

***Parliamentary event on Interfaith Dialogue
“The Parliamentary Role in Promoting Interfaith
and Intercultural cooperation”***

**Nusa Dua, Bali – Indonesia
21 - 24 November 2012**

Report

I. Remarks by Hon. Mr I Made Mangku Pastika, Governor of Bali

In his remarks, the Governor highlighted that Bali community always live together harmoniously, respect each other and grow the tolerance responsibly. Differences among Bali community do not mean inequality but can be seen as richness in diversity to strengthen national character. The local Balinese philosophy of harmonious relations between human and God, between human being and between human and their environment is still very relevant today and could be used as an effort to deal with human conflict due to misunderstanding idea about others.

He also highlighted some forms of acculturation that exist in Bali, such as acculturation between Bali and Chinese culture, as well as religious influence to culture in the form of traditional dance. Bali is nonetheless the living prove of harmonious interfaith society grown to create a secure, comfortable and order society.

II. Opening Remarks by H. E. Dr. Marzuki Alie, Speaker of the Indonesian House of Representatives

In his opening remarks, the Speaker of Indonesian Parliament extended his expectation that the Meeting will produce Bali Declaration that will foster the implementation of concrete agendas towards interfaith and intercultural cooperation. Parliament has important roles due to their legislative functions and shall create fundamentals for harmony among people.

He was also expressed his concern to the recent development in Palestine and expected that the two sides can exercise restraints as well as commence dialogue to resolve the issue and to achieve peace.

The Speaker was highlighted several important points pertinent to the dialogue. First, the interfaith and intercultural dialogue will discuss foundational issues related to problems faced by pluralistic society with a diverse faith, religion and culture. Therefore new and adaptive solution are required with attention to the dynamic nature of globalization. Second, the emerging diversities sometimes generate new social conflict especially in newly democratic country or country in transition toward democracy. The emerging social conflict may cause 'frictions' or 'collision' between social groups of different faiths, religion or cultures. Third, therefore, there must be a comprehensive discussion in order to seek solution for forwarding this issue, both discussion by governments as well as parliaments, or between two institutions in order to generate relevant policies and to avoid wrong perceptions of the differences in faiths, religions and cultures. Fourth, diversity or pluralism should be valuable asset for the establishment a social behavior which glorifies unity and cohesion. Anarchy and violence as negative excesses of the differences in faiths, religions and cultures must not take place. Fifth, faiths, religions and cultures essentially have principles that uphold universal values of humanity. In fighting for values of humanity, religious leaders, social leaders, governments and member of parliaments must have one vision, a same dream, and one spirit in creating social harmony. Sixth, in order to prevent social unrest which would disrupt the harmonious relationship among religious communities; officials, community members and state high ranking officials must strengthen their abilities for self control to avoid being provoked into making confrontational statements.

III.Plenary Session I : Religion and Social Problems

Remarks by Hon. Mr. Prof. Dr. Nasaruddin Umar, Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia

The Plenary Session I was preceded by remarks by the Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. In his remarks, he outlined that religion is embedded in the life of Indonesian.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia will continue to take active role in promoting interfaith dialogues both within Indonesia as well as in the world's arena such as with Southeast Asian, Southwest Pacific and European countries. This is an avenue where the Indonesian Government could show case its experiences and also collect valuable input

to manage its cultural and religious diversity. The dialogues allow empowerment of various groups, network and cooperation domestically and internationally to be established. Since 1970s more than four hundred Forum of Inter-religious Harmony (Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragam – FKUB) have been established throughout Indonesia. The Ministry of Religious Affairs will continue to support and welcome cooperation with parliamentarians to take active role in interfaith dialogue. As Indonesia embraces its diversity and democracy it continues to remain majority-Muslim country (more than 80% of total population, more Muslims live in Indonesia than the entire Middle East countries) and not an Islamic state (it is rather a democratic state where every religious believer enjoys equal rights to perform his or her religious convictions). Islam itself opens widely for diversity and democracy, and thus Islam opens for interfaith dialogue as illustrated in various Al-Quran verses. Despite religiously motivated tensions as illustrated by the media in recent years, Indonesia is optimistic it has once again regain stability in both politics and economy, and Indonesia will continue its commitment to establish fruitful cooperation in multi-dimensional community for advancing the future of Indonesia and the future of the world.

