investment policy package which included reforms in taxation, customs, and labor as well as provisions for strengthening small- and medium-sized enterprises.

In addition to economic prerogatives, transparent governance and anti-corruption reforms are given priority in the current administration. The judicial system in Indonesia is now independent from the executive and the legislative branches. A Team for the Eradication of the Criminal Act of Corruption and a Committee for the Eradication of Corruption have assisted the police and the attorney-general in prosecuting hundreds of individuals, including parliamentarians and high-ranking law enforcement officials.

As a result of various economic reforms undertaken by the government in the past few years, the Indonesian economy is now in a relatively good condition. Indonesia has a market of around 230 million people and a per-capita income of around US\$1280. The Indonesian economy grew by 5.6 percent in both 2005 and 2006. In 2007 the Indonesian GDP is expected to grow by 6.3 percent. In the past two years, Indonesia's exports have grown by 18.5 percent and in 2006 the total export amounted to more than US\$100 billion. The United States is an important trading partner of Indonesia, both as an export destination as well as a source of imports. In 2005 total bilateral trade stood at US\$15 billion. Truly, Indonesia has come a long way from 1998, when regional economic crises hit the country hard and led to an economic growth of minus 13 percent.

Following Indonesia's progress, it has begun to take a leading role in the region. An Indonesian proposal of establishing a comprehensive security community in Southeast Asia was accepted by its neighbors through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN. This security community is part of the "three pillars" of the larger ASEAN Community: the ASEAN Security Community (ASC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). In ASC, Indonesia leads the region's efforts to adopt the principles of democracy and human rights.

Ambassador Parnohadiningrat also commented on the growing relationship between Indonesia and the United States. Indonesia and the U.S. have elevated bilateral relations into a strategic partnership. Such a partnership reflects the fact that our two countries share many areas of mutual interest. For example, the two countries have cooperated well in the fight against terrorism. Hundreds of suspects have been apprehended and incarcerated in accordance with the Indonesian legal system. Through such close cooperation, said the Ambassador, Indonesia, as the world's largest majority-Muslim state, and the United States can achieve many common objectives.

During the Ambassador's visit he was also accompanied by Ms. Patsy Spier. Ms. Spier, a resident of Centennial, Colorado, is one of eleven survivors of an ambush that took place in Papua, Indonesia, on August 31, 2002. Ms. Spier's husband Rick (also a Colorado native) and two of her teaching colleagues were killed in that ambush. The cooperation that took place between Indonesia and the United States in the pursuit and apprehension of many of those responsible, and the subsequent convictions in an Indonesia court was emphasized as an example of the steps Indonesia has taken and continues to take toward democratization and reform.