

Dutch Minister for European Affairs and International Cooperation

Ben Knapen

Jakarta Visit July 4 – July7, 2011

Ben Knapen, Minister for European Affairs and International Cooperation, was the first Dutch high-level official under Prime Minister Mark Rutte's administration to come and visit Indonesia. Jakarta was no unknown city for Ben Knapen. He once lived in Kemang, South Jakarta for quite some time and had fond memories of living in this city, including its 'macet'. Knapen visited Indonesia, 4-7 July 2011, in an effort to discuss more about the bilateral partnership on development sector in line with the new policies issued by the Dutch government. Under the Rutte administration, more emphasis is put on investing in economic growth and self reliance. Also, programs are now focused on four sectors where the Dutch are believed to have a unique sort of experience and where they can add value and make a difference: food security, water management (water infrastructure, water sanitation), security and rule of law, and everything that has to do with the Millennium Development Goal concerning reproductive health, maternal and child mortality.

On the first day of his visit, Knapen had extensive discussions with his Indonesian counterpart Armida S. Alisjahbana, Minister of National Development Planning and Head of Bappenas. Knapen stressed that in the field of security and law and order, food and water there are a lot of common ground to cooperate with Indonesia. "My ambition is to invest in sectors where the Netherlands actually has more value and where there are opportunities for Dutch business world". He stated that the next three-year grant program, which would begin next year and last until 2015, would cover economic and social sectors such as sustainable trade, water infrastructure development, reforestation and higher education, capacity building, especially in the legal field. Together with Deputy Minister of foreign affairs of Indonesia, Triyono Wibowo, Minister Knapen discussed among others about the relationship between the EU and ASEAN. In 2011, Indonesia became the Chairman of ASEAN. He also met with the Minister of Justice and Human Rights Patrialis Akbar, to discuss about the exchange of knowledge between institutions and the laws of both countries. He opened a seminar for lawyers and lawmakers from the Dutch Ministry of Security and Law and the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights of Indonesia. In the KPK, Knapen expressed its support and expressed his praise for the KPK.

On the second day of his visit, Knapen visited the coastal city of Jakarta, where experts and officials of Indonesia and the Netherlands told him about the risk of flooding from the sea. Mr Knapen arrived in Jakarta with a pledge of four million euros, money that is to help fund the massive Coastal Defence Project. A dam is to be built and land reclaimed as part of a multi-billion-euro project on par with the Delta Works, the major coastal defence projects initiated in the Netherlands after the disastrous 1953 floods which claimed more than 1,800 lives. The four million euros are intended to draw up detailed plans and conduct cost calculations. And when the project is actually being undertaken, Dutch companies are to join in.

On the third day of his visit, Knapen visited Pontianak in Kalimantan, where in the last decade many forests are cleared for plantations and mining. He conducted talks with local development organizations and environmental and aid organizations on sustainable trade and production of agricultural, forestry and fishery products.

Knapen ended his four-day working visit to Indonesia with a visit to a fishing processing company that participates in one of the integrated programmes of the CBI, (Centre of the promotion of Imports from developing countries). The fish processing plant was the scene for the ceremonial signing of the Letter of Commitment between the CBI and the Indonesian Ministry of Fisheries.

Over the next five years the Netherlands and Indonesia will work on the sustainable trade and production of goods such as cocoa, coffee, tea, spices, palm oil, timber and fish. Ben Knapen and the Indonesian Trade and Fisheries Ministers gave the start signal through a joint statement ([see full text of joint statement](#)). "The Netherlands are a major importer of these products. This involves \$ 2 billion annually. The annual export of these products to Europe is worth \$ 12 billion. This programme for Indonesia is an excellent opportunity to work with businesses, not only to improve sustainability, but also to improve the income of Indonesian farmers and fishermen," said Minister Knapen. The five-year programme is run by the Dutch Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH), a Dutch initiative in which businesses, governments, NGOs, research institutions and local farmers in developing countries work together. Knapen decided earlier to increase the overall budget for IDH, for the current cabinet period, from 20 to 100 million euros. He is content with the fact that IDH made Indonesia one of its target countries.