In closing, he highlighted that interfaith dialogue shall not confined into conference room but reflected in the practices at grass root level.

1. Summary of Keynote Speech by Prof. Dr. Azyumardi Azra

The growing number of multi dimensional tensions around the globe highlighted the ever-increasing need for improving mutual understanding and reconciliation among peoples and cultures in various areas in the world. Such tension as inter and intra-religious conflicts can become really intense and in many cases the root causes have little to do with religion such as economic disparity, educational level, political power, demography, ethnicity, cultural background, nationality and history. This definitely call for better recognition and management of religious pluralism among the followers of religions promises to advance the principle of inclusiveness, which would enhance accommodation, not conflict, amongst competing claims to religious truth in religiously and culturally heterogeneous societies. Such an inclusiveness, not exclusiveness, should lead to a sense of multiple and unique possibilities for enriching the human quest for spiritual and moral wellbeing. Islam has long recognized socio-cultural and religious pluralism in a mixture of contexts. Islam is the single largest religion in Indonesia, Indonesia is not an Islamic state as politically and ideologically, it is based on Pancasila (The Five Principles) which is a compromise between secular nationalists who advocated a secular state and Muslim leaders who demanded an Islamic state. It is therefore reasonable to expect that Islam and Muslims play a key role in the enhancement of a democratic and multi-

cultural Indonesia. Indonesian Islam is a Wasatiyyah Islam, which is essentially a tolerant, moderate, and “middle way” (ummah wasat) Islam given the history of its peaceful early spread and had been integrated into diverse ethnic, cultural and social realities of Indonesia. To conclude, the parliament and parliamentarians have the positional power to represent and facilitate the voices of the people in intra and inter religious.

2. Summary of Presentations

▪ Hon. Mrs. Pikulkeaw Krairiksh (MP from Thailand)

In his speech, Hon. Mrs Krairiksh acknowledge that rooted between the lines of any dialogue regarding cultural values is a need for mutual understanding and respect in order to achieve a positive and constructive result for all parties involved. Parliaments and parliamentarians, who represent the ideological values of people in different areas, can play influential roles and confront difficult challenges. They can bring positive outcome based on democracy and ensuring the provision of human rights among all people.

In Thailand, differences is not only tolerated, but also integrated into the nation. Like their neighbors, the country’s population is formed by people with many differing mixtures of cultures and beliefs. Thailand strives to appreciate and value such diversity.

The Thai Parliament has the Standing Committees on Religions which has the purposes to maintain and support the preservation of arts and traditions, as well as regional folk wisdoms. This serves as the significant venue to promote Interfaith and Intercultural cooperation in Thailand.

▪ Hon. Mr. Jamel Tourir (MP from Tunisia)

The history of Tunisia following independence in 1956 saw a secular country that lead to various tensions. The early leader did not give room for freedom of speech that lead to increased tensions. The following leaders implemented similar policy and maintain that religious affair was completely separated from state affair. This was lead to an uprising that seek freedom to speak and freedom to implement religious values in the government and everyday life. However this does not automatically resolve differences among Tunisians. More distinctive Islamic uprising followed that lead to an

agreement to review comprehensively how religious, human, cultural and other values can be integrated to form strong platform for advancement. New constitution is now being developed by integrating and harmonizing religious values, political values and other values that can be the new reference for Tunisians to develop and advance as a nation and as a country

▪ **Hon. Mr. Alan Griffin (MP from Australia)**

In his speech, Hon. Mr. Griffin highlighted that religion underpin values of peace. Thus negative values such as intolerance, ignorance and justification of radical actions must not be in existence. Thus, parliament and government holds significant role in society as guardian of values, managing and administrating as well as celebrating diversity in order to address the challenges in modern society.

In order to secure right to participate fully in civil society, parliament has the power to enact law, fund programs and react to statement made in occurrence of an event.

Nowadays, Australia saw growing number of churches, mosque, synagogue and other place of worships. Since 2011 the fastest growing religion in Australia are Hindu and Islam. Australian parliament has promoted tolerance through dialogue, initiative and funding community programs, as well as celebrating harmony day.

Various councils have been established to help Australians improve their understanding between different faiths through dialogue and chair is rotated to give fair representation. 15 faith organizations are currently present including Muslims, Jews, Hindus and Sheikhs. Australia has various initiatives to developing inter-faith interchange. Australia and Indonesia initiated inter-faith dialogue between various religious groups. Other countries such as New Zealand became sponsor in this event. Respective government supports including scholarships and exchanges have allowed different members of various religious groups to participate in these positive engagements.

