

**AMAN 3<sup>rd</sup> Assembly, Indonesia,  
November 15-18, 2006**

**AMAN-** The Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN) was established in October 1990 in Thailand aiming at bringing together individuals, groups and associations of Muslims in Asia and beyond. AMAN emphasizes on progressive and enlightened approach to Islam rather than mere rituals. Initially AMAN'S main focus was on the affairs of South and South East Asia. But recently it has extended its activities into West and Central Asia. Memberships are open to all Muslims, non-Muslims are also welcome as Associate Members.

Muslims constitute a large proportion of the Asian population. They are facing common challenges- both external and internal. Illiteracy, poverty, corruption are some of the internal challenges while cultural aggression, economic and technological dominance by the developed countries are some of the examples of external challenges. Extreme materialism, violence, terrorism, rich-poor gap are also the common problems Muslims are confronted with. Integration and solidarity among the Muslims in Asia could be the best mechanism to face all challenges and that is the rationale for the formation of AMAN by a group of like minded Muslim scholars and social workers.

AMAN'S worldview is guided by the belief in Almighty Allah, by the spirit and principles of Qur'an and Sunnah. Social justice, equitable distribution of wealth, human rights with particular importance to women's right, freedom of thought and expression, love, peace, truth, compassion and moral and spiritual development are under the scope of AMAN'S agenda. AMAN also wants to maintain cordial relationship with other faiths through dialogue and exchange of views. One of the objectives of AMAN is to undertake human resource development and institutional capacity building at all levels-international, regional and national through, conferences, publications, training and internship programs especially for the younger generation. With this aim in view AMAN has already established a School of Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation and introduced a Research Fellowship Program on Islam in

Southeast Asia. Islam is the most misunderstood religion. It is also another objective of AMAN to clarify issues which create confusion and misunderstanding among the Muslims and non-Muslims as well.

### **About 3<sup>rd</sup> AMAN Assembly:**

The venue of 3rd AMAN Assembly was Islamic State University, Jakarta, Indonesia, First session of the Pre-Assembly AMAN Council Business Meeting was presided over by Dr. U.A. B. Razia Akter Banu, Professor of Political Science, Dhaka University and AMAN Council Member, Bangladesh.

A word of welcome was addressed by Dr. Komruddin Hidayat and M. Abdus Sabur, Secretary General of AMAN gave a briefing on Council Process, Assembly, Inter-faith Peace Forum and introduction of the delegates. This session's main attraction was KH. Abdur Rahman Wahid, former President of the Republic of Indonesia, who spoke on "Muslim World at Cross Roads: Over View, Thoughts and Ideas." Drs. Habib Chirzin introduced the president to the delegates.

In the second session five papers were presented namely- "Updates on Country with Specific Concerns and Issues in the MuslimWorld", "Iran and Outside World: Peace and Development Cooperation" (by Mr. Hamid Reza Taraqlis, Deputy for Cultural Affairs, Imam Khomeini Foundation); "Post war Lebanon" (by JaJaI Maqableh, Jordan) "Muslims in China", (by Mr. Ramadan Ma Qiang, Shaan XI Normal University); "Muslims in U.K" by Dr. Fazlun Khalid, Founder Director of Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environment, U.K). Secretariat Report was produced at the 3rd session which was chaired by Ms. Zahraful Fatima from the secretariat team.

The AMAN Assembly was officially inaugurated by H.M. Jusuf Kalla, Vice President of Indonesia at his Palace, after Maghrib Prayer in the Mosque of Baitur Rahim within the compound of the Palace. Welcome address was delivered by Prof. Dr. Azyumardi Azra, rector of Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta, while Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer, Chairman of AMAN gave a short speech on behalf of AMAN delegates. In his keynote speech and opening remarks Vice President mentioned about the problems and issues in Muslim countries in general and situation of Indonesia in particular. He also talked about few cases of successful conflict resolutions in the country under his leadership.

