



Ms. Erna Witoelar

UN Special Ambassador
for Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific

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Erna Witolar was appointed in October 2003 as UN Special Ambassador for MDGs in Asia & the Pacific. She is the former Minister of Human Settlements and Regional Development (1999-2001) and a former member of the National Assembly of Indonesia. She currently serves as chairperson of the Indonesia Biodiversity Foundation (KEHATI), co-chair of the Partnership for Governance Reform in Indonesia, and an Earth Charter Commissioner (based in Costa Rica).

Before joining the government, she has pursued a long career in civil society, among others led the Indonesian Consumer Foundation (YLKI), founded and led both the Indonesia Forum for the Environment (WALHI) and Friends of the Environment Fund (DML). At the global level she was elected as President of Consumers International (1991-1997), was member of the Commission on Developing Countries and Global Changes (1990-1992), and was member of the Advisory Committee on Industry and Sustainable Development of the Brundlandt Commission (1985-1986). She is at present the board member of several civil society organizations at national and international levels, incl. chairing the YIPD (Foundation for Local Governance Innovation), and serves as Advisor to both the Indonesian Association of Municipalities and Association of Districts.

From 1993 to 1997, Erna lived in Moscow during her husband's term as Indonesia's Ambassador to Russia, Mongolia, Kazakstan & Turmenistan, and has traveled extensively in the region. On her return in 1997, she helped to establish the Community Recovery Program (CRP), a consortium of some 100 NGOs active in helping people cope with the severe economic crisis at that time. Subsequently she served as Executive Director of the Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium (APPC) in 1999, and was Senior Regional Advisor of The Urban Governance Initiative (TUGI) UNDP Asia Pacific based in Kuala Lumpur (2002-2003).

She graduated in chemical engineering in 1974 from Bandung Institute of Technology, and Master of Science in Human Ecology from the University of Indonesia. She is a recipient of the UNEP Global 500 Award during the Rio Summit in 1992, the Earth Day International Award at the UN in 1993, and the Indonesian Presidential Medal for the Environment in 1995.