

**4TH MARKETPLACE  
OF CREATIVE ARTS**

Rocking Bandung!

**5TH WIEF ROUNDTABLE  
IN DHAKA**Regional Cooperation in Islamic  
Microfinance, Climate Change  
and Tertiary Education**WOMEN ON  
THE WEB**Web-reach Internet  
Marketing

# THE WIEF CHRONICLES

BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH BUSINESS

ISSUE 8, JUNE 2012

## CLIMATE CHANGE IN SOUTH ASIA: REGIONAL BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WEATHER

“Climate change projections used to be in the timescale of centuries and millennia. The changes were thought to be almost imperceptible during our lifetime. However, the brunt of the phenomenon is already being felt today, bearing down upon the lives and livelihood of people across the globe. In South Asia, the fight is critical.”

Between its geographical exposure and the vulnerability of the population due to its demographic and socio-economic factors, South Asia has been designated as one of the most vulnerable regions to the impacts of climate change. According to the recent Asian Development Bank report, two countries in the region, Bangladesh and the Maldives, as well as Tuvalu in the Pacific, are among the earliest first-hand witnesses to the destructive powers of climate change.

Several of the region's mega cities – Dhaka in Bangladesh; Kolkata, Mumbai, and Chennai in India – are at high risk. Flood-bearing and landslide-causing cyclonic and monsoonal activities are expected to affect the delta areas of the Ganges-Brahmaputra, Godavari, Indus, Krishna and Mahanadi rivers, as well as the steep terrains of the Himalaya. The reduced access to clean fresh water currently affecting large parts of South Asia is also made worse due to water stress caused by erratic rainfall and projected drying in other areas.

In the low lying areas, the rising sea level threatens to bring about land loss and agricultural failures due to saltwater intrusion. Extreme weather events and erratic weather pattern affects agriculture by bringing either too much or too little rain making landfall at the wrong time. At the same time, the increase in temperature has led to glaciers melting rapidly, threatening future access to fresh water for millions of people. In the wake of these, the number of existing and emerging health issues has

also escalated, from malaria, to dengue, to malnutrition, to cholera, to cardio-respiratory diseases and diarrhoea.

These events are expected to affect a large number of people due to the high population density and poor urban planning, and have knock-on effects on food production in a region that is highly dependent on intensive cropping systems. These are just the initial impacts and they are expected to increase and intensify.

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Like other global threats, the most severe of the impacts cut across national boundaries. Without regional cooperation, national mitigative and adaptive efforts lose their edge and may be rendered ineffectual.

Understanding the need for increased awareness and urgency for regional collaborative actions to address climate change threats, the WIEF Foundation focused on the issue of regional cooperation in climate change at its 5<sup>th</sup> Roundtable, held in Dhaka, on 19-20<sup>th</sup> April 2012. The Roundtable, organised by the WIEF Foundation, in collaboration with the SEACO Foundation and supported by the Bangladesh Federation of Women Entrepreneurs, the Bangladesh-Malaysia Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the High Commission of Malaysia in Bangladesh, also addressed the regional issues of Islamic microfinance for poverty eradication and quality private higher education.

Distinguished Fellow of the Energy and Resources Institute, India, Mr Chandrashekhar Dasgupta, said recent study shows that no less than six out of ten most affected by climate change are living in South and Southeast Asia, with one-third of the population in these two regions at high risk.

**"We are vulnerable because we are poor and have flimsy infrastructure. We have negligible capacity to cope even with benign seasonal changes. Every year more than 1.5 billion people living here pray for a good monsoon. Unless we strengthen and climate proof our physical infrastructure, roads and culverts, we will remain unable to cope,"** he said.

He underlined the importance of rapid and sustained development in building capacity, a central feature in climate change policy, as well as joint studies and information exchange within the group of countries with similar ecological zones across international boundaries. He also advocated for the sharing of experiences on coping strategies and mutually beneficial economic cooperation to speed up development in addressing threats of climate change.

