

Desra Percaya
Doctor of Civil Law
Durham Cathedral, 5 January 2024

Desra Percaya received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Durham University in 2000, having submitted a thesis entitled *Sino-Indonesian Relations: A Study of Indonesian Perceptions of China*. I emphasise this because the three happy, successful, and productive years that Desra spent in Durham help explain why he is here today.

However, his academic achievements at Durham were simply a starting point. The title *Doctor* is now coupled with the honorific *His Excellency*. His Excellency Dr Desra Percaya has, since 2020, served as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Court of St James as well as being accredited to the Republic of Ireland and to the International Maritime Organisation. Put simply, he is Indonesia's man in London and energises the vibrant and multifaceted relationship between the UK and the world's fourth-most populous nation. It is a relationship to which Durham University is proud to contribute by welcoming Indonesian students, encouraging Durham students to visit Indonesia, and developing joint research programmes with Indonesian partner institutions.

Desra has had an illustrious diplomatic career, having joined Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1986. He was Foreign Ministry spokesperson, from 2005 to 2007, and the Ministry's Director of International Security and Disarmament, from 2007 to 2009. He then became Indonesia's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva before transferring to New York as Permanent Representative to the United Nations with the rank of Ambassador. Four years back in the Foreign Ministry as Director-General for Asia, Pacific and Africa, preceded his current posting to London.

While in New York, he was elected Chairman of the United Nation's First Committee, dealing with Disarmament and International Security, and Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council. He was also a Co-Facilitator of various human rights treaty bodies, Chairman of the Non Aligned Movement Working Group on

Disarmament, Vice-Chairman of the UN Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and Vice-Chairman of the UN Committee on Decolonisation.

Desra's performance in his current and previous roles has been characterised by his commitment to multilateralism. He views the great issues of the day from an international perspective, not simply from a national one, and plays his part in crafting global responses to global issues. In so doing, he is ever-faithful to the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter – the document that, more than any other, sets the standard for international relations.

Indeed, at a time of multi-dimensional global crisis with nations increasingly turning inwards, international law and multilateral cooperation have assumed ever-greater importance. Desra holds strongly to this values-based approach to guiding state behaviour, maintaining international peace, preserving the world order, and providing a shield for the powerless and vulnerable.

Desra is an accomplished and influential diplomat who has made, and continues to make, a real difference to the world in which we live.

Vice-Chancellor, I present Desra Percaya to receive the degree of Doctor of Civil Law honoris causa.