

The settlement of population is not same. In the eastern-part, most of them are Christian and Catholic communities, in the center like Bali most of them are Hinduist, while in the western-part like in the island of Java, Sulawesi, Kalimantan and Sumatera are Moslems. So, eventhough, most of the Indonesian population are Moslems but in the local regions they are separated in Christianity, Catholic, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. They live in pluralistic society but they interact harmoniously in their daily life. The foundation of this harmony is the philosophy of Pancasila as the life philosophy of the nation consisting of five basic principles which is culturally, ideologically and politically does not discriminate its people based on any background.

In the era of colonialism, the harmony of relationship among religious followers was broken. They interacted each other based on prejudice. On one hand, the minority group perceived that the majority groups had dominated accesses in all aspects of life social, cultural, political, and economic resources. On the other hand, the majority assumed that minority need more freedom for their expression in various sectors of life. Since two years ago both government and religious leaders came to build a foundation of harmony in religious life, focuses on strengthening citizen civil rights, building houses for worship, and empowering the religious preaching and religious education.

The Religious Freedom

Our national constitution had acknowledged all of citizens have the religious freedom, and of course freedom of worship could not be reduced by state and anything. The individual right built in the substance of all mankind forever. Eventhough, the religions which were served by state are only six religions: Islam, Christianity, Catholic, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. We also gave the freedom for adherents of ethnic-religion to take part in maintaining and developing the local traditions such as Kaharingan religion in Kalimantan Island, Parmalim in Batak North Sumatera, Baduy in West Java, Samin around Bromo Volcano in East Java, Anak Dalam in Jambi and so on.

Last year, Ministry of Religious Affairs was launched a serial visits and dialogues in the spirit of the multiculturalism to all 33 provinces, met with religious leader, local government, youth and woman leaders to discuss all of issues on the challenge of religious freedom. The main issues were rooted from action of split religious groups, build of house worship, preaching of religious teaching and last but not least misunderstanding on religious praxis.

To Build of House for Worship

As we known, the house of worship can not only be looked as a place of religious ceremony but also as symbol of the present of certain religious community. So, the building of house worship, in the perception of grass root, not only connect as religion affair but also a socio-political dimension. Beside this, government must protect social harmony for keeping unity of Indonesia. The government was stated that main task is to realize the social prosperity, keep on social order and realize of security for all citizens. For this task, government was

launched a draft of regulation how to manage the religious freedom with the keeping of social order. And then, all of religious representative (Moslem, Christian, Catholic, Hindu and Buddhist) studied and proposed some corrections and made finalization on Tuesday, March 21st, 2006. And

finally, in the same day, The Government of Republic of Indonesia issued a joint decree between Minister of Religious Affairs and Minister of Home Affairs, Regulation on Direction for Head/Vice Head of Local Government for Maintaining of Religious Harmony, Empowering of the Religious Harmony Forum, and Legalisation of House Worship, No. 9 and 8, 2006.

The important of joint regulation can be looked on two aspects. First, as an impact of reformation era in Indonesia, the council of religious institutions had involved directly not only discuss this draft of regulation but also they became a team on preparing both substance and textual regulation. So, ideally, all of citizen who hold religion should be tied on this regulation. Our task today is how to socialize it to all Indonesian people to know and then implementate this regulation both by government administrator and religious people.

Second,

since Indonesian independence 1945 until now, this is one and only regulation on religious life which can be received by all of religious institutions with consensus. It shows that religious life in Indonesia is running in the right track. Our state philosophy has a foundation for all citizen to apply their religious teaching with freedom and harmony, so all of citizen have same position of right and obligation in the nation.

The Freedom of Confucianism

Based on Constitutional Decree No. 1/1965, that Confucianism in Indonesia (known as Khonghucu) is formally accepted as one of religions in Indonesia besides other religion such as Islam, Christian, Catholic, Hindu and Buddha. But after political-tragedy in 1965, the government delayed the Khonghucu activities, included all of Chinese culture like Chinese-literature, celebration of Chengbeng, Barongsay. The reason of this policy was that there was a positive relation between Chinese people with the political competition in that time.

The Chinese-confucianism which are organized under The Highest Council of Confucianism Religion in Indonesia (abbreviated MATAKIN) asks for government to acknowledge them as a legal religious community, so they should get services from state as well as a legal citizens. To respond of this demand, the government had launched a lot of researchs on how much that idea be supported by Chinese people in general.

In the January 24th 2006, the government, in this case Minister of Religious Affairs, decided to respond of their aspiration and arrange of ministry administration (The Center for Religious Harmony) to attache of their religious aspiration. Beside this, the Minister of Religious Affairs was sent letter to Ministry of Home Affairs also to attache of their civil right and Ministry of National Education to arrange of the education of Confucianism Religion. This program, until now, is running well. The problem arises internally in the confucianism religion itself because in

the past they joined with Buddhism for getting legal acknowledge including legalization from public administration on house for worship. After formalization of Confucianism, since Januari 2006, the community of Confucianism wanted to separate from Buddhism in all of religious ceremony included on house for worship, while Buddhism has decided that the house for worship was administrated under Buddhism organization.