On November 16 in the morning session Dr. Chandra Muzaffar from Malaysia presented a paper on “Reform and Resistance: Quest for Peace” and Dr. Carmen Abu Bakar's (Philippines) paper was on “Islamic Reform and the Internet.” Chandra Muzaffar asserts that resistance is fundamental to Islam. Examples of resistance against injustice, corruption, abuse of power, bureaucratization of land, autocracy and crusades are countless in the history and tradition of Islam. Prophet (PBUH) resisted against wrong doers, Iman Hossain resisted against Yazid, Sufi Saints resisted against autocratic powers. In Iran, Indonesia and many Muslim countries autocratic regimes had to collapse because of people's resistance. Now the people of Kashmir, Palestine, Iraq and the like are fighting for self determination. Wahhabi, Faraidi, Salafies, Hizbullah are all resistance movements. Dr. Muzaffar mentions that terrible injustices to Muslims all over the world are being done by the aggressors. Powerful messages of justice will stand up sooner or later against injustice and that will emanate from the spirit of The Qur'an and Sunnah.

Dr. Carmen Abubakar from Philippines presented amazing information about the existence of 20 million Google search on Islam. According to the author internet is acting as the new Madrassah for the Muslims and non-Muslims. also receive information on Islam. Information like inter-religious dialogue, women and children's rights, socio-cultural and religious practices, legal opinion and fatwa, medical advice and ethics, spiritual guidance, family life, sexuality, gender relations and the like are available in the internet. Internet can act as consensus builder, revitalizer of Islamic identity and ultimately as the promoter of Islam. However a substantial number of Muslims of the world are not yet skilful enough to navigate the internet. Knowing Islam through internet could be definitely useful but a note of caution is that too much dependence on internet might make its users confused.

In the afternoon session there were five parallel thematic workshops on contextual and important topics like “Global Economy and Islamic Alternatives” “Role of Civil Society in the Muslim World,” Islamic Feminism: An Alternative to Religious Conservatism and “Western Feminism?” “Asian Minorities: Integration or Segregation?” and “Inter-faith Dialogue Movements: Grassroots Participation and Strengthening Peace Networks in Asia” Ida Rosyidah in her “Islamic Feminism as an Alternative to Islamic Conservatism and Western Feminism” provided for an alternative model for feminism which would challenge both Islamic conservatism and western type of feminism. After three hundred years of struggle western

feminists have not yet achieved their goals by transforming economic, political and sexual rights for women. On the other hand, Islamic conservatives who explain Islam literally deceive women from enjoying their rights granted by Islam. Instead of accepting western ideology and agenda of their own, Islamic feminists are working within Islam and trying to transform Muslim society in line with Islamic values. Muslims already have an egalitarian and emancipatory origin. Unprecedented recognition and granting of rights to women in the formative phase (6th and 7<sup>th</sup> century) of Islam were astonishing. Muslims only have to reclaim all these rights from the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet (PBUH).

On November 17 three major papers were presented namely "Understanding Indonesia in its Quest for Democracy, Development and Peace" "Towards Global Peace: Ethics of Development and Governance" and "Corruption in Malaysia." In the afternoon session five workshops were simultaneously conducted. Delegates attended the workshops according to their own preferences. "Peace Process within Multi-Ethnic Nation States in Asia and Beyond," "Media for Peace," Rights of Migrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers: Role of Faith Communities" "Contemporary Islamic Research" and "Asian Influenza and HIV and AIDS: The Role of Faith Communities" those were the papers presented and discussed in the workshops. "Towards Transformation and Unity: Contribution of Philosophy of Life and Religions" and "A Framework of Justice and Peace Actions in Asia" were the two presentations on November 18.

The contemporary world is passing through a crucial time and witnessing culture of violence, social injustice, arrogance and bad governance, oppression and aggression. For human dignity and human security peace and social justice are all the more imperative. The crux of Islam is peace and social justice. The Prophet (PBUH) faced with 83 aggressions (recorded in hadith) but involved only in three wars. The Hudaibia Peace treaty is an example of avoidance of confrontation. Third AMAN Assembly's main concern was peace building. With this aim in view AMAN proposed for some agenda for action:

- Advocacy against racism, bigotry, intolerance profiling against anyone, anywhere in the spirit of peace, justice and compassion for all human beings.
- Advocacy for global economy that is based on justice and fairness.
- Strengthening the role of civil society in the Muslim world through

better networking, information sharing, resource mobilization, and capacity building and better advocacy capability.

