



### Message from the Ambassador of the Netherlands, Dr. Nikolaos van Dam, on the occasion of Queen's Day 2006



DR. NIKOLAOS VAN DAM  
Ambassador

**M**aking up the balance eight months after my arrival to Indonesia, I can say that I am very fortunate to be in this position with the bilateral relations between Indonesia and my country being in such great shape and with a shared future that looks even brighter. A new chapter in our relations was opened in August last year when Dutch Minister of For-

eign Affairs Bernard Bot attended the 60th independence celebrations of Indonesia. It was the first time in history that a representative of the Dutch government attended these celebrations. The Netherlands has used this momentum to reach out to Indonesia and express the political and moral acceptance of *Proklamasi*. Minister Bot, who himself was born in Jakarta, also expressed the profound regret of the Dutch government for all the suffering caused by Dutch military actions at that time. This gesture was very well received by the Indonesian government.

#### Visit of Prime Minister Balkenende

The positive trend in Indonesian-Dutch relations was further underlined by the recent visit of Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende to Indonesia. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Prime Minister Balkenende issued a joint statement on intensified bilateral coop-

eration between our two countries. The main goal of this cooperation is to benefit both countries by promoting a conducive environment in the political, security and investment sectors in Indonesia. Both leaders agreed that the main instrument for intensifying the relationship is an open and constructive dialog in which both sides can discuss mutual problems and opportunities. They attached great importance to promoting interfaith dialog aimed at further deepening the mutual understanding between different cultures and faiths. The joint statement covers a wide range of areas of cooperation. I will mention some examples of future projects:

**Education:** The President and Prime Minister agreed on the importance of education in development. The Netherlands will intensify its support for basic education until 2009 and for technical and vocational education and training. Special attention



Visiting Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende driving through the garden of the Presidential Palace with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

will be given to enhance participation of Islamic Institutes of Higher Education. The Stuned fellowship program provides for around 120 scholarships to Indonesian professionals each year for studying in the Netherlands and will be continued in the future as well.

#### Economic cooperation:

Indonesia and the Netherlands will increase cooperation to strengthen the investment climate, increase trade and investment flows, and improve market access to the Netherlands as a gateway to Europe and to Indonesia as a gateway to Asia.

**Counterterrorism:** Indonesia and the Netherlands

agreed to further strengthen cooperation in the area of counterterrorism. The Netherlands will continue to support the Jakarta Center for Law Enforcement and bilateral police cooperation.

**Water management:** In the field of water management, the Netherlands will provide expertise to support policy development, institutional issues and capacity building. The Netherlands specifically offered to finance the development of an integrated strategy for water management problems in Greater Jakarta and Semarang.

**Judicial cooperation:** The Indonesian and Netherlands governments agreed to jointly develop a program to support the judicial sector in Indonesia. Dutch support will focus on the institutional strengthening of the judiciary and customs, as well as on assisting Indonesian policy to eradicate corruption.

#### A shared future

It is now more than 60

years since our two peoples went their separate ways. What has remained is the living heritage of a long-shared past. A great number of Dutch citizens were born in Indonesia or have lived here, and in many ways they keep the treasured memories alive. Literature about the period of the Netherlands-Indies constitutes an integral part of Dutch literature, which it has enriched with themes, images and words typical of this part of the world. On the more everyday level, it is beyond question that Dutch cooking can no longer be imagined without the flavors of Indonesian cuisine. All this contributes to ensuring that the present-day Dutch, too, remain fascinated by Indonesia, have warm feelings for the Indonesian people and are interested in developments of Indonesian society. The close and friendly relationship we have with Indonesia now inspires me with great confidence in a bright shared future.

Courtesy of Reuters/Syuri