

**SPEECH ON THE OCCASION OF THE 64<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
INDEPENDENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA**

**Tuesday 18 August 2009**

HE Ambassador Amris Hassan  
Excellencies and members of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen.

Your Excellency, I thank you for the minute of silence in honour of Timothy McKay, who lost his life in tragic circumstances in Jakarta on 17 July. I would like to acknowledge that eight other people lost their lives in the attacks, among them Australians and an innocent Indonesian. And over 50 other people were injured. I offer sympathy to the people of Indonesia, and in particular to all those who were affected by this tragic incident.

The recent bombings have highlighted the importance of continuing to work together on counter-terrorism activities in South East Asia. New Zealand has provided counter-terrorism training for a range of Indonesian agencies and we will continue to do so. The recently finalised ASEAN/New Zealand Work Programme for Co-operation to Combat International Terrorism identifies key areas for ongoing counter-terrorism cooperation across South East Asia.

This evening has a happier purpose. It is an opportunity to mark not only Indonesia's 64<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence, but also the current vibrant state of the Indonesian-New Zealand relationship. Ambassador, our sincere best wishes on this important occasion.

2009 is an important year for Indonesia. The Legislative and Presidential elections marked another milestone in the consolidation of democracy in the world's fourth most populous and largest Muslim-majority country. We understand that Indonesia has managed to weather the storm of the global economic crisis very well. Economic growth has remained steady and

employment has remained strong. This combination of economic resilience and political stability bodes well for Indonesia's future development.

There have been some exciting developments in our bilateral relationship this year. As the Ambassador noted, President Yudhoyono and Foreign Minister Wirajuda were among the first leaders we met in Lima, just days after being elected. The contact has continued and I have had the honour of exchanging bilateral visits with Dr Wirajuda this year. It was a pleasure to host Dr Wirajuda and his delegation earlier this month. We enjoyed free and frank discussions across the whole range of engagement between our two countries. The connections between Indonesia and New Zealand are diverse; they are strong; and they are growing. I am confident that these positive trends will continue and that we will realise the potential that exists.

Trade is an important area of our bilateral relationship. Two-way trade is now over \$2 billion dollars and is well-balanced. Indonesia is our 7<sup>th</sup> largest export market and New Zealand's tenth largest bilateral trade partner worldwide. We are delighted that the agreement creating the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area has been signed and are confident that it will bring benefits for our bilateral trade with Indonesia when it comes into force. A rapidly expanding trading relationship inevitably faces some hurdles but I am confident that they will be overcome and our trade relationship will continue to flourish.

Just as important are the people-to-people links that underpin all strong national connections. New Zealand fosters these through academic, media, and government exchanges. We were delighted to offer for the third time this year an exchange programme for young Muslim Leaders from Indonesia to visit New Zealand to share views on democracy and interfaith issues.

Ambassador, I applaud the initiatives your Embassy has undertaken to promote education exchanges and I hope they will continue. It is an area of enormous

potential and we clearly have work to do to promote education opportunities to our respective students and institutions.

New Zealand strongly supports Indonesia's efforts to strengthen democracy in the Asia-Pacific region through the Bali Democracy Forum. I was delighted to announce a financial contribution to support to the Bali Democracy Forum during my visit to Jakarta in June. Hon Georgina te Heu Heu attended the inaugural meeting of the Bali Democracy Forum last year, and we look forward to continuing to support its activities.

Indonesia is also a valued friend to New Zealand in the Asia-Pacific region. New Zealand attaches considerable importance to engagement with ASEAN particularly in fora such as the East Asia Summit and ASEAN Regional Forum. Next year will mark the 35th anniversary of New Zealand's Dialogue Partnership with ASEAN and we hope that milestone will provide an occasion to strengthen New Zealand's ties with ASEAN.

As we've heard so persuasively from Ambassador Hassan, New Zealand and Indonesia enjoy a broad bilateral relationship and share important diplomatic, security and economic interests. We look forward to broadening our cooperation and developing an even stronger partnership in the future.

Ambassador – I would like to pay particular tribute to you for your tireless work to bolster bilateral relations. Your efforts and enthusiasm are greatly appreciated and we recognise the impressive personal contribution you have made to enhancing relations between New Zealand and Indonesia during your term as Ambassador. We wish you well for the future and assure you that you will always be welcome here.

Ladies and Gentlemen, can I now ask you to rise, on the occasion of the 64<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Indonesia, to toast President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and the people of the Republic of Indonesia.