

Mr Yahya Cholil Staquf
General Chairman of the Executive Board
Nahdlatul Ulama

Bonn and New York, 28 December 2021

Dear Pak Yahya,

It was a joyful and unexpected Christmas gift to me and to the World Evangelical Alliance to learn of your election as General Chairman of Nahdlatul Ulama on 24 December 2021.

On behalf of the World Evangelical Alliance, which represents 600 million Protestant Christians, I congratulate you on your new position. Even though it was an election with several candidates, from my point of view the members casting votes gave you what you deserved.

You have played a similar role to some extent already as General Secretary. Yet I am aware that being the global figurehead of Humanitarian Islam can create opponents as well as admirers. This was not an automatic next step for you, but rather, you have reaped the fruit of many years of teaching, speaking up, networking and convincing fellow Muslim leaders. I admire your zeal and endurance in this.

Your election makes the moments we have shared and the actions we have planned together even more precious, as we now know that you were on the road to becoming General Chairman. And it is a privilege to work together with you for peace and harmony between our two faiths.

Your father surely would be very proud of you, as you develop his legacy further into a new generation and beyond Indonesia. And while there is a need for politicians and parties to implement Humanitarian Islam, I am convinced that the real potential for interreligious harmony lies with religious leaders. Only if Humanitarian Islam is not just a political project but is backed by deep and persuasively expressed religious convictions, based on solid theological arguments, can it make a large-scale difference in the long run.

I thank you not only for working towards a peaceful Indonesia, in which millions of my fellow Christians are happy to live, but also because you have broadened your perspective to address the global situation. This requires a lot of courage, as there are many influential counterparts. I am convinced that God is pleased with you for all the energy you have invested and for your willingness to risk things on behalf of all of God's creation, not only for your own people.

I wish you a happy New Year and all wisdom as you decide on the next steps you will be taking in this new role. Sincerley Yours,



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