



KETUA  
DEWAN PERWAKILAN RAKYAT  
REPUBLIK INDONESIA

## **PANCASILA AND THE NATIONAL CHARACTER BUILDING**

Oration on Culture by Speaker of the Indonesian House of Representatives  
Addressed in the Asia Pacific Interfaith Youth Meeting  
At Universitas Islam Negeri Jakarta  
Jakarta, 13 October 2010

***Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh***

***May peace be upon us***

***Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,***

First of all, let us all praise and extend our gratitude to Allah *subhanahuwa ta'ala*, God Almighty, for bestowing us with blessings, particularly His blessing of health, strength, and the opportunity to gather here in the forum of Asia Pacific Interfaith Young Meeting, held by the Indonesian Youth Forum in Jakarta.

It is a great honor for me to have this opportunity to share knowledge about the Indonesian culture with all of you. The understanding of Indonesian Culture has become more and more important nowadays with the growing social and cultural problems, and considering culture is a national identity that uniquely sets a country apart from the others. Cultural identity is a set of concepts and values that govern human's relationship with God, with each other, and the universe. This relationship keeps undergoing change of value system due to intercultural and international interaction in facing challenges in the development of culture-related affairs.

Cultural issues are issues of social life that has a certain relation, often called the social structure. The culture-structure relation is still a polemic; it's unclear whether

culture is a part of structure, they are separate entities, or in fact it is culture that forms social structure.

Not a few philosophers of culture criticize the subordination of culture as being the cause of the misuse of culture as a tool to support a social structure that has been predominantly regulated by certain political grand design. This has caused culture to not only lose its independence, but also get manipulated in such a way that it becomes nothing but a legitimizing political tool.

### **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The "Indonesian national" culture is a culture that is uniquely Indonesian, that creates an impression that the Indonesian people share common understanding, and are mutually bonded by shared spirit and perspective.

The understanding of culture as the "ancestor's inheritance" only applies to ethnic groups, not multi-ethnic nations, which is "multi-ancestor's inheritance" in nature.

The understanding of culture as "the ancestor's inheritance" is more suitable to be used by local literati only. Meanwhile, the understanding of culture as an "aesthetic creativity" will easily cause us to slip into subordination of understanding. Although the dynamics of culture relies highly on creativity, artistic and aesthetic understanding will easily set us up into a subordination of "art", no matter how abundant the materialization of this art.

Through culture, we discover the value of aesthetics, which will determine the pattern and form of art, the value of power, which determine the pattern, system, and political behavior, so on and so forth. The pattern of culture can be seen through the configuration of value that it possess.

The Indonesian national culture is "the culmination of local cultures," that is, elements of local cultures that made it into and got accepted as part of the meaning of "national", which is multi-regional and multi-ethnic. Symbolically this is stated in the Youth Pledge 28 October 1928. Besides pledging to one nation and one language,

Bahasa Indonesia, which actually is the language of a particular region, the Indonesian youth also pledge to accepting local elements in form of the newly formed "community" named "the Nation of Indonesia".

In conclusion, "the Nation of Indonesia" is born out of cultural character which is supra-ethnic and multi-ethnic. National movement, with the presence of political parties and other supra-ethnic organizations and patterns of cultural activities (such as press, film, literature, and theater), has deliberately lay its foundation on the efforts of forming a "national" character that blurs local barriers. Consequently, national culture is a result of local contribution in the process of formation and growth of the national community and, therefore, respect and preservation of local culture is one of the factors that keep the dynamics of national culture alive.

In the dynamics of culture as part of the process of nation-building, national culture is involved and should engage in "world civilization". In this case, national culture continuously enriches the process itself (process of cultural enrichment), and contributes to the "civilized world", so as to achieve what is stated in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution: "world order based on independence, sustainable peace and social justice".

So if the analogy of "national culture" as an "actor" in the "civilized world" is repeated, then the actor who plays it: "he who receives and tries to give" is the culture formed in the process of nation-formation of the many ethnic ties and areas and which has matured in the challenging process of nation-building.

The cultural development that has been ongoing so far is yet to fulfill our expectations, because it still lacks of cultural solidity and social institutions that exist in society. Therefore, potential conflicts cannot be fully contained. This is exacerbated by the trend of strengthening primordial orientation, such as groups, ethnic, and religion, all of which have the potential to weaken the nation. These problems, among others, are caused by various changes in the order of life, including order of socio-culture that has an impact on the shift in values of social life.