Mr Chandrashekhar's view on the need for joint activities is echoed by the Principal Scientist for the Center for International Forestry (CIFOR), Prof Dr Daniel Murdiyarso, who stressed on the importance of synergising mitigation activities with adaptation activities. He gave the example of collaborative mitigation and adaptation activity in mangrove protection in the Sundarban area, which is the largest single block of mangrove forest in the world shared by India and Pakistan. The area, which is estimated to store more than four times above and below ground carbon stock than any ecological systems in the world, is facing the double pressure of flood from glacial melting and sea level rise.

**"Policy makers have to communicate. Many negotiators don't even talk to each other. Synergy between mitigation and adaptation has to be taken seriously. We cannot see either singularly. We need to respond to the threats of climate change through adaptation – such as through development issues – and mitigation by attacking the sources."**

**"Last year we worked very intensively in Indonesia, and this year in Vietnam and perhaps India, Africa and Latin**

**America. One of my objectives here is to talk with colleagues in Bangladesh to see if we can develop a collaborative research in wetlands as it has huge potential. We invite people to work with us and we are keen on regional cooperation,"** he said.

Prof Dr Daniel said CIFOR has been very active in capacity building through researches on wetlands and the threats/opportunity for climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as equipping partners with the necessary tools to design collaborative research, engage public and private sectors, and develop network for collaborative researches.

Executive Director of Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies, Dr Atiq A Rahman, said that climate change, which used to be perceived as an ambiguous threat, is now seen as the greatest threat facing humanity today, with implications in agriculture, food and water security, health, resource, livelihood, infrastructure, energy and environment, land tenure, rural and urban development, migration, disaster management and human security. He gave the example of land loss due to rising sea level, which on a bigger scale may trigger mass climatically-induced forced migration and loss of national sovereignty, which could lead to new conflicts.

**"We must understand it as a global phenomenon. The majority of greenhouse gas emission comes from developed countries, but the least developed countries suffer the most. It affects the poor the most since they have the least capacity to handle it. Bangladesh being one of the most vulnerable countries (MVC) faces several challenges that are undoubtedly enormous. Recent example includes flooding that normally would take place over sixty years but happen over two years. Climate change is a global phenomenon, but impacts are often local and context specific,"** he said.

Dr Atiq said, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change in 2008 adopted principles for global negotiations on climate change depending on equity, common

but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities as enshrined in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to be conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner. It recognised that the SAARC region is most vulnerable to climate change.

He added that SAARC and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries have to work together, including in the areas of development, capacity building, sharing of data and information, energy, green economy and low carbon development, food security, disaster management, water issues, knowledge and technology exchange, migration and economic cooperation.

However, according to Dr Atiq, despite the tremendous efforts made by governments and non-governmental organisations, he said that people are still suffering the vicious cycle of poverty, disasters and health issues. Negotiations on collaborative actions are going on, that allows for differences of opinion. However, Asia's political status and variation in economic growth complicates the matter. There is a need for follow up and learning, but more importantly to educate the policymakers at both national and regional levels.

The moderator, Vice Chancellor of BRAC University in Dhaka, Dr Ainun Nishat, echoed Dr Atiq by stressing the importance of working together to address climate change issues and empowering coping capacity by learning from the more advanced neighbour countries.

**"There are differences in understanding and in approach, but good things can come when we work together. For example, India already has advanced work on renewable energy, solar and nuclear power. In Bangladesh we are still not talking at that level. Advanced countries should help less advanced countries. So far the Asia group is still the weakest group in the climate change negotiation processes compared to the other sub-groups,"** he said.





# 5<sup>TH</sup> WIEF ROUNDTABLE IN DHAKA

## Dhaka Roundtable on Regional Cooperation: Islamic Microfinance, Climate Change and Tertiary Education

Three regionally relevant discussions on Islamic microfinance in poverty alleviation; addressing impacts of climate change; and the creation of world class private higher education institutions took centre stage at the 5<sup>th</sup> WIEF Roundtable, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, recently.

Although the discussion was neither exhaustive nor entirely new for governmental policy consideration, academic research or public and media discourse, the Chairman of the WIEF Foundation, Tun Musa Hitam, said that he hoped the discussion can be a platform that complements those already undertaken elsewhere and spur regional cooperation in addressing the challenges.

