

**RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN A GLOBALISED SOCIETY:  
Challenges and Responses in Africa and Asia**  
With a Comparative View from Europe  
55 Years after the Bandung Asian-African Conference 1955

In 2010, the UN declared 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity, affirming that “the variety of life on Earth is essential to sustaining the living networks and systems that provide us all with health, wealth, food, fuel and the vital services our lives depend on”. In other words, “the diversity of life”, including “religious diversity”, has been largely recognised as a fundamental condition for the survival of humanity and its habitat, the planet Earth. However, diversity has been suffering from impoverishment, as indicated among other things by the continuous disappearance of rare biological species, human languages and civilisations, including indigenous religions.

Meanwhile, Africa and Asia are the source and the pool of world diversity. While other corners of Earth — North and South America, Australia and New Zealand, Pacific Islands and Oceania, East, Central and West Europe — have largely, if not totally, become lands representing Western Civilisation marked by Christianity, Africa and Asia continue to be based on their own heritages. Africa and Asia are the regions not yet uprooted by Western Civilisation.

Unfortunately, sixty five years after World War II, fifty five years after the 1955 Bandung Asian-African Conference and twenty years after the Cold War, wars and violent conflicts still take place, not only between Nation-States, but also inside the Nation-States of Africa and Asia (e.g. conflicts around ethnic and religious differences). And religious diversity is a potential source if not a real cause of social conflicts and wars between and inside the Nation-States. So, the question is in what way religious diversity poses a problem? In what way the agents of development (States, governments, religious authorities, civil society organisations) deal with the problem? Is there any criticism, denouncement, or diagnosis of the present situation? Is there any proposal for solution? Is there any action taken in favour of religious diversity?

Twenty papers have been proposed to feed our knowledge on the issue, nineteen of them concern Africa and Asia, and the last is a comparative view from Europe. They are written by Boutros Labaki (Lebanon), Chijioke Ndubuisi (Nigeria), Collective Centre Lebret-Irfed (France), Darwis Khudori (Indonesia/France), Duanghathai Buranajaroenkij (Thailand), Frans Wijzen (The Netherlands), Hamah Sagrim (Indonesia), Julius Gathogo (Kenya), Laura Steckman (USA), Matthew O.C. Kalu (Nigeria), Maung Zarni (Burma/UK), Mohamed Kacimi (Algeria/France), Moussa Mara (Mali), Mussolini Sinsuat Lidasan (The Philippines), Nasreddine El Hage (France/Lebanon), Oscar Gakuo Mwangi (Lesotho), Pushpraj Singh (India), Raphael Susewind (Germany), Sudha Chauhan (India), Suhadi Cholil (Indonesia), Thomas Ndaluka (Tanzania), Tiburce Koffi (Ivory Coast). In addition, a closing remark by M. Faishal Aminuddin (Indonesia/Germany) ends the book.



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EDITOR : **Darwis Khudori**

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