

INDONESIA

Indonesian Church welcomes Jokowi's election "with joy and hope" by Mathias Hariyadi, *AsiaNews.it*, 26 July 2014

"Widodo is the right man to change our country," the president of the Bishops' Conference tells AsiaNews. He has high hopes that the new president "will remain the man we all know," someone who "understands the difficulties of ordinary people [. . .] particularly those living on the margins of society." In economic circles, there are great expectations that he "will boost the country's development".



Jakarta (AsiaNews) - "The Catholic Church and most of civil society welcomed" Joko Widodo's election as Indonesian president "with joy and hope," said Mgr Ignatius Suharyo, archbishop of Jakarta and president of the Indonesian Bishops' Conference.

The prelate spoke to *AsiaNews* about the nation's "new course," noting that the new president's "closeness to ordinary people and their problems, his easy-going ways, his effective approach to doing things correspond both to the social doctrine of the Church as well as the values of our Constitution. I hope he does not change but that he can change the country."

Joko Widodo, also popularly known as 'Jokowi', defeated former General Subianto with 53 per cent of the vote in the presidential elections held on 9 July.

For many observers, this result represents a sea-change for Indonesia, given that Jokowi is the first of Indonesia's seven presidents who has no link to the authoritarian regime of former leader Suharto. He is also not a military man or a professional politician but a businessman.

"From my personal point of view, I am very happy with this result," Mgr Johannes Pujasumarta told *AsiaNews*. "I am also proud, because the new president is from Surakarta like me," added the archbishop of Semarang.

"I really hope that during his tenure he will remain the man we all know, a man of heart that knows and understands the difficulties of ordinary people, someone who wants to take care of them, particularly those living on the margins of society."

"This election starts a new chapter for us," said Fr Aloysius Budi Purnomo, director of the Interfaith Commission of the Archdiocese in Semarang. "Now let us hope that under Jokowi the country's sectarian violence will end, opening up a path for pluralism and protection of all religions."

"I really hope," said Mgr A M Sutrisnaatmaka, bishop of Palangkarya (Central Kalimantan), "that with Jokowi's administration the government will protect and defend the rights of the whole people, including minorities. It would be important for us to be able to build our churches without difficulties."

For his part, Mgr Nicholas Adiseputra, archbishop of Merauke, hopes that "the ministers he picks are 'clean' and professional, able to accomplish his mission and make Indonesia a better place."

Some economists back the new president. For Tony Prasetyantoko, an economist at Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia in Jakarta, "our new president has repeatedly made it clear he wants to boost the country's development through better land use." At the same time, "he plans to revive the fishing sector and sea-related activities. This approach will improve the nationwide logistical system and make us more competitive in world markets."