"Perhaps what is more significant is how to translate the outcome of the discussion into recommendations for concrete follow-up action through effective public-private sector collaboration. I urge everyone here to mull over what was discussed and find ways to play a proactive role to implement some of the strategies raised," he said at the closing of the 2-day Roundtable Discussion.

The choice of the topic 'Islamic Microfinance: An Instrument for Poverty Alleviation' seemed apt as the modern concept of microcredit was founded in the 1970's by the 2006 Nobel Prize winner, Dr Mohamad Yunus, in Bangladesh. Microfinance, in its many variations, has since spread to all corners of the globe, providing financial services to micro-entrepreneurs and small businesses that did not have access to banking and related services.

The Governor of Bangladesh Bank, Dr Atiur Rahman, said that in order to undertake poverty alleviation effectively, the multidimensional aspect of poverty has to be acknowledged. He stressed that poverty includes the lack of many different things, including participation, food security, schooling, health, credit, voices and also power.

**"Poverty needs to be seen as a multidimensional issue and, therefore, cannot be tackled by a conventional war. To fight it effectively, we need a guerrilla attack, whereby attacks have to be strategised from different angles. Market alone cannot tackle poverty."**

**"A country can only be poor if the poor people cannot even dream of becoming rich through their earnings. We need to create this environment and microfinance creates these opportunities,"**

he said, calling upon Islamic banks to pursue Islamic microfinance and SME finance, for faster poverty eradication with a wider financial inclusion.

Managing Director, Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd, Mr Mohammad Abdul Mannan, said that Islamic microfinance should be based on the principles of universal Ummah, distributive justice, circulation of wealth, transfer of payment, financial inclusion and filter mechanism, whereby the state is responsible in ensuring basic needs of all people.

**"In the Islamic poverty eradication schemes, we see three measures: positive measures, whereby it is based on income growth, functional distribution of income and equal opportunity; preventive measure, whereby there are control of ownership and prevention of malpractice such as riba, mysir and gharar; and corrective measures, which involves compulsory transfer**

**(zakat) and recommended transfer (waqaf and government's responsibility to ensure basic necessities of the people).**

**"The suggested agenda of action is to aim for an integrated poverty eradication model that includes microfinance, zakat and waqaf that is targeted for the extreme poor while ensuring financial inclusion,"** he said.

Dr Dadang Muljawan from the Islamic Development Bank said that, demographically, micro-entrepreneurs comprise 90% of the production sector and marginal poor with limited access. Many of them face critical and persistent demand-supply gap in terms of funding, particularly in remote areas. He added that there is also a lack of coherent microfinance policy and comprehensive microfinance development strategy is required to enable legal environment and regulatory framework.

**"My suggestion is that instead of just giving money, we have to think of collaborative and integrative programs such as commercial base funds that includes zakat. We have a**



*Continued from page 3*

**pilot project where there was no sustainability in the daily activities, so we integrated zakat. It has to be simple. We should discuss about how to make the Islamic finance industry effective,”** he said.

According to Managing Director of Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia, Datuk Hajah Zabidah Ismail, the enhancement of microfinance is seen through entrepreneur development programs that include skills needed to take the beneficiaries to the next level, such as developing entrepreneurial character, basics of entrepreneurship, basic skills (technical) and business enhancement skills training.

Chairman of Board of Audit for Exim Bank Ltd of Bangladesh, AKM Nurul Fazal Bulbul, suggested consultative forums as a follow up to the discussion as Islamic microfinance has the potential to alleviate poverty and be a role model for the global Muslim community.

In another discussion on ‘Private Higher Education: Creating World Class Institutions through Regional Cooperation’ the issue of poverty eradication was again reviewed by looking at provision of high investment in education. Its moderator, Mr Ian Buchanan, Senior Executive Advisor, Booz & Co., Australia, challenged the

participants to learn from the development path of South Korea, who led the Asian Tigers countries – Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore – to achieve spectacular economic growth.

**“South Korea began with the simple product of human hair. They took the resources they had, that is ‘people’, and invested in education. Now, it is amongst the wealthiest nations. Bangladesh now has a huge resource of people. The purpose lies in the lessons learnt from the different models to be spoken here today: business aspects; Corporate Social Responsibility; and fully funded institutes for the poor,”** he said.

