

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

including at universities and conferences. The Government also regularly sponsors events that promote human rights and tolerance to increase public awareness of these issues in Indonesia.

The Government continues to work closely with the government of Indonesia to advance its human rights agenda as outlined in the National Action Plan for Human Rights (Ran-HAM). Canada and Indonesia hold annual bilateral consultations on human rights to share information, express concerns and discuss possible areas of cooperation. The Government also supports several Canadian non-governmental organizations working on human rights advocacy and capacity-building in Southeast Asia.

RECOMMENDATION 28

The Government of Canada should continue to strengthen its bilateral cooperation with Indonesia in the areas of democracy and governance; support civil society groups that work to reduce ethnic and other tensions; and support education reform, building on the exemplary experiences of McGill University's programs.

Canada and Indonesia issued a Joint Ministerial Statement in July 2004 highlighting key areas of future bilateral cooperation, including democracy and governance. Indonesia continues to undertake significant reforms to strengthen governance, including implementation of constitutional reforms to facilitate direct presidential elections in 2004. Canadian development assistance programming supported a United Nations Development Program (UNDP) voter education program in advance of these elections to encourage broad and informed voter participation.

Building on relations with key Indonesian government officials, academics, private sector representatives and policy-makers, Canada hosted a symposium in October 2004 to discuss bilateral relations and partnership with Indonesia's new administration. Prof. Dr. Azyumardi Azra, Rector of Universitas Islam Negeri and Member of the Steering Committee for the McGill University-State Institutes of Islamic Studies (IAIN) network, attended the symposium as a keynote speaker. The Government is also working towards engaging in a foreign policy dialogue with Indonesia in the coming year. These initiatives contribute to a multi-dimensional framework of Canada-Indonesia partnership that includes civil society participation and input. The Government consistently urges Indonesia to pursue peaceful resolution to internal conflicts in bilateral and multilateral fora. The Government has emphasized the need to protect human rights in conflict-affected areas and has supported programs to raise local awareness of such issues. Canada welcomes the stated intent of Indonesia's new government to seek non-military solutions to areas of conflict within Indonesia's borders and encourages further efforts in this regard.

Indonesia's Aceh and North Sumatra provinces were hardest hit by the December 26 tsunami causing the worst devastation of any affected country. The province of Aceh has been going through 29 years of armed conflict between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian military (TNI). Canada will seek to ensure that our relief and reconstruction assistance supports conflict resolution. At the Jakarta meeting on the tsunami and earthquake response held on January 6, 2005, Minister Pettigrew delivered PM Martin's message, stating that "Canada will be