

## MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



I am delighted to congratulate the Muslim community of Western Australia and indeed Australia at the arrival of the month of Ramadan and the upcoming Eid ul Fitr.

Ramadan is a special time for Muslims around the world, a time of abstinence from food and drink, with the observance of what is considered one of the five pillars of Islam.

It is a time when differences are put aside and when all Muslims focus on prayer and worship and on the wellbeing of humanity.

The Islamic presence in Australia dates back as far as 1860, when camel drivers were employed in the Burke and Wills expedition.

Western Australia has the third largest Islamic community in Australia, with more than 24, 000 people of Islamic faith living and working in our State.

Perth is home to the earliest Mosque in Australia, which opened in 1905 to serve the Afghan camel drivers and Indian Muslims who had settled in this city as traders.

Today, over ten mosques adorn the Perth metropolitan area, This, in itself, is testimony to the religious and ethnic diversity that characterises our community.

Muslims have positively contributed, and continue to contribute, a great deal to the social, economic and political fabric of Western Australia.

It is important that we recognise and value those contributions and that the Muslim community, together with the State Government and all Western Australians, continue to foster an environment where everyone can participate in our society as active citizens, while recognising our right to be different.

Once again, I congratulate the Muslim community on observing the month of Ramadan and my best wishes to everyone for Eid ul Fitr.

Alan Carpenter MLA  
PREMIER



## A MESSAGE FROM EMBASSY OF THE STATE OF KUWAIT



*Embassy of  
The State of Kuwait  
Canberra*

My Brothers and Sisters in Islam,  
Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh,

As the holy month of Ramadan brings unity to all Muslims in fasting, and prayers and overwhelms all of us by its divine spirituality and Allah's Subhanahu wa Ta'ala generous mercy, it gives me great pleasure to convey to all of the Muslim Community in Australia my warmest congratulations on this holy occasion.

May the month of the Quran bring us all the best of its heavenly blessings and may Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala accept out sincere deeds, sacrifice and goodwill.

May all Muslims receive this holy month of Ramadan joyfully and may forgiveness and peace be prominent through out this very precious occasion.

Please accept my best wishes in this holy month.

Jamal Al-Ghunaim, Ambassador  
Embassy of Kuwait  
5 Callemonda Rise, O'Malley ACT 2606

# INITIATIVES TO ERADICATE *Poverty*



*Woman begging for money in Barcelona*

It is estimated that 1.3 billion people live on less than US\$ 1 per day. This number is growing steadily as civil wars, loss of employment and restructuring of societies are creating newly poor groups. Respect for human rights, meeting basic human needs and more equitable distribution of wealth, are clear priorities for the eradication of poverty. Ultimate success, however, will only be ensured when there is a willingness and commitment on the part of the non-poor to assist in the elimination of the human degradation which poverty creates.

The United Nations Decade for Poverty Eradication (1997-2006) is a worldwide endeavour to confront the problem of human degradation caused by abject poverty. In this context, education plays an important role, however the question arises: "What can education do?".

In response, UNESCO has initiated a program in education that will contribute towards poverty eradication.

In this edition we will consider the contributions made by Professor Muhammad Yunus in establishing the Grameen Bank and leading sporting legend Zidane Zidane in their efforts to raising awareness and funds towards a solution to eradicate poverty across the globe.

Grameen Bank (GB) has reversed conventional banking practice by removing the need for collateral and created a banking system based on mutual trust, accountability, participation and creativity. GB provides credit to the poorest of the poor in rural Bangladesh, without any collateral. At GB, credit is a cost effective weapon to fight poverty and it serves as a catalyst in the overall development of socio-economic conditions of the poor who have been kept outside the banking orbit on the ground that they are poor and hence not bankable. Professor Muhammad Yunus, the founder of "Grameen Bank" and its Managing Director, reasoned that if financial resources can be made available to the poor people on terms and conditions that are appropriate and reasonable, "these millions of small people with their millions of small pursuits can add up to create the biggest development wonder."

As of May, 2007, it has 7.21 million borrowers, 97 percent of whom are women. With 2431 branches, GB provides services in 78,659 villages, covering more than 94 percent of the total villages in Bangladesh.

