

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

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Assalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb.

Peace be with you all,

Honorable Distinguished Participants,
 Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good evening!

First of all, I would like to express my warm welcome to all delegates and participants in the momentous occasion of the 7th Workshop of API Fellowships Program that brings the theme: "ASIAN ALTERNATIVES FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD: Trans-border Engagements in Knowledge Formation" here today.

It is both a pleasure and a great honor for me to welcome you to Yogyakarta, which is also known as the City of Tolerance, the place where inter-cultural and faith life finds an atmosphere of togetherness, equality and peace. I am hopeful that the situation and milieu here can support a peaceful atmosphere to contribute to reaching a sustainable world during the Workshop.

As a melting-pot of many various ethnic groups of Indonesian people, Yogyakarta is also considered a Miniature Indonesia. This is because the city has become so pluralistic, with almost all of the Indonesian ethnicities living here, coming from the throughout the Indonesian archipelago.

The city of Yogyakarta was founded by Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono I, designed under the philosophy of "*Hamemayu Hayuning Bawono*," which relates human life with environmental principles. It means "living in harmony" among human beings, and between human beings with nature and God.

Harmony is a precious treasure of Javanese life. Real success, satisfaction and happiness are the results of harmony. If one is to enjoy the benefits of life to the fullest, it is necessary to develop and maintain harmony. Therefore, its climate creates a harmonious and peaceful life among those of differing religions, faiths, ethnicities, groups, etc.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

In my point of view, the concepts of harmony and peace are also part of the Asian way of life and Asian values that exist in the four participating countries, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia as well. For instance, in Asian cultures, money is not something spoken about or dealt with in the open. It is discussed at the family dinner table or whispered about over drinks.

As we know, Asia is also a rainbow. It has a variety of colors. It is a continent where many religions and cultures have originated and flourished. It is a place where they have clashed with each other, but have also learned to live together in harmony and peace. Asia, indeed, has diversity but there is also unity. It is a prototype of conflicts and contradictions, but also of harmony and unison.

Yogyakarta, which is a part of Indonesia, where pluralism in diverse ethnicities, religions, beliefs, cultures, and even nations and citizens can live together in harmony, has a strong enthusiasm motivation to be the part of reconciliation efforts.

So let us strive to make a New World, an authentic sustainable world, where people can enjoy their life without any fear of violence caused by conflicts and wars. When we take one step towards this end, God will help us to take ten more steps.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The context of the API Fellowships Program, in my opinion, comes from the substance of word "fellow," which in the broadest sense is someone who is an equal or a comrade. Nowadays, it is most often used in an academic context as part of an elite group of learned people who work together as peers in the pursuit of knowledge or practice.

Referring to that perspective, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the theme for the Fellowship year 2007-2008, which is: changing identities, social justice, and the current structure of globalization.

Globalization in its literal sense is the process of transforming local or regional phenomena into global ones. It can be described as a process of blending or homogenization by which the people of the world are unified into a single society and function together. This process is a combination of economic, technological, socio-cultural and political forces. Noam Chomsky argues that the word globalization is also used, in a doctrinal sense, to describe the neo-liberal form of economic globalization.

Cultural globalization, driven by ICT and the worldwide marketing of Western cultural industries, was understood at first as a process of homogenization, as the global domination of American culture at the expense of traditional diversity.

In fact, globalization is the exclusive game of a privileged minority that assumes they are the only people on earth. For example, when the price of shares on the world's stock exchanges changes by 1 percent, about 4 billion dollars are instantaneously and silently redistributed. That is three times as much as all the workers in the world earn in one day.

However, a contrasting trend soon became evident that while globalization caused the global financial crisis, in which "Main Street" needs more support than "Wall Street," it also caused the emergence of movements protesting against globalization that are striving against injustice and giving new momentum to the defense of local uniqueness, individuality, and identity.

The main question is: what is the "personal realm," what is the human being? The human being is really both an individual and a social being. The human being is a person. This "somebody" is "unique but not alone." "Being a person means that I cannot be used by someone else but that I am an end in myself," says religious philosopher Romano Guardini. Human beings are not at anyone's disposal.

Politics and the economic order must be measured against these social ideas. This was something the creators of the social market economy knew. The "old" liberalism was an ideal social idea. But the "new" neo-liberalism is very different; it has degenerated into an economic idea. Profit is the "God of the neo-liberals."

Figures do not explain the world, but they save a lot of words. Figures, statistics and charts are dead matter. They can be used as an argument to support the call for

justice, but they will not inflame the call. The uprising against injustice is lit by mankind's innate awareness that all have a claim to be recognized as members of humanity. This is a right and not charity.

Indeed, globalization has various aspects which affect the world in several different ways. Globalization has had an extensive impact on the world, which is often positioning developing countries at a disadvantage.

So we need to work collectively to strengthen the institutions—political, economic, and social—in the Asian region that can begin to eliminate the root causes of injustice. This effort will require all states and peoples to strengthen their commitments to mutual cooperation, and our communities must be prepared to create mutual respect and trust to support this cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

THERE may be war in parts of the world, global warming all around us, and cruel poverty that persists in the world, but we have to go on living. For as long as humans have lived, there have been close neighbors in villages, helping and supporting each other through life's challenges.

Today, a new movement is emerging that restores this sense of closeness, while preserving the privacy we have come to cherish. Among other things, it helps us to share many resources, living in closer harmony and peace. We share one of our many dreams for making this Earth a more beautiful, caring place in a sustainable world.

I do hope that this Workshop, which was funded by The Nippon Foundation and participated in by various public intellectuals from several countries, will open up our minds, and enable us to engage in trans-border engagements in knowledge formation to eliminate the negative impacts of globalization.

Let us walk hand in hand in fellowships, and cooperate for the sake of brighter days ahead and blessings to all of us. On this note, I would like to wish you all both a fruitful and enjoyable Workshop and visit to Yogyakarta, and have a blessing and also a safe journey home.

I do believe we should make the 21st century "a culturally-centered century" of Asia. In order to build this future, the most important thing is for

intellectuals to gather in trans-border engagements and share their confidence in the future based on the common platforms emerging from the API Fellowships Program.

Finally, by praying to God, and saying “*Bismillahirrahmannirrahim*,” which means “In the name of Allah who is Compassionate and Merciful,” please allow me to officially open the 7th Workshop of the API Fellowships Program today.

Thanks, gratitude and salute to the Asian Public Intellectuals Fellowships Program and The Nippon Foundation as well, and also to all participants for your kind attention, and may God bless all of us.

Yogyakarta, 22 November 2008.