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## From the Executive Editor

By Markus Zimmer



On behalf of IACA, I extend from Jakarta warm greetings to IACA's members and friends throughout the world. This past month, in cooperation and with generous support from the Supreme Court of Indonesia and the Federal Family Court of Australia, IACA co-sponsored its first Asia-Pacific regional conference in Bogor, Indonesia. All conferees were honored by the Republic of Indonesia's President, the Honorable Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who graciously opened the Conference at Bogor Palace. Conferees included more than 200 participants from 19 Asia-Pacific

countries, representing 40 jurisdictions, who met to exchange information and experience in how to maximize public access to courts and the services they provide.

The Republic of Indonesia declared its independence after three and a half centuries of Dutch colonialist rule based on a two-tiered supremacist government framework. During World War II, the Japanese invaded, ending Dutch domination and instituting a short-lived repressive wartime regime. Eventually, both invading powers withdrew, and in 1945, the independent Republic of Indonesia was born.

From the perspectives of sheer geographic complexity as well as cultural and linguistic diversity, Indonesia represents a difficult constellation of challenges in the disciplines of economic development, political governance and civil society. Its archipelago of 17,508 islands, large and small, of which circa 6,000 are inhabited, stretches from the Pacific to the Indian Oceans with 55,000 kilometers of coastline. Combined, the islands reflect a land mass of nearly two-million square kilometers supporting a population of 245 million speaking hundreds of local dialects. Indonesia is the world's largest Islamic country; its civil-law based court system embraces 343 trial- and intermediate-level appellate religious courts exercising jurisdiction that includes elements of civil and Shari'ah law. Unique among Islamic countries, judges in the network of religious courts include men and women. Indonesia's Supreme Court adjudicates final appeals.

Indonesia's islands include Bali whose population is predominantly Hindu and whose social culture is reflected in Kertha Gosa, the Hall of Justice which graces this IJCA Issue's cover. Located in [Klungkung](#), the Hall served as a forum to address issues relating to security, prosperity, and justice in the island Kingdom of Bali. The *Candra Sengkala* at the main entrance dates the Hall to 1700 A.D. During the feudal era, every year on the fourth full moon of Balinese Caka calendar, regional kings convened to take direction and guidance from Klungkung's King. The Hall also welcomed foreigners intent on meeting the King. In 1908, Dutch soldiers conquered and instituted European rule in Klungkung, converting Kertha Gosa into court of justice utilizing a blend of European-based jurisprudence and local practice and culture.