TRADE, TSUNAMI RELIEF AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING DISCUSSED WITH INDONESIAN PRESIDENT

Trade, Tsunami relief and relationship building were the main topics of discussion when Chief Minister, Clare Martin, met with Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the sixth President of the Republic of Indonesia, in Darwin this morning.

“Indonesia and the Territory enjoy a very warm relationship - they are our closest international neighbour and home to over 200 million people,” she said.

“The Territory is also home to thousands of Indonesians and our trade, political, social, cultural and sporting links are very important to both regions.

“As the only State or Territory leader to meet the President, this was an opportunity to discuss how we can build on our formal relationship and help keep the Territory moving ahead.”

The Territory Government allocated over $500,000 to help with the Tsunami relief effort - much of which will be spent in Indonesia - and Ms Martin spoke to the President about Territorians generosity and discussed options on how we can best assist their recovery effort.

“We discussed whether our offer to help with reconstruction in Aceh should be redirected to other parts of the country, what role we can play in the Australian effort and what was most needed.”

Ms Martin said Territory exports to Indonesia totalled over $114 million and imports just over $15 million in 2003-04. The main exports included food and live animals (live and fresh meat cuts, fish) and chemicals. The main imports included machinery and transport equipment, mineral fuels and lubricants.

“We spoke about the opportunities that the AustralAsia Trade Route offers as a gateway to expand transport links and increase two-way trade flows - we expect Indonesia to play a major role in the development of the Trade Route and future job creation,” she said.

“The Territory Government is currently examining the potential to increase trade with eastern Indonesia, particularly with East Kalimantan, and will send a number of business delegations there during the year.

“We are also working on expanding air services to assist in the development of two-way trade and tourism and developing direct shipping links as there are significant opportunities for Territory business to provide oil, gas and mining supplies and services to the expanding mining industry.”

Ms Martin also discussed the recovery of the tourism industry post September 11, 2001.

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