Former Vice Chancellor of the Islamic University of Technology, Bangladesh, Prof M Anwar Hossain, said that to compete in a world that rewards a knowledge-based economy and society, there is a need for a tertiary education that encourages critical thinking, creativity, adaptivity and communication skills, as well as lifelong training that is inducted with renewed civic responsibility, ethics and values.

**“Quality teachers, updated curricula, supportive regulation and university leadership with vision are essential. Regional cooperation is a must. It is required for faculty and course curricula development and updating, faculty exchange programs, sharing of best**

**teaching-learning practices and educational resources, facilitation of initiatives for research and development works through collaborative research programs, organisation of seminars and workshops,”** he added.

Chairman of the Association of Private Universities of Bangladesh and Former Adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr Shafi Sami, said that national development and higher education are intrinsically interlinked as universities are a vital component of economic growth and development.

**“With supposed free movement of products and instruments of production, there is an increasing difficulty of movement of students where the ‘world class institutes’ are located. The contradiction is that while the world is becoming globalised, opportunity is shrinking. In this context we must forge regional corporations to create world class institutions so that vitally needed economic development is attainable,”** he said.

Vice Chancellor of the Al-Bukhary International University in Malaysia, Prof Tan Sri Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, said that there is a gap in education provision between middle income and lower income area, and the discrepancy is very prominent, especially in private universities.

**“The questions on who will fund private higher education institutions? How we can sustain it and maintain it as a non-elitist**

## THE PANELISTS

### Session 1:

#### Regional Cooperation to Combat Climate Change – The Way Forward

##### Dr Atiq A Rahman

Executive Director, Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies, Bangladesh

##### Mr Chandrashekhar

Dasgupta, Distinguished Fellow, The Energy and Resources Institute, India

##### Prof Dr Daniel Murdiyarso

Principal Scientist, Center for International Forestry Research, Indonesia

##### Dr Ainun Nishat,

Vice Chancellor, BRAC University, Bangladesh

### Session 2:

#### Islamic Microfinance – An Instrument for Poverty Alleviation

##### Dr Atiur Rahman

Governor, Bangladesh Bank

##### Mr Mohammad Abdul Mannan,

Managing Director, Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd

##### Dr Dadang Muljawan

Islamic Development Bank, Saudi Arabia

##### Datuk Hajah Zabidah Ismail

Managing Director, Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia







body? This can be answered through the concept of waqaf. Even in a non-Muslim World like the UK, waqaf can be devoted to health and community services,” he said, adding that the Albukhary International University, which was established for people living below the poverty line, provides meals, accommodation, tuition, initial clothing, and an allowance of RM250.

Executive Director of the Madinah Institute for Leadership

and Entrepreneurship, Dr Mohamed Moustafa Mahmoud, said that the Muslim World is now facing a deficit in leadership, with research showing a lack of human capital especially at the leadership level. He drew attention to the need to build collaborative networks amongst the Muslims World in order to establish quality executive and entrepreneurial education provider.

Echoing Tun Musa’s advice for a more effective public-private

sector collaboration, Founder and Chairman of the Executive Centre for Global Leadership in Indonesia, Mr Tanri Abeng, suggested exploring joint venture with the private sector with the right expertise.

“We cannot restrict ourselves to the region when we talk about creating a knowledge base, you have to search from global sources. If you produce the right quality product, you can sell it, and charge for sustainability,” he said.

## THE PANELISTS

**AKM Nurul Fazal Bulbul**  
Chairman, Board of Audit,  
Exim Bank Ltd, Bangladesh

**Prof Dr Abul Hasan M Sadeq**  
Vice Chancellor, Asian  
University, Bangladesh

**Session 3:**  
**Private Higher Education –**  
**Creating World Class**  
**Institutions through**  
**Regional Cooperation**

**Mr Shafi Sami**  
Chairman, Association  
of Private Universities of  
Bangladesh and Former  
Adviser, Ministry of Foreign  
Affairs

