

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY**  
**H.E. DR. SUSILO BAMBANG YUDHOYONO**  
**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA**

**AT "APEC 2020:  
A CONVERSATION FOR FUTURE LEADERS"**

**THE ASIALINK CENTRE**  
**SYDNEY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2007**

The Honorable Malcolm Turnbull,  
The Honorable Philip Ruddock,  
Mr. Sid Myer, Chairman of Asialink,  
Mr. Chip Goodyear, CEO BHP Billiton Limited  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear friends of Indonesia,

I know how much efforts have been marshalled by Asialink to organize tonight's dinner. So I wish to begin by commending Asialink Chairman Mr. Sid Myer and all those who have worked very hard for organizing this event in rather short notice.

The truth is : I simply cannot pass the chance to address the good people of Australia through Asialink this year.

Indeed, the year 2007 is a rather special year for me. It is the year where, through this visit, I became the first Indonesian President to visit Australia TWICE in one Presidential term.

2007 is also unique because it is a year where both the Indonesian and Australian leaders spent their birthdays in one another's country.

When I visited your great country in May 2005, I knew we were embarking on a new path in our bilateral relations. I wanted to break the old mindset about

Australia, which was symptomized by the fact that there had only been 3 visits by Indonesian Presidents to Australia in 60 years of our nationhood. I know that Prime Minister Howard too wanted to break new ground, which he demonstrated by coming to my Presidential inauguration in October 2004—the first ever by an Australian Prime Minister.

As a result, Indonesia-Australia relations today is at its peak. Since 2005, we have elevated our relations to a Comprehensive Partnership. We also signed a Framework for Security Cooperation Treaty—the so-called Lombok Treaty—which I believe altered the geopolitical relationship between Indonesia and Australia. In other words, we have significantly recalibrated our relations--for better, not worse--and that process of recalibration is still on-going today.

I am happy to tell you tonight that between Australia and Indonesia there is basically a relationship of trust. Both sides have earned that trust and both are striving to deserve it.

Australian-Indonesian relations start with a disadvantage: nations with long common borders can often be uneasy with each other, and our two countries are no exception. That disadvantage, of course, can be overcome—but it will take some work.

Consider also the differences between our histories, cultures and traditions and world views. And consider the gap in the stages of our economic development.

Naturally, Australia and Indonesia tend to perceive and address the same problems in different ways. An Oriental society with collectivist traditions that is also a developing economy will have a different set of priorities from that of an economically developed society of European extraction that is growing more and more cosmopolitan.

Such differences, compounded by ignorance of each other, and abetted by the antics of populist politicians and a few sensationalist members of mass media on both sides, can lead to an unhealthy relationship. They occasion mutual misperceptions, mutual suspicions and even prejudice.

They can drive us to create unsavory mental caricatures of each other.

Hence, there is such a thing as Australophobia in Indonesia. Even some very intelligent Indonesians are afflicted with it. This stems from the perception that Australians are so enamoured with their imagined superiority that they meddle in the internal affairs of their neighbours.

On the other hand, there is in Australia a widespread perception of Indonesia as a militaristic society, with aggressive designs on its neighbours, including Australia itself. And there is a perception of Indonesia as a society that breeds

**Muslim terrorists, including suicide bombers. I am aware that surveys indicate that these perceptions are widespread in Australia.**

**Nothing can be more ridiculous than these mental images—but they often drive people to do unreasonable things. They are stereotypes that have no flesh-and-blood existence but they exist—and persist—in the minds of people. It is largely because of these stereotypes that there has been, from time to time, periods of volatility in the bilateral relations between Australia and Indonesia and, quite often, a deterioration of the quality of public opinion in both countries.**

**What has saved us from the tyranny of stereotypes is a stronger realization of our commonalities and our shared interests. We have simply realized that we need each other. That we are better off helping each other instead of hectoring each other. That we we have much to gain from transforming our relations into a real, comprehensive partnership, and much to lose if we fail in doing so.**

**Australia is an important trading and investment partner of Indonesia—although in this regard, I hasten to add that there is plenty of room for growth. Indonesia is a reliable and strong supporter of Australia’s engagement with the rest of East Asia. We have a common interest in ensuring the stability and equitable prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region. Hence, we worked together in the successful quest for peace in Cambodia in the early 1990s. And today we are collaborating closely in the framework of the ASEAN Regional Forum, the East Asia Summit and, of course, APEC.**

**That is why in spite of the stereotypes and some differences in position on some regional issues, I can confidently make the assertion that our bilateral relationship today is basically one of mutual trust. For without that trust, there is no way we can work so closely and so effectively in multilateral forums and on a bilateral basis.**

**But that gift of trust did not come to us like manna from heaven: we both must earn it.**

**On the part of Indonesia, we purchased much of that trust with the hard coin of reform. Through reform, we salvaged our economy from the devastation of the Asian Crisis of 1997-1998, and became the world’s third largest democracy, after India and the United States. That also had a transforming effect on our relations, because now we relate to one another as fellow democracies.**

**The terrorists who carried out the carnage on Bali in October 2002 might have thought that by killing Australians on Indonesian territory they could drive a wedge between our two countries. If so, they were mistaken. The tragedy only drew Australia and Indonesia closer together. And from then on we waged a common battle against terrorism that put the terrorists on the run and brought scores of their operatives to justice.**

We have also launched various joint initiatives for law and order and peace. These include the establishment of the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation, and a process of interfaith, intercultural and intercivilizational dialogue and cooperation to empower the moderates in our society and address the root causes of terrorism. The regional interfaith dialogue, launched in Yogyakarta in late 2004, has since been echoed in Cebu, Philippines in 2005 and in Waitanga, New Zealand earlier this year. Next host will be Buddhist Cambodia.