Grameen Bank's positive impact on its poor and formerly poor borrowers has been documented in many independent studies carried out by external agencies including the World Bank, the International Food Research Policy Institute (IFPRI) and the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).



## ZIDANE AND FRIENDS PREVAIL IN 2007 MATCH AGAINST POVERTY

(source: United Nations development program newsroom)

United Nations Development Programme Goodwill Ambassadors Ronaldo and Zinedine Zidane joined 47 fellow football superstars tonight at the Stade du Vélodrome for the fourth annual Match Against Poverty. Zidane and Friends won the spirited friendly, 6-2, in a contest whose meaning in the world campaign against poverty went far beyond the boundaries of the pitch.

A crowd of 26,000 packed the Stade, while millions more watched on live television as Zidane's side pulled away in the second half in a match that raised an estimated \$450,000 for UNDP anti-poverty work world-wide. In the first half, Ronaldo and Friends looked the better of the two sides but couldn't capitalize, as Brazil's Rivaldo hit the bar twice in the opening 25 minutes. But a late barrage of goals by Zidane's side sealed the win in the Match, which was supported by FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association), with Nike and Adidas contributing equipment for the teams. Pierluigi Collina refereed for the fourth time.



"Everyone can do something to make the world a better place," Zidane told a news conference before the game. Ronaldo thanked the players, coaches, technical staff, the City of Marseille and the Olympique de Marseille for their cooperation and participation. Both players thanked the fans of Marseille for coming to the Match and contributing to the drive toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).



UNDP Associate Administrator Ad Melkert represented the UN organization at the Match, and spoke to the crowd. "Countries of the world set for themselves the Millennium Development Goals to halve poverty by 2015. The Match this year marks the second half of the course towards the MDGs...We can't afford to let it come down to penalties and extra time," said Melkert. "We have no time to lose in winning that trophy."

Zidane and Friends opened the scoring in the 38th minute with a goal by Sporting defender Ronny. Anthony Sichi, who plays for Ligue 2 side Istres, doubled the tally after collecting a pass from French comic and actor Djamel Debbouze shortly before the hour mark. Debbouze, a special guest of the Match, made it three at 70 minutes from a Zidane pass. Spanish midfielder Gerard narrowed the gap four minutes later but Javier Portillo, with a double, and Sami Al Jaber from Saudi Arabia tallied another for Zidane's side. Sonny Anderson, who has played for Monaco, Marseille and Lyon, scored his team's second.

As with previous matches, all proceeds will go to projects selected by UNDP in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Proceeds from the first three Matches have benefited anti-poverty projects ranging from support to female entrepreneurs to the construction of sports centres for street children and the disadvantaged in Brazil, Burkina Faso, Bhutan, Comoros, Cuba, Colombia, Ethiopia, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Morocco, Namibia, Sri Lanka, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Vietnam.

*Photos courtesy of People's Daily Online*

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# JAPAN'S EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO IMPROVE THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION OF THE PALESTINIANS

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

1. On March 2 (Fri), the Government of Japan decided to extend Emergency Grant Aid of a total of 7.2 million US dollars to UNDP, UNRWA and UNFPA in order to improve the humanitarian situation of the Palestinians.
2. The Middle East Peace Process is in critical phase such as the forming of a Palestinian national unity government. In such a circumstance, Japan decided this assistance to improve the dire humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories and to support President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority in his efforts for peace.
3. This assistance is expected to improve medical care and alleviate unemployment and poverty through provision of medical supplies and equipment, rehabilitation of medical facilities and job creation. The concrete projects are as follows;
  - o (1) UNDP (Employment generation through rehabilitation of destroyed agricultural facilities and infrastructures in the Gaza Strip: 3.6 million US dollars)
 

This project will generate more than 70,000 work days (about 230 people / day in one year) through rehabilitation and reconstruction of destroyed and damaged greenhouses and ground water wells in the Gaza Strip, and will also enable to resume agricultural activities in the rehabilitated and reconstructed agricultural facilities.
  - o (2) UNRWA (Emergency Health Program in the Gaza Strip: 1.8 million US dollars)
 

This project will improve medical care for the Palestinian refugees through provision of urgently needed medical supplies and equipment to Agency's primary health care clinics in the refugee camps in the Gaza Strip.
  - o (3) UNFPA (Emergency Health Program for Mother and Child Care: 1.8 million US dollars)
 

This project will improve medical care for the Palestinians through provision of urgently needed medical supplies and equipment to the public hospitals and the people living in remote areas in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.
4. Japan will continue to engage positively in efforts toward early resumption of the Middle East Peace Process through assistance to the Palestinians, political talks and confidence-building measures between the parties concerned.