**Prof M Anwar Hossain**  
Former Vice Chancellor, Islamic  
University of Technology,  
Bangladesh

**Prof Tan Sri Dzulkifli Abdul Razak**  
Vice Chancellor, Albukhary  
International University,  
Malaysia

**Mr Tanri Abeng**  
Founder and Chairman,  
Executive Centre for Global  
Leadership, Indonesia

**Dr Mohamed Moustafa Mahmoud**  
Executive Director, Madinah  
Institute for Leadership and  
Entrepreneurship, Saudi Arabia

**Mr Ian Buchanan**  
Senior Executive Advisor,  
Booz & Co., Australia

The 8<sup>th</sup> World Islamic Economic Forum will be convened this year in the Iskandar Development Region of the state of Johor, Malaysia, the fastest growing economic region in Malaysia and one of the most significant business districts in Southeast Asia. Held at the Persada Johor Convention Centre on 4-6 December 2012 with the theme “Changing Trends, New Opportunities”, the 8<sup>th</sup> WIEF will discuss the changing dynamics in global business today after the Arab uprising and Eurozone crisis which leaves many doors open to new business opportunities elsewhere across the globe.

[www.8thwief.org](http://www.8thwief.org)



CHANGING TRENDS, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

# VOX ALUMNI

## THE WIEF GLOBAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

**EMPLOYERS:**  
SEARCH FOR GEMS.

**CANDIDATES:**  
PITCH YOUR TALENT.



### VOX ALUMNI

**Name**

Ili Juliana Tajuddin

**Country**

Malaysia

**Qualification**

Bachelor of Management  
Information System,  
University Malaya

**Internship location**

Rio Tinto Alcan (RTA),  
Brisbane, Australia

In July 2010, I had the amazing opportunity to participate in the WIEF Global Internship Programme, which is an initiative of the WIEF Young Leaders Network.

The internship programme is a cross-border matchmaking initiative involving interning students and corporations from all over the world. I had applied for an internship with the international mining giant, Rio Tinto Alcan (RTA), in Brisbane, Australia, and after 4 months of job interviews, medical check-ups, work visa application, visa approval and huge number of emails, I was offered a 6 months internship. The process was lengthy, but the wait was definitely worth it as the experience I had gained from working with Rio Tinto Alcan and living in Brisbane was incredibly amazing and priceless.

Initially, when I heard that I was offered the internship programme, I had some anxious moments as to what to expect, both from the internship programme, as well as from living as a non-resident and coping with life in Brisbane. However, conversation from RTA's HR Manager, Katherine Roberts, helped allay any fears I had.

**Australia, with its multicultural society, made me feel at ease on arrival. For people with specific requirements such as for food products that may not be readily available, the internet is a very helpful tool in searching for places in Brisbane where they could be obtained. RTA had kindly made arrangements to bring me around Brisbane and allow me**

**a few days to settle down before reporting for duty.**

I was happy to perform any task given to me. However, without a specific job function it made feel uneasy as to whether I was meeting expectation. The special Interactive Lean project that I have been assigned to was very interesting and I am proud to be associated with it. I must acknowledge that everyone in the office were extremely kind and helpful. The overwhelming support given to me by everyone in the office helped me accomplish the tasks required of me. I feel grateful to everyone in RTA for their assistance, patience and understanding. I have to put on record the tremendous help and friendly advice I received from my colleagues, Cherise Rhind and Lee-Onn Tan. They went out of their way to explain the work culture in both Rio Tinto and Australia and had even briefed me on the huge Rio Tinto organisation structure which I felt was very important. This was a surprisingly wonderful experience as I had thought that this kind of introduction was normally provided by higher management. Having briefed by colleagues demonstrated the work culture here at Rio Tinto where colleagues assist and encourage one another wherever possible.

**As a Muslim, I was initially concerned on how I would be treated in the workplace or in public. I was happy to be able to tell my parents that Australians are fair minded citizens and treat everyone with respect and do not**

**practice discrimination. I was also pleasantly surprised to hear that RTA staff attends briefings to promote awareness on differences in religious practices and cultures.**

As the internship was about to come to an end in July 2011, the HR management had arranged for assistance regarding the Australian Tax Return matter. Everything was well taken care of by Rio Tinto throughout my whole 6-month stay in Brisbane.