3. Question and Answers

1. During the question and answer session, Member of Parliaments was raising some interesting points. They acknowledge that misunderstanding still took place mostly due to ignorance and lack of understanding on the real value of other religion.
2. The Member of Parliaments also shared some experiences from their country. In Indonesia, the freedom of religion is protected by Constitution. In order to secure that protection and to address the growing horizontal conflict due to different interpretation of religious teaching, the Indonesian Parliament recently passed Law No. 7/2012 on Social Conflict. This law serves as the juridical answer to conflict as well as a comprehensive solution to prevention of conflict and post conflict recovery. Further, Indonesian philosophy of Unity in Diversity serves as tool to maintain harmony despite of cultural and ethnic diversity.
3. In addition, Indonesia awares that fundamentalist group exist in almost every society and continue to pursue their own perspective and objective. In order to maintain the peace and harmony as well as integrity of its nation, a country need politicians or statesmen who could protect the interest of its country more than the interest of its heritage, religion and group. It means a statesman who could promote universal value of peace and harmony in every aspect of society.
4. Uganda has its fair share in tensions due to religious belief. Islam was the first religion to come to Uganda through trade followed by Anglican and Catholic. Tensions have arisen between Muslim and Christians, Protestants and Catholics. Recent development in education, health and trade eased the tension. However, during the dictatorship period, various political parties were established through immature means and it is common for Political party to be linked to religion. This has led to untold suffering of Ugandans. Nowadays, Ugandan parliament has formed interreligious Council, which marked the end of clashes between different faiths, thus lead to the existence of mature interfaith dialogue in Uganda.
5. The Member of Parliaments and the invitees also highlighted some universal values common to different religions. Thus, religion should be developed for the prosperity and development of nation. It should not be creator of problem but part of solution. In order to disseminate those universal values, there should be effort to enhance religious literacy. Rather than clashes with each other, different religions shall unite to find common enemy such as destruction of nature and finding constructive solution to preserve the nature.

6. In relation to Islam, some Member of Parliaments reflected on Verses on Quran that insist on dialogue between religions with the objective to introduce Islam as peaceful religion. Islam is not religion of tyranny and violence. Islam is a religion that promotes coexistence, peace and taking care of each other as stipulated in the Islamic principles.
7. In addition to the country experience, Member of Parliaments paid attention toward oppression of Muslim minority in non Muslim country and vice versa. Recent development in Palestine was also receiving high attention from the Member of Parliaments. However, the Member of Parliaments aware that they shall not be hasty in judging that a horizontal conflict is an inter-religious conflict simply due to differences in religion among conflicting parties.
8. Furthermore, Member of Parliaments extended their expectation that this Meeting could reach feasible solution and recommendation to the religion based conflict. In order to gain commitment from the attendees, those solutions shall take into account the situation in developed as well as underdeveloped country.

IV. Plenary Session II: Parliament and Universal Ethic for Interfaith Cooperation

1. Summary of Keynote speech by Prof . Dr. Franz Magnis Suseno

In his keynote speech, Prof. Dr. Franz Magnis Suseno highlighted two key points in promoting interreligious cooperation. The first point is recognizing each other in one's identity does not mean accepting all kind of behavior. Everybody has to obey the law and the law applies to everybody. But the law has to be in accordance with the human right to freedom in religious belief. The second point is recognizing each other in one's otherness. The point entails that we learn to live and work together in spite of having different religious beliefs. In Indonesia, Muslim, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists and Confucians have consistently build up positive relationships among themselves and learned that they can trust each other in spite of very different religious beliefs.

However, in terms of recent development in Indonesia, he pointed out the decreasing capability of tolerance among Indonesian. This is due to two factors. The first factor is the harsh economical, social, and sometimes political situation Indonesian individuals and groups find themselves. The second factor is growing ideologization or radicalization of religious groups.

In summary, he expects the executive and the legislative not to indulge in sectarian attitudes. In parliament this is true not only for the secular parties, but also for the parties that base themselves on religion. This is a highly important positive heritage from the very beginning of the Republic. But care for minorities is not optimal. Cooperation between religious communities is developing quite well, which means that Indonesian civil society does its part. Further, it is expected that the state will provide background support by making sure the constitution and the law are obeyed and by educating the people on how to handle plurality in a civilized and positive manner.

