



centre for **democratic** institutions

**The 2nd CDI Indonesia-Australia
Parliamentary Committees Workshop
&
CDI sponsored Commission 1 visit to Canberra**

*Wednesday 23 May – Saturday 26 May 2007
Canberra*

The second Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI) Indonesia-Australia Parliamentary Committee Workshop was held at Parliament House in Canberra on Friday 25th May 2007. The workshop involved Members and staff of Komisi I, Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, Republik Indonesia (DPR-RI).¹

The aim of the Workshop was to facilitate and enhance deeper Indonesia-Australia parliamentary links through discussions by Indonesian and Australian parliamentarians with a common interest in foreign policy, trade and security issues, and the sharing of ideas on best practice in the work of parliamentary committees.

The visit of the Commission One delegation and the Workshop was well supported by the Parliament of Australia and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, both in Canberra and by the Australian Embassy in Jakarta. CDI worked closely with the Australian Parliament's Department of the House of Representatives, in particular with the Committee Office and the Parliamentary Relations Office, in planning and preparing the delegation's itinerary and the workshop. The Department of Foreign Affairs assisted in arranging meetings for the delegation with a range of government ministers in Canberra. The Indonesian Embassy also provided invaluable assistance to CDI in organizing the visit and workshop.

In Jakarta, CDI was also well supported by the Speaker of the *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat*, His Excellency Mr H. R. Agung Laksono, and the staff of the Secretariat-General.

Workshop Participants

The Indonesian delegation was led by Drs Sidarto Danusubroto, Vice Chairman of Commission One, and included Mr Abdillah Toha, Chairman of the Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation (BKSAP). Members of the Australian Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT), Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (JSCOT) and Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and

¹ Commission One (Commission on Foreign Affairs, Defence, Communication and Information), House of Representatives, Republic of Indonesia.

Security (PJSCIS), together with senior parliamentary staff from the House of Representatives, the Senate and the Parliamentary Research Service, also participated. Two Australian parliamentarians who had attended the first workshop in 2005 in Jakarta – Senator Alan Eggleston and Mr Michael Danby MP – participated in the 2007 workshop.

The Indonesian delegation was comprised of the following:

Members, Commission I, House of Representatives, Indonesia

- Mr Sidarto Danusubroto — Vice Chair Commission I
- Mr Abdillah Toha — Chair of Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation Committee (BKSAP)
- Mr Yorrys Raweyai
- Mr Marcus Silano
- Mr Andi M. Ghalib
- Mr Soeharno

Parliamentary Officials, House of Representatives, Indonesia

- Ms Esther Sianipar (staf ahli²)
- Mr Malik Haramain (staf ahli)
- Mr Yudha Akbar Pally (staf ahli BKSAP)
- Ms Damayanti Harris (Secretary of Commission 1)

The Australian participants involved were:

Members of Parliament, Australia

- Mr Harry Jenkins MP
- Senator Alan Ferguson
- Hon David Jull MP
- Mr Michael Danby MP
- Mr Bob Sercombe MP
- Senator Alan Eggleston

Parliamentary Officers, Australia

- Dr Margot Kerley (Secretary JSCFADT)
- Mr James Rees (Secretary JSCOT)
- Mrs Margaret Swieringa (Secretary PJSCIS)
- Dr Glenn Worthington – A/g Director, Office of the Clerk Assistant (Committees), Department of the House of Representatives
- Mr Nigel Brew – Director, Foreign Affairs, Defence & Trade (FADT) Section Parliamentary Library (Research Branch), Department of Parliamentary Services
- Dr Frank Frost – Special Director Research, FADT Section
- Dr Timothy Kendall – Australian Parliamentary Fellow 2007
- Ms Jane Grace – Director, Law and Bills Digest Section
- Ms Cathy Madden – Director, Politics & Public Administration Section
- Ms Juli Tomaras – Law and Bills Digest Section

² 'Expert' staff

Background

The workshop follows on from the seminar convened by CDI on the Parliamentary Oversight of Treaties in July 2005 at the Hotel Mulia Senayan in Jakarta. That seminar brought together elected representatives and secretariat staff from both our parliaments' foreign affairs committees to discuss the central issues of international law and their implications for domestic politics. The seminar deepened ties between the Indonesian and Australian parliaments by facilitating exchange at the highest levels.