The assistance and support I received, particularly from my former manager, Chris Noonan, as well as Brian Egan, Neal Jeet and Katherine Roberts, who went beyond what was expected when it comes to my welfare and safety during the first days when Brisbane City was flooded. I was able to assure my parents back home in Malaysia that the management and colleagues at Rio Tinto Alcan were helping me cope with the situation. I also felt honoured when I was invited by Chris Noon to join on a lunch at Chris's house together with a couple of colleague from the office. This was followed by an invitation to a family outing at the Sunshine Coast. I was highly impressed with the length everyone go to here in Rio Tinto to foster good relationship.

**I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the WIEF and WYN for opening the door for me to this opportunity, as well as Rio Tinto Alcan for the amazing internship opportunity, support and assistance.**



# WOMEN ON THE WEB:

## Web-Reach Internet Marketing

Over the last few decades, the Internet has played an enormous and indispensable role in the way people do their businesses. Regardless of the scale and size, the Internet has proven its capability in bringing a whole store of ideas, products and services to clients all over the world.



**T**owards increasing the participation of women-headed businesses in global trade through Internet Marketing, the WIEF organised the 1<sup>st</sup> WIEF Web-Reach Internet Marketing Workshop, at the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR), on 13-17<sup>th</sup> February 2012. The 5-day workshop was attended by 30 women business owners from Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Myanmar, Morocco, Sri Lanka, Sudan, and Thailand.

The workshop, an initiative under the WIEF Businesswomen Network (WBN) organised in collaboration with IDFR, included practical modules that focused on creating and building online presence for businesses using social networking tools and Internet marketing strategies. Key workshop modules included search engine optimisation techniques, viral marketing platforms, and hands-on exercises on creating websites and pages on social networks like Facebook, Flickr, and Pinterest; and culminated with participants staking online real estate by designing their own websites from scratch and putting it to good use.

Chairman of the WBN, Dato' Dr

Norraesah Mohamad, said that with the progression of the Internet in our daily lives, company websites often spell 'legitimacy' for the company. She added, while social media tools, such as Facebook and Twitter, are often the most efficient and cheapest way to spread the word about available products, emails and Skype have redefined customer service and search engines have made it possible for remote businesses to be accessible.

**"We wanted to empower every entrepreneurial woman by giving her business voice and presence in the World Wide Web. We wanted to help her gain competitive advantage through the use of social media and online marketing strategies. And most of all, we wanted her to embrace her natural and intuitive abilities to create, persevere, adapt, persuade, and sell,"** she added.

Dato' Dr Norraesah said that the society demands women businesses to juggle moneymaking and business management and being a good mother, a loving wife, and an excellent homemaker. While previously, women use the traditional marketing tactics of physically visiting every door in the neighborhood, sometimes walking long distances and taking days on end, with the help of technology, she said, women now have the convenience of conducting business wider and faster.

**"With the Internet, a stay-at-home mother can help augment the family income, gain economic freedom, and even break into male-dominated industries,"** added Dato' Dr Norraesah.



The WIEF Foundation's Chairman, Tun Musa Hitam, in his speech at the closing ceremony, said that in the Foundation's continuous efforts to empower women, it has successfully conducted three women entrepreneurs workshops, which not only provided business lectures and study excursions, but also forged professional and friendship bonds for the participants.

**"We are committed to keeping this momentum alive and continue in our mission to create opportunities for businesses**

**and economies to grow. In this regard, we hope that more corporations will continue to support us as we look towards the horizon for new opportunities and initiatives to make that difference in the global world,"** he said.

The workshop received support from the Department of Women Development, the Cultural Centre of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and strategically partnered with The Coca-Cola Company.



# WIEF-IDB MoU: Renewing Partnership

The World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF) and Islamic Development Bank (IDB) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2012, at the Malaysia-IDB Group Investment Forum, in Kuala Lumpur.

The signing was the second MoU between the two long-standing partners, with the objectives to foster cooperation and socio-economic development within the Muslim World, with special emphasis on Muslim communities in non-OIC countries; promote economic growth through trade and investment of intra-OIC countries and with the rest of the world; and promote strategic alliances through exchange of ideas, information and knowledge.