2. Summary of Presentation

▪ Hon. Dr. Muhammad Hidayat Nur Wahid (MP from Indonesia)

Religious and political practices are closely linked together. Parliamentarians have the role to establish and supposed to be concern with how religious values are implemented universally for the better advancement of the world.

A few years ago, Myanmar, then Burma had incorporated their Muslims citizen in various aspect of government. However, when the parliament passed a law that took away their civil right then it is inevitable the Myanmar Muslim took to the street for an uprising. This is a simple evidence how parliament and parliamentarian can make a difference between harmonious and challenging live hood.

Indonesia would like to establish parliament that can accommodate various needs in a comprehensive manner. The parliament then should support various means to bring about living with people from different background, such as parliamentarian support in the interfaith dialogue.

Parliament is able to bring about positive change when it can involve various religious communities such as from the Islamic, Christians, Buddhist and Hindu communities to take real action in a well orchestrated manner and find breakthrough for harmonious world.

People's voice is God's voice. Parliamentarian represent the voice of people that is representing human being and the people as constituent, in addition as the people's voice is God's voice then parliamentarian also represent God's voice.

Consultative discussion through dialogue, quality debate and progressive sharing of information to build greater understanding of each other can lead to the finding of universal values that represent God's voice. Such universal value can be found explicitly in each religion such as no religion ever accept betrayal including corruption, the need to be productive in various aspects of life, nurturing harmonious life.

Parliament has and always will be expected to take role in advancing democracy, lead harmonious living and shut door for radicalism and terrorism. Whether we are working as parliamentarian or government official or whatever it is that we are meant to be we are one, we are human beings that have universal responsibilities.

3. Question and Answers

1. There should be some form of protection through carefully judged measures to avoid problems and rift between people with varying religious belief and that these measures must be well communicated. However, the Meeting agrees that there is certain limit to protection to provide safe corridor for life.
2. Tolerance is surely can be easily misinterpreted. Harmony on other hand is enrichment. There is a middle element between Tolerance and Harmony that is Respect for each other. Respect means that one has to respect other's dignity in the face of pluralism.
3. The people of Indonesia and also the world, together with their respective government must exercise a series of action that would allow people with different religions to practice their convictions in a safe yet constructive manner such to allow different people to learn and gain improved understanding of the other.
4. People's voice is God's voice is critical as it can be misinterpreted such as in the case when elected Member of Parliament miscomprehends the trust placed by their respective constituent. The people's voice is God's voice relating to parliamentarian role in advancing people's livelihood should be viewed in larger context as it can be easily understood that Member of Parliament may be selected following a pre-arranged agreement. However, still parliamentarian's role is help advance the quality of life of the constituent and the people of the nation.

V. Plenary Session III: State and Religion-Learning from Best Practices of each Country in Building the Trust and Cooperation among Religions.

1. Australia

Australian Government and Parliament upholding the principles of human rights, including allowing each citizen to freely change his or her religion, banishment of the test on religion understanding nor forcing their citizen to belong to a religion, and encouraging freedom of speech and provide laws that would allow every citizen to perform their religious conviction.

2. Brunei Darussalam

Issues of religion have always been sensitive issue that requires a proper and meticulous way of handling in any country. However, Brunei Darussalam firmly belief that any issues or problems arising from it shall be solved or resolved via cooperation among relevant stakeholders such as government or societies of different beliefs within a country.

In Brunei Darussalam's context, most of the activities are driven by the holistic philosophy of the country, which is the Malay Islamic Monarchy. However, other religions are also allowed to be practiced in the country provided that the individuals professing them are practicing it in peace and harmony.

Brunei Darussalam has been able to enjoy a harmonious interfaith relationship amongst the society. Several initiatives in order to promote trust and cooperation have been put in place. The support of the government in ensuring the participation of the country and relevant representatives from major religion in Brunei Darussalam reflects the true meaning of trust and cooperation amongst the state and religion.

3. Cambodia

It is important to give attention to religious issues in order to ensure stability, sustainability and harmony on religious beliefs not only in Cambodia but worldwide. The Royal Government of Cambodia through its relevant authorities has strived to consolidate peace, political stability, security order, democracy and respect human rights. Leaders of Royal

Government of Cambodia calls to maintain peace and harmonious living to its leaders and followers. This goes as far as incorporating the values to the national motto of “Nation, Religion, King” and the recently established Cambodian Inter-Religious Council that promote interfaith understanding and co-existence peacefully.

