



Inauguration of Nahdlatul Ulama Central Board

President Joko Widodo of Indonesia:

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**Welcoming Nahdlatul Ulama’s Centennial:
Nurturing the Earth and Building a Global Civilization**

BALIKPAPAN, East Kalimantan, Indonesia: On January 31, 2022, [Indonesian political leaders](#) gathered to witness the inauguration of the newly elected Nahdlatul Ulama Central Board, which will govern the world’s largest Muslim organization from 2022 – 2027 under the Chairmanship of Kyai Haji Yahya Cholil Staqf.

Held on the island of Borneo, at the city of Balikpapan’s Sport and Convention Center, the event was attended by Indonesian President Joko Widodo (“Jokowi”); Vice President KH. Ma’ruf Amin; former Vice President Jusuf Kalla; Puan Maharani, the granddaughter of Indonesia’s first president Sukarno and currently Speaker of Indonesia’s National Assembly; nine cabinet ministers; and Indonesia’s chief of police.

The event was broadcast nationally on TVNU and widely covered by Indonesia’s print and broadcast media, which quoted President Jokowi as saying, “NU displays the calm and friendly face of Islam, and of Indonesia, before the eyes of the world and vividly demonstrates that religion and culture may exist side-by-side, mutually enriching each other.”

President Jokowi praised NU:

...for having continuously encouraged religious moderation and tolerance and for safeguarding the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and *Pancasila* [Indonesia’s multi-religious and pluralistic state ideology].

The view expressed in the NU march *Hubbul Wathan Minal Iman (Patriotism is Integral to Faith)* continuously reinforces the principle that the unity and sovereignty of our nation are worthy of devotion, and even of sacrificing one’s life to defend.

NU’s contribution to our religious and national life has transformed Indonesia [from a Dutch colony inhabited by hundreds of ethnic and linguistic groups] into a nation united by the principle of ‘Oneness Amid Diversity.’ This achievement may serve as a model and an inspiration to other nations.

On behalf of the people of Indonesia and their government, I would like to thank the *kyais* (NU religious scholars), *nyais* (NU women), and the entire family of [over 90-million] NU members for the enormous contributions they have made, and will continue to make, to our nation: past, present and future.

The Speaker of Indonesia's National Assembly, Ibu Puan Maharani, publicly stated:

From the depths of my heart, I wish to convey how proud I am of Nahdlatul Ulama, which has played a vital role in developing our national vision since before independence until the present day. NU always prioritizes Islam as a source of universal love and compassion (*Islam rahmatan li al-'alamin*). NU continues to inspire deep love of country among its followers, in the spirit of *Hubbul Wathan Minal Iman (Patriotism is Integral to Faith)*.

This country is fortunate to have an organization like Nahdlatul Ulama, which is the single most vital element in building and preserving Indonesian nationalism. It is time for NU to launch a global movement to nourish all of God's creation, and contribute to the emergence of a truly global civilization. NU's Islamic values, which are friendly, moderate and tolerant, must be continuously projected upon the world stage.

This is a tough task for the NU Central Board to undertake during the solemn period of 2022 – 2027 [when NU will celebrate its hundredth anniversary]. But I believe that NU's leadership is perfectly capable of preserving the values instilled by Nahdlatul Ulama's founders, while at the same time spreading these values to every corner of the earth in order to realize Islam as a source of universal love and compassion."

In a keynote address delivered before President Jokowi, members of his cabinet and hundreds of NU leaders gathered in Balikpapan, as well as a live national audience, NU Chairman KH. Yahya Cholil Staquf explained why NU — which was founded in 1926 — adopted this year's theme, "Welcoming Nahdlatul Ulama's Centennial: Nurturing the Earth and Building a Global Civilization."

We adopted this theme because we are certain that the founders of Nahdlatul Ulama, who established this [Sunni Muslim] community, were motivated by a profound concern for humanity, and their aspiration to foster a new civilizational order.

In order to develop that civilization, we must safeguard and nurture all that dwells upon this earth. That is why the NU logo displays an image of the globe....

There are two dimensions to this 'nurturing': the first is an obligation to preserve the environment and safeguard the earth, which is our common dwelling place. The second is to ensure the existence of a just and peaceful order in this world, which we share with all other human beings, regardless of their ethnicity or religion.

Nurturing means we must continue to improve and build upon the quality of all that we have inherited upon this earth, both in terms of nature and the structure of our societies, without causing damage to either, let alone destroying the environment or our fellow human beings.

Only by observing these principles will our efforts, God willing, bring about a better and more noble future — not only for Nahdlatul Ulama; not only for the people of this nation and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia; but for all the inhabitants of this earth, by fostering the emergence of a truly just and harmonious global civilization.