## **Ladies and gentlemen,**

The ideals of reform to build New Indonesia, should be done by building a democratic civil society, supported by law enforcement toward the rule of justice, corruption-free government, realization of social order and social security that ensures social productivity and prosperity-enabling economy.

The Structure of New Indonesia is the "**Indonesian multicultural society**" built from pieces of the New Order era of "**plural society**". Thus, the Indonesian social pattern of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) is no longer diversified in terms of ethnic groups and cultures, but the cultural diversity that exists in Indonesian society.

In this type of multiculturalism, where the Indonesian people are seen as a generally accepted culture within a mosaic-styled society, there's no such thing as minority. This type of multiculturalism actually had been used as a reference by our founding fathers, in the "national culture", as stated in the explanation of Article 32 of the 1945 Constitution, which says: "The culture of the nation (Indonesia) is the culmination of local cultures."

Multiculturalism emphasizes cultural diversity in the spirit of equality and, therefore it will also issues that support this ideology, such as politics and democracy, justice and law enforcement, job opportunities, human rights, cultural rights of communal and minority groups, the principles of ethics and morals, and the level and quality of productivity.

As an ideology, multiculturalism must be fought for, because it is required as a foundation for upholding democracy, human rights, people's prosperity within the society. Multiculturalism is absorbed in various interactions that exist in many structures of human life, which is included in social life, economy and business, politics, and various activities in the respective community.

Studies on the mode of activity, namely the relationship among people in various resources management are an essential contribution in the effort of developing and strengthening multiculturalism in the life of society, nation, and the state of Indonesia.

## **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In discourse about democracy, the issue is always colored by questions about the legitimacy of state power over the people. The idea that people can determine state policy, which became known by the name of democracy, ranging from a form that is still very simple. The System in Ancient Greece, is direct democracy, which is a form of government where the rights to make political decisions are executed directly by all citizens, which act based on a majority procedure.

If we go back to the Indonesian cultural context, then the democracy that has been developed is **Pancasila democracy**, which in my opinion has proven to be a common ideological platform for Indonesian nation-state and to be the most feasible as well as suitable for life today and the future.

To date I have not seen another ideological alternative to the common platform, which not only acceptable for the nation, but also suitable viable in the journey of Indonesian nation-state. With such a crucial position of Pancasila, I saw a pressing urgency to make the revitalization of the values of Pancasila. There are three things that bequeathed by the founders of the Indonesian people, namely [1] state that was formed as Republic of Indonesia, [2] Philosophy and Ideological Platform of the Nation, that is Pancasila, and [3] State Constitution which is described in 1945 Constitution.

Pancasila, maybe still needs development, deepening and conceptual elaboration, in order to become a reliable paradigm. The development until the elaboration is very urgent, because it is very difficult to imagine the existence of Indonesia, which in every respect very diverse, without being associated with Pancasila.

Pancasila is an ideology which stands to those who wish to shape the future together under the auspices of a country, regardless of ethnicity, race, religion or class. Therefore, we have to consider that Pancasila is not only a state ideology, but a vision of state that are intended to give a philosophical common ground, a modern pluralistic society, that is the Indonesian Society.

However, the need is recognized, that as the foundation of society, every Indonesian has equal status, rights and obligations, either as citizens or as society members, and should not impose the will to others. Today, the distribution of society's political aspirations has been able to be accommodated in multi-party system. On the one hand, this may reflect the manifestation of democracy, but on the other hand can lead to the violation of the values of Pancasila.

Plurality factors, as well as the existence of regional disparities which increase sharply, can have an impact on problems in the political, economic, socio-cultural, and defense aspect. The state in the shape of an archipelago country with various problems will be more vulnerable if external factors intervene and exploit the existing weaknesses.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It should become a common understanding, that Indonesia is a nation of cultural diversity that should be grateful for. However, these differences were not managed properly, because many claims by foreign governments against Indonesian culture. Similarly, regional autonomy makes our social conditions vulnerable for a separation. This must be realized immediately, because if the right formula is not found to overcome the issue, then the sovereignty of this nation cannot be assured for the coming years.