The Current Development of Religion in Indonesia

In the first step of New Order regime in 1966 the socio-political condition of Indonesia was unstabil. The competition of people not only in the field of political struggle but also in religious dimension. So, the government should protected all of people from violences. In various regions, the religious people faced on religious tension especially on two aspects: spreading of religion by preachers and on build house of worship. There were some competitions tent to be conflict among religious adherents, mainly Moslem and Christian. In some areas there was firing of house for worship such as in eastern and western regions. As a solution of this case, the government had decided to make join regulation between Minister of Religious Affairs and Minister Home Affairs to declare regulation on religious propagation and how to build house for worship known Surat Keputusan Bersama Menteri Agama dan Menteri Dalam Negeri No. Tahun 1969 dated 13 September 1969 (Join Decree between Minister of Religious Affairs and Minister of Home Affairs No. 1/1969 on guidance of spreading religion and to build houe for worship). After that, government launched a lot of new policies especially in the field of religion such as new regulation No. 9 and 8, 2006 issued in March 21

st

, 2006. The reason of this regulation is an impact of the change of the Constitutional Law on the Local Government which has changed from No. 18, 1965; No. 5, 1974; No. 22, 1999; and the last No. 32, 2004. The essencial change of state policies is the moving of state system from centralization to decentralization, as we know regional autonomy policies. So, the case of religious propagation and how to build house for worship are problems arise in this nation not only in certain religion but also include in Islam, Christian, Catholic, Hindu, Budhis and Confucianism.

The material of regulation is the guidance for local government on how to maintain religious harmony, empowering of religious harmony forum and the procedure of build house for worship. Eventhough the national development of religion policies still as a task of central government but the local government had obligation to prevent and protect the social order. Secondly

, we had aware that social harmony should be a collaboration between community and

government. And

thirdly

, the regulation of house for worship both permanent or temporal times. The principles of regulation are the foundation of house for worship should be based on the real need of

certain community of religion, keeping on religious harmony all of settlements from lowest local

government in the region.

This idea was based on the universal values that all of people are same under the law, while in the other side the community of the nation must life in the secure, they can living together even they are different in cases of ethnics, sects, cultures and religions. We believe, that all of citizens can living together and they can practice of their religious teaching in secure and peace. So, the regulation which was created together by government and religious leaders from five institutions of religions: Islam, Christianity, Catholic, Hindhuism and Budhism, was became the base toward religious harmony.

Fortunately, in our nation, beside the religions as a platform harmony of life, there are some local system on relationship, called kinship system. In the Tapanuli North Sumatera we know Dalihan Natolu

(kinship in case of marriage relationship)

,
in Minangkabau West Sumatera
Tali Tigo Sapilin Tiga Tungku Sajarangan
(kinship by division of social figures)

,
in North Sulawesi
Kitorang Samua Basodara
(kinship in case of social migration) and so son. The base of kinship system is the combination between local tradition which enriched with religious values.

The Conflict Factors

We acknowledge that our nation has the basic social harmony but we should aware that potency of social conflictâ€™internally or externallyâ€™sometimes arise suddenly both designed or undesigned.

Above, we can record a lot of factors that can raise a massive conflict in the pluralistic community, as below:

1. Differentiation of religious teaching ;
2. Building of house for worship;
3. Mixed marriage and the youth relationship ;
4. Political competition both in general election and local election ;
5. Access of economical assets ;
6. Access for general facilities ;
7. Differentiation of social praxis ;
8. Religious preaching ;
9. Gathering of religious ceremony; and
10. Access for public services.

Facing this conflict factors in the beginning of reformation era in1998, all provinces had

formed a social-religious forum for keeping harmony. In the North Sumatera, they founded that institution for religious harmony in 1996 which they called Lembaga Pengkajian Kerukunan Umat Beragama (The Institute of Studies for Religious Harmony), in Jakarta they found The Indonesian Conference of Religion and Peace.

We also believe, that conflict factors not come from inside of religious different but also from outside such political and economical competition both from inside or outside our state. So, religion is only used as a trigger for raising emotional sentiment. As we know, the difference of religions and ethnics can raise violence if the community do not have a broad knowledge of their religion. They look the difference of religious symbols as difference of substance.

Solving of this factors, we should arrange some medias how to bridge social differences such as dialogues, discussion, seminar, visiting in religious celebration and development of charity actions.

Our program today in the Department of Religious Affairs, join with Department of Home Affairs and together with the leaders of religious institutions, is socialization of Join Ministerial Decree on the Guidance of Local Government on keeping religious harmony, empowering of

religious harmony forum, and building house for worship. We had met all of District Government, Head of Religious Department of District or Municipality and

Head of Office for Unity of Nation. Twice in a year, January and July, they should make report to two minister about the development of application of join decree. In other side, the budget for religious harmony covered by regional financial budget all over the local and province.

We had stated in some occasions, that religious harmony is the main part of national harmony. So, we should keep it strongly by increasing some dialogues, seminars, informal meetings with local leaders, and last but not least, empowering the communities.

Wassalamualaikumwarahmatullahiwabarakatuh

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