

5th Regional Interfaith Dialogue

**Future Faith Leaders:
Regional Challenges and Cooperation**

Perth Declaration

Participants from Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam are gathered in Perth for the 2009 Regional Interfaith Dialogue on ‘Future Faith Leaders: Regional Challenges and Cooperation’.

Considerable progress has been made in the economic and political integration of our region. Religious diversity is a national asset that creates and enhances multilateral relations between our nations. This Dialogue has focused on the next generation of faith leaders who will develop a network linking communities around the region for ongoing interfaith activities.

We thank the Government of Australia for hosting the Fifth Regional Interfaith Dialogue. We also express our appreciation to the Co-sponsors – Indonesia, New Zealand and the Philippines – for their continuing commitment and contribution to the Dialogue process.

While the Interfaith Dialogues are important for the opportunity they provide to establish contacts and engage in discussions, we recognise that their true value is measured by the success with which our words are translated into action. As delegates of this Dialogue, we undertake to take messages of peace and understanding to our respective communities and to work together with those from our own faiths and with others to implement these proposals.

No declaration can capture the range of partnerships and relationships between faiths and across the region that have been created at this event. The full value of the Dialogue will be realised by the implementation of the following recommendations.

We unanimously make the following recommendations for action:

- 1. We call upon our respective governments to continue their support for this Regional Interfaith Dialogue.**
- 2. We commit to the establishment of an interfaith social network facility with an online forum, which integrates existing networks.**

- 3. We commit to fostering regional project-driven activities across faith communities that focus on community service and development, environmental challenges and social justice.**
- 4. We call upon governments and faith communities to invest in the development of future interfaith leaders.**
- 5. We commit to supporting the development of resources for teaching youth about other faiths that are acceptable to the relevant religious communities and to educators.**
- 6. We note the importance of, and commit to, the collection and dissemination of best practice educational interfaith resources and activities in the region.**
- 7. We encourage faith communities to meet the needs of marginalised youth as a response to the dangers of radicalisation.**
- 8. We call for government and community support for faith leaders to be trained in mediation for peace building and conflict resolution.**
- 9. We call upon governments and faith communities to promote the traditions of peace making and conflict resolution found within the different faith and indigenous traditions.**
- 10. We call upon government and civil society, including faith based groups, to strengthen collaboration in peace building and conflict prevention.**
- 11. We acknowledge the value of the freedom of the media in the promotion of communal and regional harmony, and we call on religious leaders and national and international media to recognise that this right entails the responsibility for accurate and balanced reporting.**
- 12. We call on faith communities to seek media training and for media outlets to train reporters in religious issues.**
- 13. We call on media and religious leaders to take responsibility for the resolution of disputes over misrepresentations and other conflicts.**
- 14. We encourage delegations at future Dialogues to reflect gender and other diversity.**

Participating countries will report back on the implementation of these recommendations at the Sixth Regional Interfaith Dialogue.

30 October 2009