

Indonesia conducted the 10th World Interfaith Harmony Week 2020 at Jakarta HQ

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On March 7, Indonesia conducted the 10th World Interfaith Harmony Week 2020 at Jakarta HQ, Indonesia on the theme "Interfaith Harmony in the Spirit of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika".

Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Sanskrit = Unity in Diversity) is the national motto inscribed on Indonesia's national symbol, Garuda Pancasila. Indonesia's founding fathers established 'Bhinneka Tunggal Ika' as the national motto to promote tolerance among different groups and religions in the country. As Indonesia has been facing political and religious turmoil due to some ideological dissents, there is an urgent need, on the basis of religious sphere, to promote Bhinneka Tunggal Ika more as the source of excellence and the unifying factor.

Religious leaders representing Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Indigenous Belief, and Sikhism were invited to speak in this program. They all came with the enthusiasm to bring change and created a great atmosphere among all the participants.

It was even more special as influential and respected VIPs attended the program:

Dr. Ali Mochtar Ngabalin, Expert Staff to the Office of Indonesia's President, who came as the Chief Guest

Prof. Dr. Nasaruddin Umar, Grand Imam of Grand Mosque "Istiqlal", a reputable Moslem leader, once appointed as a Deputy Cabinet Minister of Religious Affairs

Maha Pandita Utama Suhadi Sendjaja, General Chairman of Parisadha Buddha Dharma Niciren Syosyu Indonesia.

The Chief Guest, Dr. Ali Mochtar Ngabalin, was very inspired by the program. In his speech, he suggested that such a program promoting interreligious harmony should be held more often to fight against radicalism and terrorism in Indonesia because we do not want Indonesia to fall victim to some repressive groups just like what happened in other countries. He continued by expressing his regret that this program was only conducted on a small scale, and therefore he urged that UPF should initiate a bigger program, where we can involve the opinion leaders, and he promised to help facilitate in any way possible to achieve this by bringing it to the President's desk.

A Summary of the Interfaith Speeches

ISLAM: "I agree with what the UPF founder said about God not being sectarian. Humanity is one and has no color. Not only is humanity one, but also the religious scriptures are one. The content of all religious textbooks boils down to one thing: Love." -- Prof. Dr. Nasaruddin Umar

CHRISTIAN: "Sometimes Christians tend to monopolize LOVE, and do not realize that it actually belongs to all people...to become one as Indonesian or world citizen, does not diminish our value as religious people whether it is Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, etc. There is no peace among nations, without peace among religions." -- Rev. Jimmy Sormin

CATHOLIC: "Catholic clergies and theologians suggest that Christianity and Catholicism are no longer Christ-centered but instead God-centered, whereas Christ is the way to bridge people to God, just like central figures in other religions were to guide people to the one God." -- Rev. Andy Gunardi

BUDDHISM: "Now is the time for us to go one step beyond tolerance that is 'acceptance'. We can tolerate something without accepting it, but we can't accept something without tolerating it." -- Maha Pandita Utama Suhadi Sendjaja