

# Becoming a "Good" Country

BY JENNIE M. XUE



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Indonesia's international image isn't rosy. It's a fact that we must humbly acknowledge. A random survey of Americans would say that Indonesia is "part of Bali." More than ever before, a country's brand depends on international public opinion, not diplomatic relations. Consultant Simon Anholt has coined the terms "nation brand," "city brand," and "place brand." Many countries are competing for reputation with various publicity and promotional efforts.

As an Indonesian residing overseas, I can see clearly which cultures are effective ambassadors for their people and country. With their cuisines, China and Thailand have captured the world's stomach and heart. With its amazing nature and ecologically-friendly "Crocodile Dundee" culture, Australia has captured everyone's heart. Indonesia, on the other hand, remains largely unknown.

Anholt did a study measuring variables that

make a country "good" or "desirable" according to public opinion. It is called the Good Country Index. Guess what? Indonesia is ranked 119th between Benin (118) and Zimbabwe (120). Ireland was ranked the first, followed by Finland (2), Switzerland (3), and Netherlands (4). New Zealand was ranked 5th, UK 7th and Australia 15th. Singapore was ranked 27th, Korea 47th, Thailand 53th, India 81st, and China 107th. The variables measured are divided into seven groups: science and

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technology, culture, international peace and security, world order, planet and climate, prosperity and equality, and health and wellbeing.

In science and technology, Indonesia ranked 122nd. This group measured international students, journal exports, international publications, Nobel prizes and patents. In the culture group, Indonesia was ranked 92nd. This group measured creative group exports, creative services exports, freedom of movement (visa restrictions), and

press freedom. In international peace and security, Indonesia was ranked 36th. This data measured peacekeeping troops, international violent conflict, arms exports, and Internet security.

In world order, Indonesia was ranked 95th. This data measured charity giving, refugees hosted, refugees generated, population growth and treaties signed. In planet and climate, Indonesia was ranked 92nd. This data measured biocapacity reserve, organic water pollution, CO2 emissions and other greenhouse emissions. In prosperity and equality, Indonesia was ranked 103rd, which measured open trading, U.N. volunteers abroad, and FDI outflows. In health and wellbeing, Indonesia was ranked 97th, which measured food aid, pharmaceutical exports, humanitarian aid and drug seizures.

It is disappointing that Indonesia is ranked pretty low. The new president and his administration must work to improve international public opinion about Indonesia as a "good" country, one that cares about humanity worldwide, rather than being absorbed in local and sectarian issues. After all, a country's brand is more than just a perception. It is a measure of how a country provides for its own people and engages with the global community. 