And when an earthquake and tsunami devastated our provinces of Aceh and North Sumatera in December 2004, among the first to respond, predictably, were rescue and relief workers from Australia. They saved lives and tended to the wounded and helped the rest of the survivors resume their normal life. Then, almost immediately, Australia made available \$1 billion in grants and soft loans through an initiative called Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and Development.

Meanwhile, in that massive effort to save Indonesian lives nine Australian rescue workers gave their own lives. We Indonesians will always remember that ultimate sacrifice in the name of friendship and humanity.

I myself will long remember the outpouring of solicitude and cordiality with which I was received when I made an official visit to Canberra in April 2005.

It is fortunate for our bilateral relations that I have nurtured a personal friendship with Prime Minister John Howard that has remained robust through good and bad times. The same can be said of my Foreign Minister, Dr. Hassan Wirajuda, and his Australian counterpart, the Hon. Alexander Downer: they are great friends. I know that this personal contacts also exist across Government agencies at all levels.

Great personal friendships at the top will be more meaningful, of course, if they are also in evidence at the grassroots. I said earlier that our relations are being recalibrated, and there is no better way to do it than to make people-to-people contacts the engine of our bilateral relations.

For there are many Australians who are great friends of the Indonesian people. Among them are Dr. David Marsh and Clair Marsh who have been tirelessly collecting donations of medical supplies and equipment from all over Australia and bringing them over to where they are critically needed in Indonesia. This year they established the Marsh Foundation with a mission to bring health care to the underprivileged in Indonesia.

Several years ago, at a time when Indonesia was reeling from the effect of the Asian Crisis, two young Australians, Fiona Collins and Mia Hoogenboom, bicycled from this city, going around the perimeter of Australia to raise funds for the Ozindo Project—a relief programme to provide staple foods for the Indonesian poor.

In Bali, yet another Australian doctor who fell in love with Indonesia, John Fawcett, has built a world-class facility for optic medicine: the Australia-Bali Medical Eye Centre, a partnership between Aus-Aid and the Bali Health Department supported by a local NGO. Its medical health givers render their services free of charge and save thousands of Indonesians from blindness every year. In more ways than one, this is an eye-opener on Australian-Indonesian friendship. I was delighted to join Prime Minister Howard in inaugurating that Eye Center recently.

Another eye-opener is the way so many Indonesians were inconsolable at the death of Steve Irwin, that lovable, cheerful and nature-loving Australian. We love him and treasure his legacy.

I want to stress that we are talking of real flesh-and-blood individuals with extraordinary human qualities—not stereotypes. They are the ones who matter.

Let me add that the telecasts of the Australian Broadcasting Company are well received in Indonesia. I myself marvel at the scholarship behind its documentaries.

Australian achievement in soccer is much admired Indonesia. Our own national team, representing a football-crazy nation of 230 million, met with early elimination in the last World Cup. So we had no one else to cheer on but the Australian soccer team that represents a nation of 21 million who are more interested in cricket.

Obviously, in spite of the stereotypes, there is plenty of goodwill in Indonesia today for Australians. Let us build on that.

Hence, I urge Australians to come to Indonesia and make it your second home. I want to see more Australians travel, play, rest, study, research, and make new friends in Indonesia. Those who are interested in Asian studies can make Indonesia their gateway to deeper knowledge. To the artists among you, come to Bali and find out how the artists of Europe found the fullest expression of their soul on that island paradise. To the entrepreneurs, come and avail yourselves of our latest package of investment incentives.

And I fervently wish that this would be a two-way flow.

We already owe much of the quality of our human resources to Australian educational institutions. My own son, Edhie Baskoro, earned degrees from the Curtin University of Technology in Perth. Still, I would like more and more Indonesians to come and study here in Australia—by scores of thousands every year if possible.

I should like more and more Indonesian businessmen to come here and look into opportunities in a strongly growing Australian economy, and find ways to strike up joint ventures that will also benefit Indonesia.

In sum, let us expand and intensify our people-to-people contacts in all fields, especially in trade and investment, and in culture and education. Let this effort be our way of dispelling the mental caricatures that are retarding our cooperation. Let it be the main pillar of our bilateral relations.

It was not too long ago when we all believed that nothing could be done about the climate. Now we are assured by the best science of the day that the climate we human beings live in is at least partially our creation. We are responsible for what it has become. But we can make it better and more sustainable if we exert the right, vigorous, concerted and sustained efforts.

That is the idea behind the formation of the Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership, of which Australia and Indonesia are co-founders. We just announced that initiative this morning here in Sydney.

What is true of the global climate is even truer of a bilateral relationship. We can create a climate of trust between our two countries—but that requires a prudent, vigorous, concerted and sustained effort.

It also requires knowing each other on the basis of immersion in each other's culture. It requires the cultivation of personal goodwill and the habit of cooperation through close and frequent personal and people-to-people contact.

And if we are truly committed to this relationship, and we have the courage of our commitment, a climate of mutual trust will pervade the relationship.

Of course, even in the best of climates, there can be bad weather. There can be an incident that is magnified by the mass media of both countries, and some grandstanding politicians on both sides will then call for severance of diplomatic relations. It can still happen.

But that is always a passing event. The positive climate remains, so long as we are working hard to make it sustainable. So long as mutual trust is carefully nurtured.

On that basis I confidently look forward to many years of goodwill, mutual trust and cooperation between Australia and Indonesia.

Thank you.