## THE VIRTUE IN GIVING THE ALMS (ZAKAT)

### Expending in Allah's (swt) Way and Giving the Sadaqa - HARUN YAHYA

Our Prophet (saas) was the one who expended the most from what Allah (swt) gave to him. If anyone wanted anything from the Messenger (saas), he would certainly give, whether it was much or whether it was little; he always gave whatever he could. The pleasure he took from giving was more than the happiness of the person who received. Our Prophet (saas) specified four types of possessions from which to give alms (zakat):

- 1) Agricultural products and fruits,
- 2) Animals (camel, cattle),
- 3) Gold and silver,
- 4) All sorts of commercial goods.

*"O You who believe! Give away some of what We have provided for you before a Day arrives on which there is no trading, no close friendship and no intercession"* (SuratAl-Baqara, 254)

Cooperation had a great place in our Prophet's (saas) life. He informs us that the best of all aids given are the ones given in secret. Our Prophet (saas) says:

*"Seven are (the persons) whom Allah would give protection with His Shade on the Day when there would be no shade but that of Him (i. e. on the Day of Judgment, and they are): ... a person who gives charity and conceals it (to such an extent) that the right hand does not know what the left has given: and a person who remembered Allah in privacy and his eyes shed tears."* (Sahih Muslim, Book 005, Number 2248)

Satan inspires fear for future in people so as to hinder them from giving away from that which Allah (swt) has blessed them with. This way, he drifts them into stinginess. Our Prophet (saas) says that this is a great danger for believers.

*"Spend and do not calculate, (for) Allah would calculate in your case; and do not hoard, otherwise Allah would be withholding from you."* (Sahih Muslim, Book 005, Number 2244)

*"He who gives time to one who is financially hard up (in the payment of debt) or writes off his debt, Allah will provide him His shadow."* (Sahih Muslim, Book 042, Number 7149)

*"If any owner of gold or silver does not pay what is due on him, when the Day of Resurrection would come, plates of fire would be beaten out for him; these would then be heated in the fire of Hell and his sides, his forehead and his back would be cauterized with them. Whenever these cool down, (the process is) repeated during a day the extent of which would be fifty thousand years, until judgment is pronounced among servants."* (Sahih Muslim, Book 005, Number 2161)

14 September 2007

**To: All Islamic Councils in Australia  
All Islamic Societies in Australia  
All Mosques and Islamic Centres in Australia  
All Imams in Australia**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Islam  
Assalamo alaikum wa Rahmatullahe wa Barakatuhu

## **SPECIAL FUND RAISING FOR AFGHANISTAN**

Ramadan Kareem, May this letter reaches you in good health and high Islamic spirit during this blessed month of Ramadan.

I have recently returned from a fact finding visit to Afghanistan to see for my self what if any assistance the Australian community and especially the Australian Muslims can provide the Afghani people.

Our brothers and sisters and their children in Afghanistan are undergoing tremendous hardship and our sympathies, sorrows and prayers are not enough to alleviate the suffering. If we are truly affected by their suffering then we must do something about it at the personal level, and especially during the month of Ramadan.

We are aware that many efforts are in place to collect funds and this is a good sign that people do care for our other brothers and sisters who are suffering in the many other parts of the world.

Therefore, in the same spirit of caring, the Executive Committee of the AFIC has set up an AFIC Fund for Afghanistan and appeals to all Muslims of Australia to donate towards the establishment of a medical centre just outside of Kabul. The land for this project has been donated by a generous local and it is situated some 10 kms from Kabul. It is in a heavily populated area with no similar facility for some distance.

We appeal to all Muslims to make a special effort and especially at Friday congregations during the Holy month of Ramadan for this noble project. We should not justify our lack of action by assuming that the international community presently in this war torn country will be able to look after the many pressing needs of all of the many returning displaced and former refugees.