The setting of ownership of traditional cultural expressions in the world, is not yet clearly regulated. Ownership of a particular property is easier when it comes to the concept of intellectual property. Although both have different concepts, but the intellectual property arrangements had already been there and easy in its application process, since it only involves a single individual.

The ownership of culture will be more accurate if it holds a concept of collective ownership rather than individual ownership. Therefore, firmly speaking that the regulation of ownership of cultural expression that is based on individual ownership is not appropriate and misguided if it is continued.

The setting of ownership of traditional cultural expressions in Indonesia, as reflected in article 10, the Law on Copyright No. 19 of 2002, in fact, does not contain restrictions which can be categorized as traditional cultural expressions that need to be protected, the form of protection, and regulatory authority to regulate the use of traditional cultural expressions.

On the international scale, the issues concerning the protection of traditional cultural expressions procedures have started to be treated seriously by an institution under the UN, which is in charge of managing Intellectual Property with the name of WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization). The Provision Draft of Protection of Traditional Cultural Expressions of WIPO provides a challenge for us as a nation which is very diverse in terms of ethnicity and wealth of its cultural expressions.

WIPO provides that owners of traditional cultural expressions submitted to the community of maintainer and developer of traditional cultural expressions. This provision will eliminate the state's role in national cultural reality by segregating the cultural activist, which can reduce the occurrence of interaction between cultural communities, and lead to indifference to the traditional cultural expressions of other cultural communities. This certainly will lead to an indifference that tends to encourage chauvinism, than the pride of togetherness as one nation.

Indonesian Culture in the arena of globalization can be said to have two sides, the Indonesian culture is very diverse and highly vulnerable to external cultural influences and domestic universalization occurred due to globalization. Thus, to maintain balance to prevent erosion and extinction of Indonesia's cultural heritage, cultural management is needed dynamically.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On this occasion, I would like to recall the State Address of the President before the House plenary session of August 14, 2009 which I value relevant, as an additional explanation of the things that I have outlined earlier.

The President delivered that thirty years and fifty years ahead, we believe Indonesia will be a developed country, with dignity and prosperity. This will be realized if Indonesia is able to strengthen the three pillars of our nationhood, namely: **independence, competitiveness and superior civilization.**

**The pillars of independence** should be preserved and strengthened, because independence is the foundation of strength, endurance, and our ability to move forward as a nation. Indonesia should not be dependent on other countries, even to the world. In order to move forward, with resources and cultural forces that we have, self-reliance as a nation need to be continuously improved.

**Competitiveness pillar** of the highest order is must be possessed. In the era of globalization loaded with competition and challenges, the people who win and superior is a productive and innovative nation, master of Science and technology, intelligent in taking opportunities, and have the courage to face changes.

And, the third pillar, Indonesia should be able to build and have a **superior civilization and glorious nation.** That is why, Indonesia needs to continue to maintain the value, identity and character of our nation which is noble and honorable. We need to continue to improve morale and work ethic as a strong and persistent nation. We continue to build a civilization that brings brotherhood and harmony of the nation, and maintain the natural preservation.

In facing and solving problems, we are required to always give priority to peaceful means, civilized and democratic, as characteristic of civil society, not by violent means and ignoring social institutions and legal institutions. Therefore, Indonesian nation **requires great thoughts, and works of great nation as well.**

Meanwhile, in looking to the future, it is a necessity for Indonesia to continue to build a culture of excellence and a glorious civilization. From this then the character is developed, spirit and tenacity of our nation, towards the establishment of civil society.

**Ladies and Gentelemen,**

Finally, I express my gratitude and appreciation for the trust given to me to convey this scientific oration, with many limitations that I have. Hopefully what I delivered can be beneficial to all endeavors towards change in Indonesian society that is democratic, fair and prosperous, and believe in the one and only God.

By saying “**alhamdulillahirobbil’alamin**” I declare that *The Asia Pacific Interfaith Youth Meeting* is **adjourned**. Thank you.

***Wallahul Muwafiq Illa Aqwamiththariq,  
Wassalamu’alaikum Warohmatullahi wabarokatuh.***

Jakarta, 13 October 2010

**SPEAKER  
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA**



**Dr. H. Marzuki Alie**