

Canadian films on Indonesia premiered



Photo by: Andrew Inkpen

Talking to Indonesians in all walks of life.

Two new films about Indonesia, both produced by Canadians, were premiered at separate events in Jakarta last December.

Barbara Barde's film *Indonesia: A Generation of Change* examines the modernization process and the difficult challenges it presents to Indonesia over the next 20 years.

Katherine Stenger Frey's production *The Sanctuary of the Earth Goddess* profiles the Minangkabau people of West Sumatra and their struggle to preserve their culture in a rapidly modernizing society.

Investigates politics

Indonesia: A Generation of Change is the first major film to be made by a foreigner about Indonesian politics and economics with the explicit co-operation of the Indonesian government.

Targeted at a Canadian audience, the film features Indonesians in all walks of life, from cabinet ministers to rice farmers, talking about their country and its future.

Actually five separate half-hour shows, the series studies the chief issues in Indonesia as the country approaches the year 2000: Economic development,

environment and population, cultural diversity and Indonesia's role in the world economy.

According to Ms. Barde, "This film could not have been made without co-operation from the highest levels of the Indonesian government."

For Canadian TV

The Jakarta screening was co-hosted by Harmoko, the Minister of Information, and Jack Whittleton, Canadian Ambassador to Indonesia, and was attended by Indonesian Foreign Affairs Minister Mochtar Kasumaatmadja.

In Canada, negotiations are currently under way to show the series over the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation television network. The show will also be distributed to Canadian schools in both English and French with an accompanying teaching guide.

In Indonesia, the film will be shown on TVRI, the state-run television network.

Preserving their culture

In *The Sanctuary of the Earth Goddess*, Ms. Frey studies the Minangkabau people, one of the world's last matrilineal societies — meaning property is passed

from mother to daughter — which is all the more unusual as the people are also strict Muslims.

Claiming about 3-million people, concentrated in West Sumatra with some in Malaysia, the Minangkabau culture is currently at risk from the modernization taking place throughout Indonesia.

Ms. Frey spent much of her two years in Indonesia learning the Minangkabau's customs and legends. For the film, she used actors from Padang, West Sumatra, to depict the stories forming the basis of the society's beliefs.

Both women have extensive experience in making films. An anthropologist by training, Ms. Frey has been making films for over 10 years and previous works include *Happy Birthday Baby*, a study of bonding in children. She is currently working on an animated film about Jamu, a traditional herbal medicine used in Indonesia.

Ms. Barde has made many films on development all over the world. While filming the Indonesian series she also produced two additional films, one on women in development and the other on the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) role in Indonesia.