A local doctor of Afghani background has taken on the task of heading this project and will be personally responsible for this project with the backing of the Muslim community of Australia through the administrative support of AFIC.

I will be forwarding some photos when available in the next few days of the land as well as some other photos about the plight of the grass roots Afghani people.

Let us demonstrate our humanitarian and religious duty in this tragic suffering of the people in Afghanistan. Please send your donation to the above postal address or directly deposit in the following account:

AFIC Refugee & Humanitarian Account  
Westpac Bank  
BSB# 032 010  
A/C # 201 603

Wassalam  
Yours brotherly in Islam,



Ikebal Adam Patel, President.



AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION  
OF ISLAMIC COUNCILS INC.

## MESSAGE FROM NSW PREMIER MORRIS IEMMA, MP



I extend my warmest greetings to all members of the Australian Islamic community as they observe the holy month of Ramadan.

This is a time of special meaning and importance for Muslims. But I believe there are lessons at Ramadan for all Australians as we celebrate our cultural diversity and strive for greater harmony and understanding among people of all faiths and backgrounds.

The Fast of Ramadan the fourth Pillar of Islam is said to inspire the faithful in the virtues of self-discipline, contemplation, charity and goodwill all qualities that contribute to warmth and goodwill in our multicultural society.

Goodwill and charity are important forces on enhancing unity and harmony in the wider community. They are vital in maintaining the common goals on which multicultural Australia thrives.

Ramadan is also a time when we reflect on the values of family, forgiveness and tolerance as well as our individual failings and how each of us can become a better person.

So let us not forget that Muslim values are also, in large measure, Australian values signposts to a closer and more inclusive community.

On behalf of the NSW Government, I extend to every Muslim family my best wishes for Ramadan and the coming year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Morris Iemma'.

Morris Iemma, MP  
NSW Premier





# Building Bridges

The Third Asia-Pacific Regional  
Interfaith Dialogue

## Building Bridges: The Third Asia-Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue

Waitangi, Bay of Islands, 29-31 May 2007

### WAITANGI Declaration Third Regional Interfaith Dialogue **ACTION PLAN**

We, the participants in the Waitangi Asia-Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue - from Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam, gathered in Waitangi, New Zealand to "Build Bridges" on 29-31 May 2007.

This Dialogue builds on the commitments from the Yogyakarta Dialogue in December 2004 and the Cebu Dialogue in March 2006.

We welcome the statement made by New Zealand Prime Minister, Rt Hon Helen Clark, who, acknowledging the rich diversity in our region "where all the world's major religions are represented," called on "responsible nations and people of good will to build bridges across the divides" of our societies.

President of the Philippines, H.E. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, stated that "as co-sponsor of the Waitangi Interfaith Dialogue, the Philippines looked forward to creating deeper interfaith ties within the region as together we work towards building bridges for a culture of peace."

Foreign Minister of Australia, Hon Alexander Downer, noted that although "each faith may walk alternative paths to explore the human and the divine...this is a shared journey that demonstrates the diversity and openness of our societies."

New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rt Hon Winston Peters commented that never before had so many representatives from such a diversity of communities of faith gathered in Waitangi to create "greater mutual understanding and respect for each other."

Director-General for Information and Public Diplomacy of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Andri Hadi, representing Indonesian Foreign Minister Dr Hassan Wirajuda, highlighted the role of regional dialogue in connecting religious leaders and faiths across the region and called for bridges to be built at all levels of society. This Dialogue "has now taken root in history."

We support their statements on the significance of interfaith activities and cooperation to enhance better understanding in our Asia Pacific region and to collectively address the challenges to peace in our region.

We express deep appreciation to the Government of New Zealand for hosting and co-sponsoring the Third Regional Interfaith Dialogue, which was preceded by the moving powhiri by Ngapuhi on the historic marae at Waitangi. We also express our appreciation to the Governments of Australia, Indonesia and the Philippines as co-sponsors of the Dialogue process.



We welcome the offer by the Government of Cambodia to co-host with Australia the meeting of the fourth Asia Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue next year.

We call for an increased number of women delegates in subsequent Dialogues.

We encourage the participation of youth delegates in subsequent Dialogues.