- Women, empowerment through strengthening of programs and legal systems.
- Respecting the special position of minority groups.
- Supporting inter-faith dialogue movements through grassroots participation and to strengthening peace networking.
- Developing a civil society initiative on fighting corruption and promoting integrity in the Muslim world.
- Strengthening the role of media in conflict resolution and peace process through greater training.
- Addressing the challenges of literacy and excellence in higher education, research, and development in the Muslim world.

As a long term measure AMAN Council meeting proposes to form commissions on various issues confronting Asians, particularly Asian Muslims. Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, Drs. Habib Chirzin and Professor Aleyssa Abdulkarim were requested to take initial steps to make The Commission on Asian Minorities and Peace Processes fully functional. Arrangements can be made for a delegation from Papua to visit Jakarta and meet former President Abdur Rahman Wahid, National Human Rights Commission and concerned people of the government of Indonesia to resolve the conflict in Papua. In near future an interfaith team may be sent to Sri Lanka to explore the possibility of Asian initiative in the peace process. The Commission on Women and Gender Rights will act as gender watch and it could be a trans-border action agenda. Dr. Amani Lubis, Dr. U. A. B. Razia Akter Banu and Ms. Rubianti Khalifah were requested to develop a concept paper and to suggest names of outstanding women activists from Asian region. The Commission on Education, Research, Information technology and Interfaith Cooperation; and the Commission on Civil Society, Governance and Advocacy will operate under the stewardships of Dr. Imtiyaz Yusuf, Dr. Seyyed Hassan Hosseini and Thomas Michel. Dr. Anwar Fazal will shoulder the responsibility in taking initial steps to make The Commission on Civil Society, Governance and Advocacy functional.

Tireless effort of dynamic Secretary General Abdus Sabur and attendance of a large number of enthusiastic delegates made the AMAN Assembly a grand success.

Dr. U. A. B. Razia Akter Banu  
Professor of Political Science, Dhaka University

## **Workshop on Research Methodology** **An Islamic perspective**

Workshop in “Research Methodology: An Islamic Perspective” organized by BIIT was held in Dhaka in two phases. First one was held on 19 May 2006 in BIAM Auditorium and the second one on 25 and 26 August 2006.

1<sup>st</sup> phase: A host of young teachers and researchers of various public and private Universities attended the day long workshop, Mr. Shah Abdul Hannan, President of BIIT inaugurated it. Then it was taken over by Mr. Zohurul Islam, Executive Director, BIIT as moderator. He started the working session-I. Dr. U.A.B Razia Akter Banu, Department of Political Science, Dhaka University and Vice-President (Research, BIIT) presented the introductory paper entitled “Research: Scope, Concept and Major Features”. Working session-2 was conducted by Professor Mohammad Loqman Ph. D. Chief, International Islamic University Chittagong, Dhaka campus. Dr. S. M Ali Akkas, Project Director; PLAGE Ministry of women and children Affairs spoke on “Methodology of Research: An Islamic Perspective.” The working session-3 started with Professor Dr. Abulhasan, M Sadeq Vice-Chancellor, Asian University of Bangladesh as Moderator. In this session Dr. Abdul Awal Khan, Professor, Institute of Education and Research, Dhaka University illuminated “Designing a Research”. In the afternoon Professor Burhanuddin Ph.D, Vice-Chancellor, City University took the floor as Moderator and conducted the fourth and last working session of the day. The last presenter was Dr. P.K Md. Matiur Rahman, Professor, Institute of Statistical Research and Training, Dhaka University. He presented on “Methodology of Research, Technique of Sampling, Framing of Research tools.”

