

**The 6<sup>th</sup> Regional Interfaith Dialogue (RID-6), Indonesia  
11-15 March 2012**

**SEMARANG PLAN OF ACTION**

**1. Proposed Shared Concerns and Commitments**

- a. We, the participants of the 6<sup>th</sup> Regional Interfaith Dialogue (RID-6), representing diverse religions and cultures, gathered in Semarang on 11 – 15 March 2012, under the theme, “*Strengthening Collaborative Communities to Promote Regional Peace and Security: Interfaith in Action*” to discuss visions, aspirations and practical cooperation towards this end.
- b. We affirm that the Plan of Action is to promote substantive activities which enhance mutual understanding, tolerance and respect for religious diversity in order to strengthen regional peace and security.
- c. We reaffirm our commitments as articulated in the previous declarations in Yogyakarta (2004), Cebu (2006), Waitangi (2007), Phnom Penh (2008), and Perth (2009) and acknowledge the achievements of the RID process.
- d. We encourage religious leaders, scholars, and media of the participating countries to collaborate and build on existing interfaith initiatives and take leadership roles in furthering the RID process, particularly in civil society.
- e. We note the development of the “Regional Interfaith Network” (<http://www.regionalinterfaith.org.au>), an online forum established by community groups with financial support from the Government of Australia, and recommend delegates to share information, establish networks, encourage interfaith activity and dialogue, and develop partnerships in promoting interfaith dialogue and cooperation.
- f. We call on our governments to continue supporting interfaith initiatives and support the implementation of these recommendations, with a special focus on grass root activities, youth interfaith training and capacity building, and the promotion and advancement of human rights.

- g. We ask our governments to promote interfaith cooperation in public diplomacy.
- h. We recognize the value of other regional and global interfaith dialogues and seek to maximize the effectiveness of the RID process through communication and collaboration.

## **2. Plan of Action**

### Religious Leaders

We recommend:

- (1) that religious communities create national religious leader databases, with the responsibility of religious communities to update;
- (2) that in each of the participating countries, religious leaders meet annually to discuss issues of local, national and regional importance, and that relevant information be shared by means of the RID website;
- (3) that religious leaders develop programs supporting interfaith education and collaborative interfaith activities;
- (4) that participating countries explore the development of national women's interfaith networks and a regional women's interfaith network.

### Civil society

We recommend:

- (1) that religious communities create databases of religious civil society organizations and assume responsibility for maintenance;
- (2) that religious civil society organizations be encouraged to meet annually to reinforce the value of interfaith dialogue;
- (3) that religious civil society organizations be encouraged to develop programs to support interfaith education and collaborative interfaith activities;
- (4) that religious civil society organizations be encouraged to demonstrate leadership in the promotion of ethics and values, including peace education;
- (5) that interfaith activities should be fostered by community leaders,

educators, journalists and other opinion shapers, with the full support of community leaders.

## Youth

We recommend:

- (1) that religious communities develop programs for emerging religious leadership to learn from and about other faiths and that religious communities contribute to databases of resources towards this end;
- (2) that religious communities make efforts to include young men and women in collaborative interfaith projects;
- (3) that delegates set up a regional working group to establish a regional Youth Interfaith Celebration Day;
- (4) that an interfaith home stay database, including monastic and other locations be developed;
- (5) that future RIDs be expanded to include designated youth representatives;
- (6) that the Asia-Pacific/European Youth Interfaith Forum, last held in Perth in 2007, be reinstated and convened periodically;
- (7) that participating countries ensure that other RIDs members are informed of youth interfaith education programs and capacity building disseminated via the RID website.

## Education:

We recommend:

- (1) that schools and universities make use of religious adherents to educate about the religion, drawing on local, national and regional religious resources;
- (2) that sister school relationships be established to promote personal understanding, utilizing on-line technologies where face to face contact is not an option;
- (3) that our governments resource educators to promote schools as a safe environment for interfaith learning and activity;
- (4) that music, arts and cultural traditions be utilized to foster interfaith

- understanding;
- (5) that religious communities develop a cohort of interfaith exponents who have expertise and experience in both their own religious traditions and interfaith dialogue;
  - (6) that religious communities take responsibility for addressing the need for acknowledging and overcoming negative historic grievous and memories;
  - (7) that we acknowledge the essential role of interfaith education in building peaceful societies.

### Media and Communications

We recommend:

- (1) that the RID website be extended to include links to on-line interfaith resources in the region;
- (2) that a working group be set up to establish the most effective use of social media, both to strengthen the networks forged at this RID and to promote the vision of the RID process;
- (3) that participants exchange examples of local “best practice” to assist the media to better understand religious beliefs and practices and the positive role of religion in promoting peace and conflict resolution;
- (4) that communities proactively promote interfaith proponents as role models for good citizenship;
- (5) that participating countries ensure that details of interfaith programs are communicated to other RID countries.

### Varia:

We take responsibility for:

- (1) conveying the Action Plan and positive RID experiences to our communities;
- (2) working collaboratively to publicly oppose prejudice against any religious community;
- (3) developing collaborative and preventive measures to limit religious tensions and conflict.

Semarang, March 15 2012.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Government commitments to RID projects:**

#### **The Australian Government:**

Leadership Training Program for Young Muslims  
Australia-Indonesia Youth Exchange Program  
Australia-Indonesia Muslim Exchange Program  
Australia-Indonesia Building Relationships through Intercultural Dialogue and Growing Engagement Program  
Australia-Indonesia Schools Exchange Small Grants Program  
Australia International Cultural Council Grants Program  
Emerging Young Leaders Program,  
Strengthening Grassroots Interfaith Dialogue and Understanding  
Human Rights Grants Scheme

#### **The Government of Indonesia:**

The Special Program of the Indonesian Arts and Culture Scholarship 2012  
- 15 scholarships for future faith leaders from RID countries for 7 weeks in Indonesia (21 May - 14 July 2012).  
Peace Journalism Media Workshop in Indonesia for 15 young journalists from -15 countries of the RID in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, 2012.

#### **The New Zealand government:**

The Building Bridges program.  
Support for the establishment of a Muslim Youth Advisory Group.  
Indonesian Media Development Association focused on coverage of religious conflicts and the role of media in promoting peace.  
Search for Common Ground, 3 month project in partnership with the Maluku Media Centre focused on the use of media as a tool for peace-building.  
Dissemination of school text, 'Know your Neighbours', based on the diverse cultures and faiths that live in our region.  
The Taskforce on Action on Violence within Families encourages community Leaders, both men and women, to oppose family violence.