



Toespraak

datum 4 april 2019

On the occasion of the seminar on Palm Oil organised by the Indonesia Nederland Society, 4 April 2019, in the presence of the Ambassador of Indonesia to the Netherlands, Mr I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja, and the Ambassador of Indonesia to the United States of America, Mr Mahendra Siregar

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you here today in the Senate of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

A very warm welcome to Mr I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja, Ambassador of Indonesia to the Netherlands, Mr Mahendra Siregar, Mr Jesse Kuijper, Chair of the Indonesia Nederland Society, and a very special welcome to my former colleague in the Senate, and former Minister of Defense, Mr Wim van Eekelen, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Indonesia Nederland Society. Also a warm welcome to the esteemed speakers, and last but not least the students who are attending this afternoon: welcome!

Ladies and gentlemen,

However different our backgrounds, we all share a common interest in Indonesian-Dutch relations. These



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relations date back to the 16th century and have evolved and developed immensely.

The first Dutch–Indonesian Round Table Conference in the fall of 1949, as you will undoubtedly know, was officially closed in the 'Ridderzaal', which is just outside the Senate. One month later, sovereignty was transferred to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia.

In the last few decades our two countries have entered in a new positive phase in their relationship. Our countries have found numerous ways to cooperate on a political, economic as well as a personal level. Today's meeting is a perfect example of that.

The Indonesia Nederland Society was founded seven years ago, in March 2012, to deepen the relationship between the two countries, in the field of economic development, culture and education, sciences and bilateral relations in general.

In this regard, today's seminar on palm oil comes timely because of the growing concern about the effect the production of palm oil has on the deforestation of Indonesia.



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For that reason Indonesian President Joko Widodo in September 2018 signed a three year moratorium on new licenses for palm oil plantations.

Recently the EU has decided to ban the use of palm oil in transport fuels for the same reason, to halt deforestation. On the other hand, many people depend for their livelihood on the palm oil industry. The EU proposals therefore caused the Indonesian government to discuss the ban during the ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting last January. The debate within the EU is ongoing, as is the debate between the producing countries and the EU. Like I said: your discussion today comes very timely.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I have only briefly touched upon the subject of palm oil in these welcoming words. I am not an expert on the subject. During today's seminar, I am certain that this important topic will be thoroughly discussed and debated. The excellent speakers are a guarantee for that.

I wish you all a very interesting and thought provoking afternoon.

Thank you.