4. Egypt

Dialogue should be kindly and gently conducted based on the rules of clinging to fixed and basic rules, clinging to Islamic issues such as the Palestinian Issue and other issues of the Islamic nations, preserving the Islamic identity of Muslim nations all over the world and protecting the rights of Muslim minorities in non-Islamic countries.

5. Indonesia

Indonesia is a country with more than 17,000 islands where about 240 million people with their respective individual characteristics live. The people of Indonesia embraces and our founders have formulated The Constitution of the Republic Indonesia in 1945 based on the diversity and plurality, summed up in the motto Bhinneka Tunggal Ika or Unity in Diversity as God Almighty has created every one of us uniquely through various tribes, nation, language, color, religion, beliefs, traditions, and other differences. The constitution guarantees the freedom and the protection to every Indonesian to practice their respective religious conviction as long as they remain peaceful which allow Indonesians to build mutual trust and cooperation to advance Indonesia into the future. It is therefore understandable on the path taken for Indonesia is not a state based on a particular religion, but it incorporates various religious beliefs in its values. The Ministry of Religious Affairs in coordination with other relevant agencies, play critical role to: improving the understanding and practice of religion, fostering inter-faith harmony, improving religious education and religious education, as well as morals of the people. It has initiated the Forum for Religious Harmony in various parts of the country. The House of Representatives as the backbone of the national legislation also realize that every tension must be addressed comprehensively including social tension that became the rationale for the recently passed Law No. 7/2012 on Social Conflict that would maintain the nation’s diversity to be maintained socially, harmoniously, politically and legally.

6. **Lao PDR**

Lao PDR is a country bordered by China, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand and Myanmar. As such it consisted of as many as 49 ethnic groups with diverse traditions and dialects. The main religions are Buddhism, Christianity, Baha'i and Islam. The right to practice any religious conviction is guaranteed in the constitution of the Lao PDR. All acts of fomenting division among religions and among the people are totally prohibited. The Lao parliamentarians have encouraged and educate the multi ethnic Laotians of different faith and culture to enhance their conscious observance of the constitution and laws and live in peaceful manner without discrimination. As for the world, Lao PDR is committed to take active role in helping to promote solidarity, mutual understanding and promote solidarity, mutual understanding and inter-religion as the dimension of culture of peace and share a common challenge of life regardless of our respective faith.

7. **Morocco**

Promoting dialogue is prerequisite of development. The more developed a nation, the more they need dialogue. It needs dialogue based on spirit of reconciliation to achieve mutual agenda.

Morocco has become the example of harmonious relation with other country. This has been achieved through, inter alia, signing of Memorandum of Understandings with neighboring and friendly country, commitment to the value of openness between countries. Morocco is also committed in maintaining peace through bound of brother-ness with other country. Morocco also committed in friendly diplomacy as stipulated in their constitution.

8. **Myanmar**

First Speaker: Myanmar is a country whereby Buddhism flourishes and colored the country and its people in every aspect of their live. The spirit of Buddhism is well represented the Myanmar civilization and is well documented in various relics. The Myanmar Radio and Television broadcast the Dharma as taught by popular monks to the general public which help to ensure appropriate values are implemented in everyday's life of the people.

Second Speaker: Clarification on the unfortunate event that occurred in the Rakhine State, west Myanmar, where conflict between ethnic Rakhiners and Bangales caused communal unrest. The conflict did not originated from racial or religious issue but merely violence between two ethnic groups of different origin and religious beliefs due to some in discretionary manner. Myanmar is known for its tolerance where Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Hindu coexisted in harmony.

9. **Saudi Arabia**

The challenge facing the global community lies on its response to the issues and problems of human rights and dignity and the removal of injustice. The following points can be important to the parliamentary role:

1. Regulations and laws that support the role of dialogue concerning the dimension of religion.
2. Activating agreements and international treaties that focus on cultural aspects and open informal as well as formal communication channel.
3. Stimulate parliamentary committee friendship.
4. Evaluating the role of civil institution, assemblies and other organizations to encourage their functions toward local and global communities.
5. Adopting ideas of Global Education to allow better understanding of various cultural, economic and environmental dimensions, among others.
6. Establishment of research centers on cultural and social studies.
7. Build relationship with global institutions and adopting principles and international resolutions that preserve human rights.
8. Support international institutions to resolve world's issues.
9. Consolidate the principle of cooperation and action at educational institution and non government organization.

