

PRESENTATION BY RIZAL MALLARANGENG, DIRECTOR, FREEDOM INSTITUTE

Like the previous speakers here, I would also like to emphasize how the year 2004 was for my country a beautiful year, and very successful. I like how "The Economist" magazine, published in London, put it: "the 2004 Election was Indonesia's shining example to the world." We are proud of this. And we are thankful for Canada's help. However big or small, five million dollars was a lot of money for us. Overall, the election was a milestone in the history of the country. It was great. We are looking forward to the new government. They represent the symbol of hope. I understand that it is painful to lose an election, but this is the outcome of *vox populi*; the people have chosen as they wanted and the beauty of democracy is that you change the government peacefully. In the last five decades since independence, all of our presidents have left office - I don't want to say shamefully - but none was a graceful exit. But from now on, we are proud. We are going to see next week for the first time, the peaceful transfer of power. The new government is going to lead 220 million Indonesians into the 21st century. This is good. We are proud and we are thankful to our friends from abroad for helping make this happen.

By saying this was good or even excellent does not mean that the election was not without drawbacks and weaknesses. I could tell you many things about those weaknesses, but one thing that I think you will understand very well was that the election was very complex. It was one of the most complex elections in the world in terms of the rules of the game. It was complex, and it was long - carried out over eight months and a series of three elections plus the party conventions. So it was long and expensive. I understand very well because I observed the competition from within. It was very expensive, and not many people know that. Now, being part of the team of the incumbent president, I observed that because the president was also the chairman of PDI-P, one of the largest parties, the team spent a lot of money during the first round in the legislative election during the April campaign. It was a lot of money. Because this was the first time, nobody really knew what to do or how to spend the money in order for the party to win the election. The party lost, but the money was already