

**Speech at a dinner on the occasion of the visit of
the President of the Parliament of Slovakia,
H.E. Mr Paska,
Wednesday 13 May 2009**

Dear Mr President,

It is an honour and a pleasure to welcome you to this dinner in one of the most beautiful rooms in the House of Representatives, the so called Regents' Room.

In the days when Indonesia was a Dutch colony it was in this very room that each newly-appointed Governor-General would bid farewell before leaving to serve his term. The Governor-General was the highest Dutch official of Indië - the Dutch East Indies - as Indonesia was then called. A portrait would be made of him, which would then be hung on the wall of this room. If you look around, you will see all the Governor-Generals appointed during those 300 years of colonial history. And after the newly appointed Governor-General had had his final meeting here, he would embark directly onto the ship that was to bring him to the Dutch East Indies. The last thing he saw as he bade his fond farewells was the text that still hangs above the door of this room. It is written in old Dutch and it reads "In Indië something great can be achieved".

Dear colleague, may this be the motto of our relationship. In many international forums, we already work together to maximise our influence and attain the best possible results on issues about which we feel strongly. The topics that were raised during your meetings today once again illustrate to what extent our countries share many characteristics and face similar challenges. Globalisation

has, on the one hand, granted us many opportunities - economic, social and cultural - but on the other hand has given us tougher challenges to face as well. Cooperation on a bilateral as well as on a European level is of the utmost importance if we are to tackle these modern issues with success.

Mr. President, may I – for the third time today – reiterate my warm welcome to you here in the Dutch House of Representatives and propose a toast to you, and to the excellent relations between our two countries. May they endure the test of time.