



**OPENING REMARKS
PARLIAMENTARY EVENT ON INTERFAITH DIALOG**

theme :

**The Parliamentary Role in Promoting
Interfaith and Intercultural Cooperation**

by :

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the Speaker of the House of Representatives of
the Republic of Indonesia

Karang Asem Ballroom - Grand Hyatt Hotel,
Bali, 22 November 2012

Assalamu'alaikum warohmatullahi wabarokaatuh.

Peace be upon all of you and may Allah bestow His Mercy and Blessings.

Honourable

- Member parliament delegates,
- The Vice Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia,
- The Governor of the Bali Province,
- Keynote Speakers and all Speakers,
- Invited guests from international organizations and distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

Firstly, allow me, as the Speaker of the Indonesian House of Representatives, to express my sincere gratitude and highest appreciation for your attendance at the *Parliamentary Event on Interfaith Dialog* which will officially be opened today. The theme for our meeting is *“The Parliamentary Role in Promoting Interfaith and Intercultural Cooperation”*.

Allow me to also take this opportunity to thank the Vice Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia who is in attendance today, the Governor of the Bali Province and all local government officials for their supports and assistance in convening this international event.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is the first forum initiated by the Indonesian House of Representatives during my tenure as the President of the PUIC which ends in early 2013, which follows up on the recommendation of the 7th PUIC General Assembly in Palembang in 2012. As the President of the PUIC and as the host, we have high expectation that this parliamentary event will be fruitful as the myriad issues for discussion will be beneficial towards building cooperation among the member parliaments and furthermore the forum is expected to be influential in the development of social issues both at the regional and international levels.

At the end of this event, we hope the forum will produce **Bali Declaration**, a declaration that will foster the implementation of concrete agendas towards effective interfaith and intercultural cooperation. Parliament is believed to have important roles because of their legislative functions that can create fundamentals for harmony among people.

The intention to live in harmony and peace is still worked out in various parts of the world, as we are still witnessing, among others, the attacks of Israel to the Palestinian people these days, which resulted numerous victims. We, together with international community, are deeply concerned with the ongoing situation, and expect that the two sides can exercise restraints as well as commence dialogue to resolve the issue and to achieve peace. In light with that, and as part of my leadership as the President of Parliamentary Union of OIC Member Countries (PUIC), we plan to hold an emergency meeting of PUIC Executive Committee (PUIC EXCOM) meeting and to visit the Gaza Strip in the next few weeks.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the President of PUIC and the Speaker of the Indonesian House of Representatives, I would like to present several key points to this forum as inputs for the upcoming dialogue.

First, in line with the chosen theme, this interfaith and intercultural dialogue will discuss foundational issues related to problems faced by a pluralistic society who has diversity in their faiths, religions as well as cultures which may transpire in any countries.

The global reality in this new millennium has been marked with the increased flow of globalization due to the dynamic mobility and interaction among people across countries, made easier by the advances in technology and economy which impact on the increasingly vital role of society in many aspects. Therefore new and adaptive solutions are required to respond to the emerging needs including those borne of new identities such as religions, faiths, cultures, and so on.

Second, the emerging diversities sometimes generate new social conflicts especially in countries which are in the midst of developing democracy or are at the stage of democratic transition such as Indonesia and other countries. The emerging social conflicts may cause “friction” or “collisions” between social groups of different faiths, religions or cultures. The source of conflicts is rooted not only from domestic causes in developing democracies, but also that of developed democracies, as a freedom without recognition to diversity despite of claim of free for expression, will certainly claim victims and trigger reaction from others. This happened as in the case of the blasphemy film *“Innocence of Muslims”*.

Third, therefore, there must be a comprehensive discussion in order to seek a solution for forwarding this issue, both discussion by governments as well as parliaments, or between the two institutions and/or those concerned with this issue 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 a valuable asset for the establishment of 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.

This is the importance for having dialogues which should be conducted by all stakeholders in order to create harmony. In order to foster trust and cooperation among different social groups, we must listen and learn about practical issues, which will be presented by delegation members during the upcoming sessions.

Fifth, faiths, religions and cultures essentially have principles that uphold universal values of humanity. Without values of humanity, religion loses its meaning. In fighting for values of humanity, religious leaders, social leaders, governments and members of parliaments, must have one vision, a same dream, and one spirit in creating social

harmony in order to foster the feelings of safety, comfort and peace.

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. Tolerant and respectful mindsets, good dialogue as well as cooperation must be established both at the regional and international levels.

With this in mind, the Indonesian Parliament recently expressed its appreciation to the President of the Republic of Indonesia's address to the United Nations' General Assembly which called attention to the need for international consensus to prevent religion-fuelled enmities. We, the Indonesian Parliament, fully support and are of the view that an international protocol against the defamation of religions is indeed necessary.

As a nation which places religious and cultural diversity in high regard and as a part of the international community, we call for mutual respects and understanding among the followers of different faiths. Despite of our having different faiths, religions, and cultures, we should not forget other main issues faced by all countries in the world, namely the issues of climate change, poverty, hunger and protection to human rights.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

Indonesia, with its various religions, faiths and hundreds of tribes and customs and as a country which is developing its democracy, has a philosophical and judicial foundation in establishing the Indonesian nationhood and statehood. This foundation consists of the constitution which was declared on day after Indonesia gained its independence, called Pancasila with its five underpinning principles including Unity of Indonesia, and the motto of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (unity in diversity).

By maintaining this philosophical and judicial foundation, *insya Allah*, our nation and country will always survive amid the massive globalization in various aspects of life.

These are some issues that we would like to bring to your attention during the *Parliamentary Event on Interfaith Dialog* which will be held over the next two days in Nusa Dua - Bali.

By saying “*bismillahirrohmannirohim*”, *in the name of Allah, most gracious, most merciful*, as the President of the PUIC and as the host, I declare **this *Parliamentary Event on Interfaith Dialog***, with the theme “***The Parliamentary Role in Promoting Interfaith and Intercultural Cooperation***” is officially opened. Thank you.

Wassalamu'alaikum warohmatullahi wabarokaatuh

"Peace be upon all of you and may Allah bestow His Mercy and Blessings".

Bali, 21 November 2012

President of
The Parliamentary Union of OIC
Member Countries / the Speaker of
The Indonesian House of Representatives

Dr. H. Marzuki Alie