10. **Tunisia**

According to Tunisian delegation, the challenge to interreligious affairs in Tunisia was derived from the proposal to adopt Islamic Sharia as the national constitution. However, the National Constitution of Tunisia stated that Tunisia is an independent and sovereign republic with Islam as national religion, with Arabic as national language. The decision was meant to preserve national unity and to not divide the nations into those who support and those who oppose Sharia.

Tunisia is of the view that religion cannot be separated from nation. Religion is larger than nation. Thus, nation shall not try to govern all aspect of religion. As its commitment towards equality between religions, Tunisia was also nurturing the teachings and rituals of religious minority.

11. Turkey

The delegation from Turkey maintained that Islam is a religion of harmony. Islam has a very good approach toward coexistence between religions as shown by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Coexistence between religions means accepting the existence of other religion with the provision that Islam is the best religion and rejecting any kind of blasphemy on other religion. In the context of Turkey, Turkish people have follows the legal concept of tolerance based on self confidence, justice, love and humanity. Justice entails upholding human rights and rejection of threat. Although the Ottoman Empire adopted Islam as official religion that did not denigrated the existence of other religion. Under the leadership of Khilafah Usmaniyah Turkish are living in harmony based on equal rights to perform their religious worship. The State is not by any mean interfering with religious affairs and tax exemption is provided for non-Muslim.

Turkish delegation supported interfaith dialogue and maintained that the dialogue shall not discuss on religion but on solution to socioeconomic problem and human relations embedded in the conflict between different religions.

12. World Council of Churches (WCC)

The World Council of Churches (WCC) underlined some of their activities. Those activities were developed around the objectives of promoting interfaith dialogue between religious communities. Some of the programs are inter-religious program for youth and inviting speaker from other religious group to deliver speech on WCC General Assembly. WCC has also projected future activities focuses on interfaith dialogue based on awareness that interfaith dialogue is one of the main reasons that different religions build future together. WCC expressed their willing ness to works together with other religious groups. WCC viewed people as equal human being with the purpose of building civilization.

13. Majelis Tinggi Agama Konghucu Indonesia (MATAKIN)

Majelis Tinggi Agama Konghucu Indonesia (MATAKIN) highlighted Pancasila as state ideology, which glorifying the values of religion while giving its citizen the freedom of faith. Pancasila is a national consensus and the common platform for all religious groups to meet and discuss the future of Indonesia. MATAKIN expressed their expectation that the Indonesian House of Representatives will issue Law that protects civil rights based on citizenship rather than based on religion.

14. Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia (PHDI)

Leader of the Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia (PHDI) were quoting some key figure to support his point on the importance of respect and tolerance as part of interfaith dialogue. Among all, quote from former President of Indonesia Soekarno, which is people are friend to each other. Thus they encourage their brother and sister from other religion to empower religion to humanized people. Emphasized on the view of Dr. Ida Bagus Mantra, former Governor of Bali, the best of human are those who respect other. PHDI expressed their appreciation on the increased tolerance and respect toward other religion in Indonesia, especially in the relation to respect toward Hinduism in Indonesia. They also invite the Meeting to embrace the concept of all religion is good but my religion is the best one that is why I choose mine. Hence, the dispute on which religion is better can be stopped once and for all.

15. Thailand

The delegation from Thailand stated that Thailand comprises of variety of culture and belief. The Constitution of Thailand ensured that state provide right of people to freedom to worship according to their religions based on the protection of human rights. Religious practicing is not an issue and problem in Thailand because the decision-makers in the executive and legislative utilize the middle way to moderate, compromise, reconcile and connect all gaps. This has been resulted in growing trust and cooperation amongst people of different faith.

16. Uganda

The delegation from Uganda outlined the interfaith condition in Uganda. Uganda is made up of 44 million people, in which 45 percent are catholic 30 percent are Muslim 20 percent are Christian and 5 other religion. In Uganda, conflict between religions is non-existent. However, Interreligious council made up of leaders of all religions has been formed to attend to any potential conflict. Interfaith harmony was also promoted through education by including tolerance and cooperation in the school curriculum. The Culture of meritocracy in Uganda means that Government Leaders and Member of Parliament was elected based on merit rather than religion.