Since the 2005 seminar, CDI has held several meetings with Members of the Indonesian Parliament on areas of ongoing co-operation and assistance. CDI held a meeting with members of the Commission 1 delegation led by Dr Muhammad Hikam during their visit to Australia in June 2006. Discussions at that meeting covered a wide range of areas of possible assistance, including:

- Assistance with legislative drafting, namely current bills including those dealing with Freedom of Information and the national postal service;
- Assistance to the Commission 1 secretariat;
- Further cooperation between Commission 1 and Australia's Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade;
- Australia /Indonesia Defence treaty and security issues; and
- Development of democratic institutions in Papua - especially the new provincial legislature

It was agreed that CDI will work closely with both Commission 1 and the relevant Australian committees to ascertain agreed areas of co-operation as part of our ongoing work to strengthen parliamentary committees in the future.

In November 2006, CDI met with the Working Group on Performance Enhancement of the House of Representatives led by Dr Eva Sundari. CDI agreed to work with the Working Group as they prepare their report on reform options and move into the implementation phase of their programme. This will involve further cooperation as part of CDI's mandate to strengthen parliamentary government in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Visit Itinerary

The workshop was held on Friday 25th May 2007 at Parliament House in Canberra. This date was chosen so as to coincide with the Australian Senate's Budget Estimates hearings, which are meetings where Senators can question Ministers and their officials about the expenditure of government funds. The delegation was therefore able to observe an estimates hearing in progress.

The delegation, accompanied by Dr Stephen Sherlock, arrived in Canberra on Wednesday 23 May. CDI hosted a welcome reception for the delegation that evening. On Thursday 24 May, the six Indonesian Members of Parliament, accompanied by CDI Deputy Director, Mr Quinton Clements, and Mr Samsu Rizal, Counsellor, Indonesian Embassy, met with a number of Australian Federal parliamentarians including:

- Hon. Bruce Billson MP, Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence and Minister for Veterans' Affairs;
- Mr Bob McMullan MP, Shadow Minister for Federal/State Relations and International Development Assistance;
- Mr Robert McClelland MP, Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs;

- Mr Joel Fitzgibbon MP, Shadow Minister for Defence;
- Hon. Greg Hunt MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs;
and
- Hon. Kevin Andrews MP, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship.

During the morning, the four Indonesian parliamentary officials, accompanied by Dr Sherlock, met with a range of Australian Committee and Research Service staff. The delegation then had lunch, hosted by Mr Michael Johnson MP, with a number of Australian parliamentarians who are members of the Australia-Indonesia Parliamentary Group. In the afternoon the delegation observed Question Time in the House of Representatives. This was followed by a briefing on the Senate Estimates process and observing an estimates hearing by the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. The delegation then met with Australian Foreign Affairs officials for a roundtable discussion on a range of bilateral issues.

In the evening the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. David Hawker MP, hosted a cocktail reception for the delegation attended by the Clerk of the House of Representatives, Mr Ian Harris and a number of Australian parliamentarians. This was followed by a dinner hosted by His Excellency Mr Teuku Mohammad Hamzah Thayeb, Indonesian Ambassador, at his residence.

The Workshop

The theme of the workshop was 'Understanding the role of Parliamentary Committees in policy making in Indonesia and Australia'. The aim was to facilitate discussions by Members and staff of the foreign affairs, defence and intelligence committees of the Indonesian and Australian parliaments, both on issues of policy substance and on issues related to the effective functioning of parliamentary committees in general.

The workshop was opened by Mr Harry Jenkins MP, Second Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives. The morning sessions concentrated on an exchange of views about Southeast Asian regional security issues and bilateral Indonesia-Australia relations. Professor Andrew McIntyre from the Crawford School of Economics and Government at the Australian National University opened the discussion with a very stimulating keynote address on the issues and problems that may confront parliamentarians in our region in the near future. This was followed by opening remarks from, Drs Sidarto Danusubroto, Deputy Chairman of Commission I and Senator Alan Ferguson, Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. These presentations led to a free-ranging interchange amongst the workshop participants. The discussion touched on a variety of issues, including non-traditional security problems and potentially sensitive issues in the bilateral relationship.