**2<sup>nd</sup> Phase:** Second Phase of the workshop was held on August 25 and 26, 2006 in the city campus Auditorium of Bangladesh Open University. Professor Dr. UAB Razia Akter Banu, Vice-President of BUT welcomed all on the opening day Mr. Ahmad Farid, former Ambassador and Vice-Chancellor of Manarat International University was present as chief guest. Shah Abdul Hannan; President of BIIT was in the chair. On the first day of the working session three papers were

presented. Prof Dr. Burhanuddin, Vice-Chancellor, City University illustrated The core principles of Methodology and Action plan. Dr. S M Ali Akkas. Project Director, PLAGE, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs came with his presentation on Designing and Conducting a Research: Humanistic, Ethical and Islamic Approach.” Last event was the subject of General Overview of Research Methodology: A Comparative Study of Western and Islamic Method. Dr. Abul Hossain, Project Director, Multi-sectoral program on violence against women and children affairs presented. On the following day (26<sup>th</sup> August 2006) The participants sat in four separate groups. The four groups were :

1. **Group A:** Business Administration, Finance, Economics, Banking & Management.
2. **Group B:** Political Science, Public Administration & International Relations.
3. **Group C:** Islamic Jurisprudence (*Usul-Al-Fiqh*), Islamic Studies & Law.
4. **Group D:** Literature, Culture & Civilization.
  - a. Various Universities may be approached to include courses on Islamic Economics, Finances, Marketing & Management at BBA and MBA level.
  - b. Coordination should be established among various Islamic research organizations.
  - c. Paper presented in different workshop to be compiled and published.
  - d. To approach PATC and other training institutions both private and public sector to offer courses on politics, administration and international relations from Islamic perspective.
  - e. To take initiatives to develop Islamic literature for political science, public administration, and international relations.
  - f. To take initiatives to collect contributions of Muslim scholars in middle age.
  - g. To offer more training courses on various fields of academic discipline from Islamic perspective.
  - h. To take initiatives to develop a website of Islamic scholars in Bangladesh.
  - i. To organise national/international seminar on international

relations related issues from Islamic perspective.

- j. To take initiatives to publish a directory of Islamic researchers in Bangladesh.
- k. The researchers should have a clear idea and neutral mind while proceeding to research on Quran and have an in-depth knowledge on various aspects of the Quran like *naskh*, *mansukh*, background of the revelation of an *ayat* etc.
- l. Some selected topics like terrorism and Zihad, Islamic economics and banking, women rights, Islamic modernization, rule of law, Islamization of knowledge, Muslim-non Muslim relation be chosen for researchers.
- m. To take Sunnah not only as a source of *Shariah* law but also as source for human and sociological subjects.
- n. To identify the false Hadith.
- o. Special emphasis to be given on the matters like nature of *Hizab*, *Jautuq*, socio-economic activities, poverty alleviation, woman related Hadith etc. while doing research on the Sunnah.
- p. Emphasis to be given on *quias* in a simple way instead. of going into a complex philosophical method.
- q. To make the subject of *Usul* generalized and easier for the general people.
- r. An Anthology of Islamic literature should be published. Initiatives to be taken to keep up Islamic tradition and culture in family as well as academic institutions.
- s. Media coverage on Islamic tradition be increased and for this purpose the *ummah* should have its own powerful and effective media.
- t. Islamic currency to be introduced instead to Dollar, *Uro* for the revival of glorious tradition and civilization of Islam.
- u. Reference Library with the books of literature, culture and civilization be setup for researchers.

In the concluding session the chairman Mr. Shah Abdul Hannan thanked all the participants, presenters, coordinators and guests for their all-out cooperation and active participation to make the workshop a success.

