

## DECLARATION OF THE ASIA-AFRICA FORUM 2005 "The Spirit of Bandung 2005: Towards a Common Future"

We, people of faith communities and people movements from Asia, Africa and other continents came together to Jakarta at the Asia-Africa Forum 2005 to share our common vision on the *Spirit of Bandung* in conjunction with the commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Asia-Africa Conference which was held in Bandung from April 18 to 25, 1955. We asserted that *The Spirit of Bandung* is the spirit of the oppressed people for a new world which is free from exploitation and colonialism, a world of peace and international justice.

The three-day conference, held in April 12-14, 2005, was organized by the CCA-URM in cooperation with INFID, JK-LPK, Lakpesdam, P3M, IGJ, ICRP, KWI, PGI, GKI, YMCA-Metro, and Pokja PLP.

We recalled the series of meetings to revisit *The Spirit of Bandung* which were held in June 2002 in Bandung followed by another conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka in August 2003 and in Mumbai, India during the World Social Forum in January 2004.

The present world is going through rapid changes. The most recent development is the expansion of neo-liberalism under the banner of globalization usurped by the Empire. As a result, countries and peoples of Asia-Africa are being victimized again even more seriously by the trans-national capital aided by global financial institutions like the World Bank, IMF, WTO, and client states.

We are determined to reclaim *The Spirit of Bandung*, which by itself represents the spirit of liberation, the spirit of justice and the spirit of peace. *The Spirit of Bandung* is also a spirit of solidarity and trust in the struggle for a just world, for equality, for a common prosperity, for a global life in peace and harmony. Hence, *The Spirit of Bandung* needs to be reasserted to be operational in the present globalized world. We are determined to promote interfaith cooperation, strengthen networks among people organizations and all movements working towards social transformation. We emphasize the need for an alternative spirituality grounded in human dignity, in the dignity of creation and hope for the future, based on the daily struggle of the marginalized communities and victims of oppressive structures.

We are of the opinion that the countries which attended the Bandung conference of 1955 have turned their backs to its original goals. In today's world dominated by neo-liberalism and by terror and counter-terror, we reflected on *The Spirit of Bandung* which is the spirit of resistance to capitalist globalization as the new form of colonialism. It is the spirit of common future and the spirit of alternatives in the face of cultural, economic and political absolutism.

### CONCERNS:

We are concerned about the economic, political and cultural exploitation by the neo-liberalism, and of the abuse of religion in exacerbating situation of conflicts and in justifying the domination of power against the people.

We are concerned about the abuse of religion to further narrow political interest instead of a genuine spirituality that promotes justice, peace and reconciliation.

We note with grave concern that the "war on terror" has been transferred as an ideology to divide communities and to demonize few, while it provided justification for the return of the jungle laws such as preemptive strikes as normative political strategies. The conference participants uphold the sanctity of life as an organizing principle of the people and declared that the attempt to promote violence as redemptive is a challenge to the basic notion of civilization. It is unfortunate that unilateral decisions are made by the powerful nations and they also bypassed the common consensus of the global community, expressed through the forums of the United Nations. Moreover, certain nation states use war on terror as an excuse to curb civil and social liberties of the people.

We warn against the subsumption of life to the logic of market and emphasize the need to develop alternative means of measuring human worth which reflect the innate dignity of humanity and all creation.

At the time when economic globalization alienates majority of the people from the common resources, we advocate that the fundamental rights of people to establish social agency for the management of resources should be espoused uphold. While doing so, the perceived priority of the indigenous people, women and other marginalized groups to ownership of national resources should be ensured. This can be achieved by encouraging the people's participation in national, regional and international decision making when it relates to the well being of the people, enabling them to become stake holders of their own destiny.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Strengthen solidarity and trust among the peoples of Asia, Africa and other continents as well, and sustain the awareness of *The Spirit of Bandung* through education, training, and common action.
- Strengthen people-centered politics and economics that affirm *The Spirit of Bandung*.
- Promote mutual exchange of information and personnel between and among Asian and African peoples, and peoples of other continents as well.
- Encourage the countries that participated in the first Bandung Conference of 1955 to reaffirm and recommit to *The Spirit of Bandung*, to promote interstate cooperation alongside the global solidarity of peoples movements.
- Call for genuine democratization of nation states so that they listen to the voices of the people in claiming their struggle for justice and peace.
- Call for the genuine democratization of the United Nations Organizations as well as other international organizations such as IMF, World Bank, WTO so that they listen to the voices of the people in claiming their struggle for justice and peace.
- In *The Spirit of Bandung*, we support all initiatives for peace and reconciliation in and among particular countries in Asia, Africa, and other parts of the world.

- We particularly call nations states and peoples movements to consolidate their power to uphold the rights of the farmers and peasants in the upcoming Ministerial Meeting of the WTO on Agriculture and Trade Agreement in Hong Kong in December 2005.

We strongly recommend that the organizers of the forthcoming Asia- Africa Summit allow the representatives of NGOs and people's movements to represent the concerns and hopes of the marginalized people in the conference.

It is worth to repeat the declaration of the late Indonesian President Soekarno at the opening of the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung of 1955 that "we can inject the voice of reason into world affairs. We can mobilize all the spiritual, all the moral, all the political strength of Asia and Africa on the side of peace. We can demonstrate to the minority of the world with lives on the other continents that we, the majority, are for peace, not for war, and that whatever strength we have will always be thrown on to the side of peace".

**Jakarta, 14 April 2005**