Violent protest, however, is not acceptable in a democracy. Education and training to meet these challenges is necessary. There have been some fundamental changes in the military in the last 18 months so there is room for Canada to re-consider its role with the Indonesian military. Arms sales have ceased and the next naval change is in 2001, which indicates there may be a maritime peacekeeping role in the future. Training of both police and military officers in peacekeeping and peacebuilding would help transform the law enforcement practices in the country. Democracy needs to be institutionalized and war crime trials have to take place before there are any future military sales to Indonesia.

The question for Canada is, in part: "Will the Indonesian military decrease in size and influence, what conditions should exist to begin military to military contact and what should or should not Canada be engaged in, support or be encouraging?"

CONCLUSION

Canadians are very aware of Indonesia and the recent political changes in the country. Electronic monitoring and media profiles bring the issues closer for Canadians to follow. Canadians, particularly students on the West Coast of Canada have been following these issues for many years – issues of deforestation, cultural issues such as language and arts and human rights in East Timor and West Papua.

A new framework for Canada – Indonesia relations is required for an Indonesia in transition. A framework that embodies the Canadian pillars of human security and democratic development going hand in hand with Canada's economic interests in the region. A number of key initiatives for a Canadian framework include:

Institution building such as police training, civilian police training, sharing the Canadian Human Rights Commission best practices, and labour standards to respond to globalization.

Capacity-building initiatives included support to civil society groups, NGO-NGO activities, and strengthening partnerships amongst civil society groups.

Canada should invite the President of Indonesia to Canada and plan Ministerial and provincial visits and exchanges to Indonesia. Canada needs to support Indonesia's change process and cement positive outcomes of change. The fundamental key to supporting Indonesia's transition is a strengthened civil society with a broader involvement in Indonesia's future development.

Report written by Dawn McLean
Consultant