M. K. Alam  
BIIT



## **Inter-faith Dialogue**

1<sup>st</sup> Phase: An Inter-faith Dialogue was held in Dhaka in two phases. First was on May 1, 2006 and the other was on July 10 and 11, 2006. Title of the first phase of the dialogue was “National Inter-faith Dialogue on Strengthening Social Stability in Bangladesh”. Sayed Ashraf Ali, former Director General, Islamic Foundation Bangladesh presented the key note paper on “A Look Back at the Inter-faith Community Relations since the Emergence of Bangladesh”. Then three special guests Mr. Jonathon Cebra, Director, the American Centre, Dhaka, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Secretary General, Council for Inter-faith Harmony and Prof. Dr. Emajuddin Ahmed, former Vice-Chancellor, University of Dhaka, highlighted the importance of Inter-faith relations.

After the presidential speech of Mr. Shah Abdul Hannan, President of BUT, Dr. Md. Lutfur Rahman, Member, Executive committee thanked all for their participation in the dialogue.

The working session 1 was conducted by Mr. M Azizul Haque, Vice-President of BIIT. Father Dr. Tapan D Rogario presented a brief paper on “Inter -faith Teachings and Dialogue in Strengthening the Social Relation and Establishing peace in Bangladesh: the Christian Prospective”. Dr. U.A.B. Razia Akter Banu, Prof. Dept. of Political Science, University of Dhaka illustrated another topic entitled “The Teaching of Islam in Strengthening the Inter-faith Relation: the Case of Bangladesh”.

Prof. Dr. M. Shamsheer Ali, Vice-Chancellor, South-East University, started working session 2. Two papers were presented in this session. Dr. Sukumal Barua, Prof. Dept. of Sanskrit and Pali, University of Dhaka, gave a brief presentation on “Inter-faith Teachings and Dialogue in Strengthening the Social Relation and Establishing peace in Bangladesh: the Buddhist Perspective”. The next paper was “The Teaching of Hinduism in Strengthening the Inter-faith Relation: the Case of Bangladesh”. It was presented by Dr. Parash Chandra Mandal, Prof. Dept. of Sanskrit and Pali, University of Dhaka. In the concluding session of the dawn to dusk program Mr. M. Zohurul Islam *FCA*, Executive Director of BUT put up the recommendations and Mr. Shah Abdul Hannan, President BUT thanked all in his concluding speech for their

participation and upholding the importance of Inter-faith and friendly relation and requested all to keep it up in future days.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Phase:** The second phase of the dialogue entitled “The Regional Inter-faith Dialogue” was held on July 10 and 11, 2006 at BIAM auditorium in Dhaka.

The first day (July 10, 2006) included three sessions- the inaugural session and two working sessions. Maulana Motiur Rahman Nizarni, the honorable Minister, Ministry of Industry, government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, graced the occasion as chief guest, while His Excellency Morgr Joseph Arshad, secretary at the Vatican Apostolic Nunciature, Embassy of Holy Sea (Vatican) in Bangladesh and Prof. Dr. M. Ershadul Bari, Vice-Chancellor, Bangladesh Open University, were present as special guests.

Key-note paper on “Peace, Development and Stability in South Asia: The Challenges and Responses from Religions” was presented by Prof. M. Shamsheer Ali Ph. D, Vice-Chancellor, South-east University of Dhaka. The inaugural session was chaired by Mr. Shah Abdul Hannan, President of BUT.

In working session 1, Dr. U A B Razia Akter Banu, Prof. of Dhaka University and Vice-President, BUT was the moderator. Dr. David Watt, Prof. of Temple University, Pennsylvania USA, presented a paper entitled, “The Relationship between Religion and Peace, Development and Stability”

In working session 2 Dr. Mumtaz Ahmed, Prof. Dept. of Political Science, Hampton University, USA, highlighted on “The Inter-Religious Commonalities and Diversities: A Study of Potentials for Peace and Stability in the South Asian Region”. Participants in the dialogue took part in the discussions after every presentation.

The working session-3, July 11, 2006 was conducted by Father Dr. Tapan De Rozario, Secretary CBCB and Dr. Arun Kumar Mukharjee, Prof. of Jadabpur University, India, presented a paper on “A look back at the Inter-faith Relations in South Asia Region”.

