

ISIM

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The veritable driving force behind the start-up phase of the ISIM, Wim Stokhof guided the institute as director in charge for almost two years, until shortly after the appointment of Khalid Masud as the ISIM academic director in May 1999.



PHOTO: WIM VREEBURG

Prof. Stokhof addresses the public at the opening of the ISIM.

Wim Stokhof, born as the son of an Amsterdam craftsman in 1941, began his fruitful career as a scholar in Slavic Languages. Having been asked by the Indonesian literature specialist, Hans Teeuw, to conduct linguistic research on the remote island of Alor, Indonesia, Stokhof published several articles and books on the linguistic aspects of the local 'Woisika' and other related languages. During his 10-year stay in Indonesia, he also expanded the successful Indonesian Netherlands Development Project (ILDEP),

Tribute to ISIM's former Director in Charge: Prof. Dr W.A.L. Stokhof

which was to last for 14 years. In 1986, Stokhof returned to the Netherlands where he was appointed chair of Austronesian Linguistics, succeeding the well-known linguist, Joop Anceaux.

At the same time, he founded the Projects Division of the Department of Languages and Cultures of Southeast Asia and Oceania of Leiden University, where he initiated the Indonesian-Netherlands Cooperation in Islamic Studies (INIS) Programme. Furthermore, he established two programmes on Irian Jaya Studies and a Public Administration Project in Indonesia, to name but a few. Apart from these projects, he initiated and stimulated several influential series on linguistics in Indonesia, such as the *ILDEP-series*, and *Pacific Linguistics: Materials in Languages of Indonesia*. His interests, however, reach beyond the archipelago and his endeavours are far too numerous to be listed here.

The most well known of his projects, INIS, was first financed by the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation. In 1992, after a major crisis between the Minister and the Indonesian government, relations between the two countries came heavily under discussion. From then on, projects could only be initiated under the headings of 'mutual benefit' and 'equal footing'. Stokhof succeeded as one of the very few to save his project and became a partner of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences,

a relationship that continued successfully for several years.

In 1993, he also became director of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), a post-doctoral institute jointly established by the Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), Leiden University, the Free University and the University of Amsterdam. Even at that time, Stokhof had already begun to launch ideas about an institute for research on modern Islam. The Islam in the 21st-century Conference, organized in 1996 by the INIS, helped in making clear that the strengthening of a global, interregional academic dialogue was needed.

At the end of 1997, a constitutional document was written, upon which the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences, the Ministry of Development Cooperation and three main universities in the Netherlands agreed to establish an institute for Islam Studies. Stokhof was asked to become the 'building pastor' of the institute, until an academic director was found to develop research and fellowship programmes.

Stokhof operated, together with a Working Group consisting of crucial advisors from each of the participating institutes, to design the scientific programme. He recruited the necessary staff for the office and organized the remarkable opening of the ISIM on 20 October 1998. Finally, he led the search for an academic director. Four months after Khalid Masud was appointed,

Stokhof withdrew from the institute. Nevertheless, his input is still vital as reflected in his position in the International Advisory Committee of the ISIM. ♦