The afternoon sessions of the workshop shifted the focus from the policy issues themselves to ways to most effectively use parliamentary committees as a mechanism of legislative and policy development. Under the theme of "Making Parliamentary Committees Work", the workshop explored topics of common concern regarding the role and operation of parliamentary committees in our respective parliaments. Opening contributions were made by Drs Sidarto Danusubroto, Mr David Jull MP, Chair, Joint Committee on Intelligence & Security, Mr Abdillah Toha, Chair of DPR-RI Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation and Senator Alan Eggleston, Chairman of the Australia-

Indonesia Parliamentary Group. These were followed by a range of contributions, both from the Members of Parliament and the parliamentary staff in the workshop. The final session ended with a lively and important discussion about the role and responsibility of parliamentary staff and ways to maximise the scarce human resources available to parliamentary committees.

Future Initiatives

The Indonesian delegation and the Australian participants expressed great enthusiasm for the workshop and the theme chosen. Feedback from the participants has been overwhelmingly positive. It was unanimously agreed that CDI should continue to facilitate this type of gathering of Australian and Indonesian MPs and the workshop become a permanent fixture in the CDI calendar.

In 2008, CDI proposes holding a Parliamentary Dialogue involving parliamentarians from Australia, Indonesia and Timor-Leste. This activity would be similar to the annual CDI Pacific Parliamentary Dialogue. The purpose would be to bring together and facilitate discussions by MPs from the three countries – possibly through relevant committee structures in each country - on issues of common interest whilst giving the participants the opportunity to look at aspects of parliamentary practice in the host country. If successful, this could become either an annual CDI activity or possibly be incorporated into the annual Pacific Parliamentary Dialogue.

Conclusion

Administratively there were few problems. The delegation arrived in Canberra as scheduled, and the administrative support provided by the Committee Office and Parliamentary Relations Office was excellent. The use of simultaneous translation for the workshop proved to be extremely useful in generating ease of discussion and enhanced understanding. The workshop program worked well, resulting in a useful mix of presentation and participation. Although the workshop was originally designed to take place over two days, the condensing of the program to one day worked well although time ran out in the afternoon in the midst of a lively discussion.

The delegation used the opportunity of visiting Canberra to further their links with Australian parliamentarians and parliamentary officers, as well as interacting with the Indonesian diplomatic and expatriate communities. All participants, both Australian and Indonesian, exhibited a genuine desire to learn about their respective parliamentary systems and gain a better understanding of the issues affecting the bilateral relationship.

Like all of CDI's activities, the workshop provides the basis for the continued strengthening of links between regional counterpart democratic institutions, and between individual legislators. As is always the case at successful seminars, an important benefit of this gathering of Indonesian and Australian parliamentarians is the informal interchange and fostering of relationships that occurred between and after the formal sessions and at the social events. Workshop participants got to know each other and to exchange ideas and experiences as individuals involved in public life. The contacts, and often the firm friendships, that can be established on such occasions are something to be valued highly in the development of connections between our respective parliaments and countries.

Through having now run the workshop twice, CDI has developed strong links with Commission 1 and the DPR-RI which will greatly assist in future CDI Indonesia focused activities.

Acknowledgements

The visit of the Commission 1 delegation and the workshop would not have been successful without the active involvement and support of the Australian Parliament, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Indonesian Embassy. CDI extends its appreciation to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. David Hawker MP, the Clerk of the House of Representatives, Mr Ian Harris, and the staff of the Committee Office and the Parliamentary Relations Office for their generous assistance, advice and excellent preparations. CDI also acknowledges the assistance and support of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australian Embassy in Jakarta. CDI is especially grateful to His Excellency Mr Teuku Mohammad Hamzah Thayeb, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia, and his staff for their assistance in organising the delegation's visit.

CDI is also grateful for the enthusiastic participation of the staff of the Committee Office, Department of the House of Representatives – in particular, Dr Glenn Worthington, Dr Margot Kerley, Mr James Rees and Mrs Margaret Swieringa - and the Parliamentary Research Service in the workshop and for meeting with the Commission 1 staff on Thursday 24 May 2007.