

A dynamic relationship

By **RICHARD GRAHAM MP**

THE PRIME MINISTER'S TRADE ENVOY TO THE ASEAN EC, INDONESIA, MALAYSIA AND THE PHILIPPINES



RICHARD GRAHAM is the MP for Gloucester and the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy for Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). He is the only member of the House of Commons to have lived and worked in Indonesia and to speak Bahasa Indonesia. Mr Graham chairs the All Party Parliamentary Group for Indonesia and accompanied the Prime Minister to Indonesia last year. He has also acted as PPS to the Minister for Asia, Hugo Swire. Before entering Parliament he worked in aviation, diplomacy and finance, and has lived in Indonesia and the Philippines, as well as Hong Kong and China.

Richard Graham MP
with Indonesian
Trade Minister
Thomas Lembong

This week's visit by Indonesia's President Jokowi to the United Kingdom comes at a dynamic time in the partnership between our two countries. This comes partly from shared views of the world as democratic maritime nations that believe in the rule of law and preventing extremism, but also in greater human links. Increasingly both our peoples have a growing similarity of consumer habits and taste in brands and creative media. Indonesian designs are available in London and Adele's songs are listened to all over Indonesia. You can meet Indonesian PhD students at the University of Gloucestershire and students from the University of Central Lancashire studying textiles in Indonesia.

And whether through aspiration for more international education, demand for investment into new sources of energy or a drive for the most modern aerospace and strengthened airport security, Indonesia is finding the UK a rich source of reliable high tech solutions.

British businesses in turn are welcoming the greater transparency of business practice in Indonesia. Strong links with local partners underpin the success of UK firms like HSBC, Prudential and GlaxoSmithKline, while successful bidders for Indonesian tenders, particularly from state-owned enterprises, find the UK government has greatly increased its commitment to export credit from UK Export Finance.

So there is a much greater awareness today among British businesses of the world's fifth-largest country and her enormous potential than there was when I first worked in Indonesia in 1980. Today, retailers like Marks & Spencers and Debenhams as well as Jaguar Land Rover vehicles have an established presence in Jakarta, and the British engineering and architectural contribution to Indonesian infrastructure projects is on the up through companies like Mott Macdonald, Arup, Bennoy and JCB.

Meanwhile, F1 Manor Racing Team's Indonesian driver Rio Haryanto shows we should expect more Indonesians starring in international sports, and nothing would be more popular than one in widely-followed Premier League football. Sport can be both big business and good for international exposure, and of course the UK has a vast amount of experience from our Olympic and Commonwealth Games, and last year's RugbyWorld Cup. As someone who once represented Indonesia at squash in the SE Asian

championships, but without huge success, I very much hope that the UK can help Indonesia deliver a sparkling Asian Games in 2018.

At the same time, the new non-stop flights by Garuda from London's Heathrow Airport to one of the world's most exciting nations for tourists now also mean that holidays for UK residents are much more accessible. This will be good for growth and jobs in Indonesia and also for greater awareness of this great archipelago and people to people relations.

It's a huge honour to have been the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Indonesia for over three years, working with our Embassy in Jakarta and UKTI in the UK to spread awareness of the mutual trade and investment opportunities. We should be proud that a Made in Britain plant provides bio diesel from recycled cooking oil for buses in Bali, that Rolls Royce engines on Airbus aircraft transport Indonesians across the world, and that over 10,000 Indonesian students are contributing to our universities here.

Of course there is much more that both our countries can and should do together, and I'm confident that new and exciting ways of doing so will come from President Jokowi's visit. The aerospace and maritime sectors are likely to lead the way, but there are opportunities in every sector. I hope that many British investors and exporters will come and hear the story of modern Indonesia and meet some of her dynamic ministers and top business leaders. In an era when we all face similar challenges like cyber crime, terrorism and economic volatility we have much to benefit from sharing solutions and ideas and pursuing opportunities together. **E**

