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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Vice-President Joseph Biden appreciates the achievements of Indonesia: strategic partnership to be developed further**

**February 4, 2009**

At a meeting in the White House, Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, the Vice-President of Indonesia conveyed his congratulations on the inauguration of President Barack Obama and Vice-President Joseph Biden. The inauguration was an historical occasion for both the people of the United States, as well as the world.

The meeting with Vice-President Kalla was Vice-President Biden's first meeting with a foreign leader since taking office on January 20. Biden stated that President Obama and himself underscore the importance of Indonesia in the Muslim world due to a number of factors: Indonesia being the largest Muslim-populated country in the world, and as one of the world's largest democracy. One of the United States' foreign policy priorities is to reach out to the Muslim world. In this respect, Indonesia's role is much appreciated and Biden welcomed suggestions from Indonesia.

"Indonesia welcomes President Obama's proposal to reach out to the Muslim world. This effort should also be parallel to the peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflicts. Indonesia can become a partner of the United States in forging cooperation based on mutual interest and mutual respect." said Vice-President Kalla.

There are many common grounds for cooperation between Indonesia and the United States such as democracy, creating peace and stability, increasing trade and investment, and facing the challenges of climate change. These can be the foundation for a closer cooperation between the two countries in the future. With this in mind, Indonesia and the United States can enhance their relationship through a strategic partnership.

Vice-President Biden underlined that Indonesia is an important partner for the United States and believe that a more strategic partnership will benefit and add value to the existing relationship. Furthermore, the democratic advancement in Indonesia is a significant achievement that contributes greatly toward peace, security, and welfare in the region.

Vice-President Kalla said that the nomination of Indonesia as a country “eligible for compact status” in the framework of the Millennium Challenge Corporation, is one form of recognition of the progresses that Indonesia has attained thus far.

During his two-day visit to Washington, DC, Vice-President Kalla, also met with Senator Christopher Bond; Senator Jim Web; Dennis Blair, the Director for the U.S. National Intelligence; and CEOs of multinational companies. The Vice-President also delivered a speech entitled “Crafting peace in Indonesia: peaceful settlement and reconciliation” at the International Luncheon of the 57<sup>th</sup> National Prayer Breakfast. Vice-President Kalla also gave a presentation during the United-States Indonesia Society Luncheon Discussion and a meeting with the Indonesian community of Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C., February 4 2009

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