17. Konferensi Wali Gereja Indonesia (KWI)

Konferensi Wali Gereja Indonesia (KWI) encourages the Meeting to proceed beyond tolerance toward mutual love and respect. In the context of Indonesia, living in plurality means interfaith dialogue is not an option but a necessity. In order to pursue the objectives of fostering harmony through dialogue, KWI works with Commission for Interreligious Dialogue. KWI also introduced their related to interfaith dialogue, among all, weekly prayer comprises of religious leaders of different religions.

18. Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia (PGI)

Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia (PGI) highlighted Pancasila as the ideology of Indonesia. Pancasila secure the religious rights of Indonesian and ensure that Indonesia is not a theocratic but democratic country with religiosity.

In comparison to the USA, official state function in Indonesia is particularly free from religious influence. In order to maintain this condition, PGI encourage the Indonesian Parliament to formulate law on symbols with nuances of nationalities rather than symbol representing any particular religion.

19. Muhammadiyah

Muhammadiyah introduced brief history of Muhammadiyah since its formation in 1912 by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan. Muhammadiyah has observe

and taking actions to assist Indonesian since pre-colonial periods up to today. Muhammadiyah insisted on maintaining dignity of Indonesian through addressing the problems faced by Indonesian community related to poverty, education and health.

20. Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragam (FKUB)

Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB) stated that Bali is relatively free from problem related to religious affairs. In Bali, religion is part of solution rather than source of conflict. FKUB also highlighted history of Bali and its culture of respect. FKUB showed respect and tolerance in Bali through illustration on how other religions respect the holy festivities of *Nyepi* (Day of Silent) even when its occurrence happened to clash with other religions' occasion. Puja Mandala, a complex of five religions worship places is also an example of living in harmony in Bali.

VI. Plenary Session IV: Closing Session

1. Closing Remarks by Hon. Priyo Budi Santoso, Vice-Speaker of the Indonesian House of Representatives

In his remarks, the Vice Speaker extended his appreciation to the works of the Member Parliaments reflected in the Bali Declaration. He underlined the Bali Declaration as an important document containing universal values to guide Parliament and Member of Parliament to promote inter-religions, inter-cultural and inter-civilization cooperation. The document shows Parliament as an institution of many political ideologies but still focuses on matter of benefit to the common, such as diversity of faith. The Bali Declaration enshrined the universal values of humanity.

The Vice Speaker reminded the Meeting to keep holding on to the religious value particularly related to humanism and civilization even beyond the Meeting. Parliamentary endeavour on promoting and pursuing peace, as well as promoting tolerance and compassion, must be translated into policies and concrete actions. Those efforts must be supported by commitment to Human Rights and respect towards others' rights within the framework of religious deeds.

2. Bali Declaration

The Meeting adopted Bali Declaration unanimously. The drafting committee was attended by representatives from 9 countries. In this Declaration, Parliament and members of parliament reaffirm the understanding that the interfaith and intercultural activities are tool to advance human welfare, to resolve common challenges, as well as to encourage and promote tolerance, respect, dialogue, and cooperation at the local, national, regional and international levels and among different cultures, civilizations and peoples in order to promote international peace, stability, and security.

The Declaration reiterated that parliament as a pillar of democracy holds pivotal role to express people aspiration with its diversity of characters, ideologies, and views through political process of policy making, therefore, parliament can help to facilitate understanding and cooperation among states and people as well as to promote dialogue, tolerance, mutual respect, and understanding among civilizations, helping to prevent and counter related conflicts.

The contribution of the media to develop a better understanding among people of different faiths, religions, beliefs, and cultures is important, and therefore, the Bali Declaration acknowledge the role of media and the exercise of the freedom of expression in such a way as not to incite hatred, racism, xenophobia or human rights violations.

The participants expressed their deepest appreciation to the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia for initiating this Parliamentary Event on Interfaith Dialogue. The event has been significant in strengthening the important role of parliament in fostering understanding and acceptance among people of different faiths, religions, beliefs and cultures.

Nusa Dua, 23 November 2012

Hon. Surahman Hidayat

H.E. Dr. Marzuki Alie

Chairman of the Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation

Speaker of The Indonesian House of Representatives