



The Centre for Democratic Institutions

VISIT BY THE DELEGATION FROM THE INDONESIAN DIRECTORATE-GENERAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION 20 AUGUST 2002 CANBERRA

Introduction

On 2 August 2002 CDI hosted a delegation from the Directorate-General of Human Rights Protection within the Indonesian Ministry of Justice and Human Rights. The delegation, comprising five officials, was investigating Australia's governmental efforts at the promotion of democracy and human rights, with a view to promoting democracy and human rights in Indonesia.

Presentations on the Australian human rights 'framework' were made by Roland Rich, Director of CDI; Dr Greg Fealy, Research Fellow in the Department of Political and Social Change at the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies (RSPAS); and Professor Hilary Charlesworth Director of the Centre for International and Public Law (CIPL) at the Australian National University. The visit was part of the AusAID Indonesian Legal Reform Program Facility which has as its head in Jakarta, Human Rights expert Peter Thomson. CDI also gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Dr Ron Witton as interpreter.

Discussion

The half-day discussion was broken into three sessions, led in order by Roland Rich, Greg Fealy and Hilary Charlesworth.

The first session with Roland Rich focused on the centrality of human rights to processes of good governance. Mr Rich explained how current scholarship and practice placed human rights and governance in the centre of the development puzzle. Older development assistance methods had been overly focused on achieving economic growth often through the role of the state, and paid too little attention to the subjects of development - people. Human rights is the foundation upon which efforts to improve the quality of development *in human terms* are based.

Questions from the delegation highlighted the tension that can exist in societies such as Indonesia between human rights and public order. Mr Saptomo cited the drop in Indonesia's Human Development Index rating since the fall of the New Order government and subsequent instability. The discussion also covered what other options Indonesia might have had had towards the end of the New Order period.

Contrasts to other developing countries facing similar challenges were also drawn, including Malaysia, China and Vietnam.

The second session's discussion was led by Dr Greg Fealy. Dr Fealy was able to provide a broad comparative basis for the delegation's interest in the Australian political system and human rights situation. The discussion touched on issues of the voting system, the nature of Australian political parties and their implications for Australian democracy, and issues surrounding parliamentary support for human rights. Challenging human rights issues to do with Irian Jaya and Aceh were also discussed, as the delegates sought new perspectives on approaching these long standing Indonesian problems.

The final session was led by Hilary Charlesworth. Prof Charlesworth was able to start the session by presenting information about the first attempt by an Australian government (A.C.T.) to introduce a statutory bill of rights, the preparatory committee for which she is chair. Prof Charlesworth canvassed Australia's human rights history and placed her efforts within that context. Questions from the delegation centred around Australia's human rights promotion 'framework'. They were specifically interested in how best to promote the study of human rights, how to encourage centres of excellence in human rights research and advocacy, and how to develop a relationship between government and human rights advocates.

List of Participants

Delegates

Mr Bunyan Saptomo	Director Cooperation on Human Rights Promotion
Mr Abdullah Sani Damanik	Director Human Rights Education
Mrs Mahdiah	Director Human Rights Information Systems
Mr Slamet Martawardaja	Director Human Rights Fulfilment
Dr H. Sudarsono	Secretary to General Directorate

Interpreter

Dr Ron Witton