In working session 4, Prof. Pares Chandra Mandal, Ph. D, Dept. of Sanskrit and Pali, University of Dhaka was the moderator and Mr. Ahmed Hasan Imran, Editor, the *Weekly Qalam*, Kolkata, presented his paper named “Peace, Development and Stability in South Asia Region: The Role of Religion”.

Based on the presentations and discussions held the dialogue made some valuable recommendations which are enumerated as below:

- a. The dialogue recommends for religious communities to go by the teachings of their religions so that a permanent environment of peaceful co-existence of the faith communities can be ensured for all.
- b. The dialogue also observes that some quarter of vested interests are trying to jeopardize the existing community relations. To avoid such unhealthy situation, the dialogue recommends the community leaders to remain ever vigilant to such evil forces.
- c. The dialogue also recommends the governments of the South Asian region to co-operate with the organizations which are working for interfaith harmony and the vice-versa.
- d. The dialogue recommends to all concerned quarters, policy makers, media, academicians to contribute to the efforts of thwarting the menace of 'injustices' of the religious communities in the region in all levels of life and distrust.
- e. The dialogue recommends that all communities should participate in the solution of the problems of all communities such Muslim, Buddhist, Christianity.
- f. The dialogue recommends to the UN and the government of the country of the region to frame a code of conduct to protect the honor and dignity of all prophets and great religious personalities and of holy places of all faiths.
- g. The dialogue recommends strongly to the government of all countries to shun policies that promote hatred, differences, and conflicts, if there is any in their existing policies.
- h. The dialogue asks faith leaders to undertake advocacy initiatives on social issues such as *HIV/AIDS*, gender equity, access to health and education, human trafficking etc. towards raising awareness and action programs.
- i. A centre for Interfaith Dialogue may be contemplated for future action program.
- j. The dialogue desire to develop and promote communication, and exchange of experts with other Inter-faith groups at home and aboard.

At the end Mr. M Azizul Haque, Vice-President, **BIIT** gave vote of thanks and Mr. Shah Abdul Hannan concluded the session.

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## **International Seminar on Muslim Countries and Development**

HUM Kualalumpur has successfully organized an International Seminar in cooperation with Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta (UMY) and the Indonesian Embassy in Malaysia on December 2, 2006, at the UMY Campus, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

The theme of the seminar was 'Muslim Countries and Development: Achievements, Constraints, and Alternative Solutions (Multi-Disciplinary Approach)', It has been attended by the rector of HUM and UMY, Deans, Faculty members and post graduate students of HUM and UMY.

Drs. M Habib Chirzin, Sec. Gen. IIIT- Indonesia and Councilor of Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN) was a keynote speaker after the opening remarks from the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia, Prof. Dr Bambang Sudibyo; the representative of Sultan Hamengkubuwono X, the Governor of Yogyakarta; Rector of UMY DR. Khoiruddin Bashori; Rector of HUM Prof. Dato Dr. Syed Arabi Idid were present in the conference. The title of the keynote speech was 'Muslim Countries, Development Co-operation and the Need for Models: a Critical Reflection.'

Aside from a plenary session, there were paper presentation in four parallel sessions:

- Science, technology and education/human resource development issues;
- Economic development issues;
- Politics and legal enforcement issues;
- Social, religious and cultural issues;

With more than 20 interesting papers with different topics presented in the parallel sessions.

This is noticed that some times ago Prof. Kamal Hassan, former rector of HUM and his wife visited the house of M Habib Chirzin and had a discussion with some Muslim scholars and Muslim student activists. Prof. Malik Badri of ISTAC and Prof. Osman Bakkar of UM had also visited his house and had a good discussion with IIIT-Indonesia.

After the IIUM- UMY seminar Mr. Chirzin was invited by the Directorate General of Higher Education of the Ministry of National Education to be a keynote speaker in the National Student Leadership Training for Sumatera Region Universities in Medan, North Sumatera, Intelligence, Emotional, Spiritual and value bases leadership. The title of the keynote speech was 'Diversification of Challenges in the Ever Changing world, Human Security and Our Common Responsibilities.'

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