We note and were encouraged by the national reports on the wide range of interfaith initiatives building on the commitments made during the Cebu Dialogue on Interfaith Cooperation.

We acknowledge the importance of interfaith dialogue and cooperation

- in the building of bridges between faith communities and between them and governments;
- in learning about each other through public education, religious education and media; and
- in the promotion of regional peace and achieving security.

We welcomed the opportunity to learn about the discussion at the Auckland Symposium on 23-24 May 2007 on the Alliance of Civilizations Report and to comment on the Report's recommendations.

### **We agree to adopt the following Plan of Action:**

#### **Building Bridges**

- We ask that faith groups and civil society develop partnerships with each other and with governments to work for social and economic justice, minority empowerment and reconciliation among conflicting groups within society.
- We recommend that faith leaders and governments establish and facilitate faith and interfaith points of contact at the local and national levels.
- We endorse further exchanges between people (e.g. youth, students, teachers, religious leaders, academics) of different faiths, within and between countries, and at the grassroots communal levels.
- We endorse the strengthening of intra-faith dialogue and call for intra-faith dialogue sessions to become a formal part of the Asia Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue process.
- We encourage dissemination of information about interfaith activities to address concerns about these activities in some religious communities.
- We recommend that a regional database, accessible on the internet, be established identifying the range of local, national and regional religious activities in every region, including faith and interfaith groups, faith-based organisations, charities and NGOs, and best practices of interfaith activities.
- We recommend that faith leaders and governments explore the establishment of an Asia-Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue network for the exchange of information about interfaith projects.
- We encourage public and private donors to expand funding for interfaith activities and community development.

#### **Education**

- We support education about religions in the public curricula of all schools, including religious schools. We encourage governments in the region to ensure through curriculum review that curricula meet guidelines for fairness, accuracy, and balance in discussing religious beliefs and that they do not denigrate any faith or its adherents.
- We recommend that schools should promote non-formal interfaith education such as community service, twinning projects and community immersion.

- We request interested governments to implement pilot projects in religious education to be trialled in more than one country in the region.
- We encourage religious leaders, education policy makers, and interfaith civic organizations to work together to develop consensus guidelines for teaching about religions.
- We support the inclusion of education about religions in the training of faith leaders.
- We call for support for research projects exploring any nexus between religion and conflict; perceptions of security among different faith groups; and religious education in the region.

## **Media**

- We advocate the implementation of media literacy programmes in schools, to help develop a discerning and critical approach to news coverage about religions by media consumers.
- We call for leaders in academia, religion, politics, civil society, and culture to generate media content that help to deepen inter-cultural understanding, and promote community values.
- We call on the media to include the coverage of religion in their voluntary codes of conduct.
- We recommend journalist exchange programmes around the region.

## **Alliance of Civilisations Report**

Delegates welcomed the Alliance of Civilizations Report to the UN Secretary General. A plenary session introduced both the Alliance of Civilisations Report and Recommendations and a report-back on the Auckland Symposium. The workshops were invited to discuss the recommendations and their relevance to the Asia-Pacific region. A number of the recommendations have been incorporated in the Waitangi Declaration above.

Waitangi, New Zealand  
31 May 2007



**From Left to Right:** Reverend John Baldock (*Anglican Church*) Cardinal George Pell (*Catholic Archbishop of Sydney*) Sister Patricia Madigan OP (*Catholic Church*) Archbishop Aghan Baliozian (*Diocese of the Armenian Church of Australia and New Zealand*) Reverend Sefarosa Carroll (*Uniting Church*) Dr Ameer Ali (*Vice President of the Regional Islamic Da'wa Council of Southeast Asia and the Pacific*) Reverend John Henderson (*General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in Australia*) The Hon Alexander Downer MP (*Minister for Foreign Affairs*) Mr Kim Hollow (*Vice President, Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils*) Sheikh Shafiq Khan (*Chairman of the Australian Islamic Cultural Centre*) Mr Tom Calma (*National Race Discrimination Commissioner*) Mr Prakash Mehta (*Member of the Hindu Council of Australia*) Mr Jeremy Jones AM (*Director of International and Community Affairs, Australia/Israel and Jewish Affairs Council*) and Mr Ikebal Patel (*President of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils*)