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Statement on Indonesia

On 16 June 2014 the LWF Council adopted the following Public Statement:

The LWF Council, meeting in Medan, Indonesia 12-17 June 2014, is thankful to the thirteen Indonesian Lutheran member churches for their warm welcome and hospitality. Indonesia has the fourth largest number of Lutherans in the world—5.8 million—and two-thirds of all Lutherans in Asia are Indonesians. We give thanks to God for the Indonesian sisters' and brothers' vibrant and faithful witness to the Gospel and for the way in which they live out their faith in love and service for the neighbor. They live in communion amidst diversity. It has been a great blessing to have our meeting here.

We have marveled at the immense size and diversity of Indonesia, the fourth-largest nation of the world, with more than 17,000 islands and more than 500 languages and dialects, tied together by the unifying language of Bahasa Indonesia. Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world—86% of its 240 million people. The Indonesian state is based on the philosophy of Pancasila—Five Principles: belief in God, just and civilized humanity, the unity of Indonesia, representative democracy, and social justice.

There are so many impressive achievements of the Indonesian people to celebrate and for which to give thanks. Among them are:

- A constitutional framework that provides for freedom of religion and the equal rights and dignity of each citizen;
- The lively revival of democracy since 1998;
- The huge treasure of how Indonesians deal with diversity, allowing so many people to live together peacefully, in most places at most times;
- The valuable “local wisdom” which helps to promote the cultural and religious respect for each other;
- The vibrant civil society; and
- The way the country has been helped by women and men working together toward addressing the important concern of gender justice.

We have also learned that there are pressing challenges with which the people of Indonesia are grappling. Among them are:

- Inconsistent enforcement of the rule of law as the country has been decentralized, with certain laws and practices enforced in different ways in different regions and local areas;
- The need for the national government and local authorities to protect the rights of all religious communities, especially the Shia, Ahmadiyya, Christians, Buddhists, Confucians, and those who practice local religious traditions;
- An increasing separation of people in their daily lives along religious lines;
- Economic justice issues such as increasing gaps between the rich and the poor, and the use of land; and
- Environmental degradation, deforestation, and increasing CO₂ emissions.

The LWF Council joins and supports the Indonesian churches in their efforts to uphold freedom of religion, their interreligious solidarity in working against injustice and in responding to human need, and in their continuing engagement in dialogue with different religious groups to promote understanding, just and peaceful communities and environmental protection.

We give thanks to God for the people and churches of Indonesia.

Medan, Indonesia