



Asian Conference of Religions for Peace

ACRP MALANG STATEMENT 2013

The annual executive meeting of the Asian Conference of Religions for Peace was held at the Muhammadiyah University in Malang in East Java on 7th – 10th June, 2013. Member nations in attendance were Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, the Philippines and South Korea as well as Dr Peow, an observer from Malaysia. Especially welcomed for the first time ever was a representative in observer capacity from Timor Leste, Arif Absullah Sagan, president of the Islamic Community Centre of Timor Leste, located in Dili.

Members also noted the formation of the Interfaith Council of Myanmar in September 2012 and of the Youth Interfaith Council of Myanmar in February 2013. Encouragement was also given to increase the number of member nations, notably Bhutan, Brunei, Papua New Guinea and Viet Nam. As well, the Committee urged members to redouble their efforts to strengthen their national chapters.

The opening ceremony was lauded by the presence of the Governor of East Java, Dr. H. Soekarwo and by the Rector of the University of Muhammadiyah Malang. Dr Soekarwo spoke of his keen appreciation of the interfaith movement, emphasizing the importance of dialogue. Professor Din Syamsuddin, moderator-general of ACRP, spoke of the need not only to have interfaith dialogue but also intrafaith dialogue. He said, “It is God's love for diversity in nature that can also be seen in human beings. It is God's decision to have diversity”, adding that ultimately “behind death, there is God's examination”.

In opening the meeting, Professor Syamsuddin said that Asia was now the most dynamic region in the world but progress also brought the dangers associated with secularization and modernization. However, in various parts of Asia, there is still conflict, even within religious communities.

Member nations in their annual review reported on the many interfaith initiatives across Asia that accord with the Asian value system based on harmony and dialogue. Much has been done and much has been achieved. As well, the various Commissions reported on their valuable work, including the Commission of Reconciliation and Security chaired by Venerable Master Xue Cheng together with Dr Marwat, honorary president of ACRP and the secretary-general, Dr Sunggong Kim.

The main focus of the meeting was the staging of the next ACRP General Assembly scheduled to be held in August 2014. It heard of preliminary proposals from both Pakistan and India as well as a joint proposal from the two Korean chapters to stage the Assembly on the Korean peninsula which was prioritised to encourage reconciliation. The executive committee resolved to wait for more developed proposals by October 31st,

2013 and empowered the secretary-general with the moderator and the five co-presidents, to make a recommendation for final approval by circulation by the executive committee by late November.

The executive committee also heard details of the World Assembly to be held in Vienna in late November.

The executive committee called upon the nations of the world to address the continuing issue of poverty, the distribution of wealth and the disparities between rich and poor. Much progress has already been made through the economic development in Asian countries, but the poverty of so many remains a scandal to be overcome.

The executive committee thanked the Indonesian members of Religions for Peace led by Professor Din Syamsuddin and the staff of the UNiversity of Muhammediyah Malang for hosting the meeting in Malang.