

## **Plenary Session II**

### **Parliament and Universal Ethic for Interfaith Cooperation**

#### **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 who to handle plurality in a civilized and positive manner.

#### **Summary of Presentation by 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.

### **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.