The WIEF was represented by its Chairman, Tun Musa Hitam, while the IDB Group was represented by its President, Dr Ahmad Mohamed Ali. The signing and exchange of documents was witnessed by Prime Minister of Malaysia, H.E. Dato' Sri Najib Tun Razak.

In his speech, Tun Musa said that the WIEF recognises the value of genuine substantive cooperation and wish to pursue it further in several key priority areas and avenues of collaboration. He said that by intensifying the enduring partnership, the initiatives aim to advance economic progress of the Muslim World and Muslim communities in non-Muslim countries.

**“WIEF’s partnership with IDB started way back and it has been a fruitful, mutually beneficial, strategic long-term partnership, with both sides actively committing to development programs close to a decade. The WIEF Foundation has also supported IDB by being part of their events and initiatives and this has helped solidify the collaboration further.**

Today’s MoU reinforces the WIEF Foundation-IDB partnership and is a follow-through from previous agreements. We look forward to taking our collaboration to the next level,” added Tun Musa.

Dr Ahmad Mohamed Ali highlighted that the IDB has a high regard for the WIEF Foundation because of the many platforms and successful Forums the Foundation has organised, with the aim to be a facilitator for business and development initiatives.

**“Since the start of IDB’s partnership with the WIEF Foundation, we have immediately forged a strategic partnership which resulted in the successful implementation of joined activities and initiatives to further our**

**common goals and objectives. IDB is aware of the need to persistently support and facilitate all aspects of regional cooperation, and we look forward to continue being instrumental in making a difference to both the Muslim and non-Muslim countries. IDB initiated this second MoU as we wanted to further enhance the IDB Group’s relationship with the WIEF,”** he said.

The MoU covers various areas of cooperation including dialogues on development issues; promotion of economic growth through increased trade and investment; promotion of Islamic finance; contribution to the poverty reduction efforts in the Muslim World; promotion of the development of the private sector; and increasing opportunities for women and the youth in development.





# TUN MUSA'S JUBILEE MEDAL FROM KAZAKHSTAN



For his contribution towards the development of Malaysian-Kazakh relations, Tun Musa Hitam, Chairman of the World Islamic Economic Forum Foundation, was awarded a Jubilee Medal in commemoration of the anniversary of the Republic of Kazakhstan's 20<sup>th</sup> year of independence.

The award was presented to Tun Musa, who is also Malaysia's former Deputy Prime Minister, by the Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Malaysia, H.E. Beibut Atamkulov, at the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Kuala Lumpur.

In his acceptance speech, Tun Musa underscored the importance of Malaysia and the Republic of Kazakhstan strengthening their ties in 2012 and onwards.

**"Malaysia has had a very robust relationship with Kazakhstan. Our countries have signed various bilateral trade agreements, which have reinforced ties. Malaysia and Kazakhstan both have an abundance of natural resources, are both multi-ethnic and each share the goal of becoming a hub for their respective regions,"** said Tun.

Malaysia will be lending its expertise and support for five key projects to assist the Central Asian

republic. They are Islamic banking, oil and gas, electricity generation and a landmark hotel reflecting Malaysian architecture and culture in Kazakhstan's capital. The World Islamic Economic Forum Foundation and the Kazakhstan Government will continue to explore other means and ways of forging closer working relations, increase trade in select areas, and provide opportunities for educational and cultural exchange, among other areas.

The Jubilee Medal is awarded to citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan and foreign nationals who have made a significant contribution to the establishment of statehood, strengthening of the sovereignty, as well as social and economic development, of the republic. Past recipients of the award include leaders from Kazakhstan, Bulgaria and Azerbaijan.







April 2012 saw the Marketplace of Creative Arts descending upon the creative city of Bandung for its 4<sup>th</sup> event, held in partnership with the Bandung Creative City Forum.

The event, which took place on 14-15<sup>th</sup> April, attracted thousands of local and international participants. Forty artists, traditional and contemporary dancers, filmmakers and singers/musicians from all 10 ASEAN countries, Japan, India and Australia were involved in the event. Read snippets of the Marketplace in Bandung through the lens of one of our participants, Najwa Yosof.







# MARKETPLACE TRAVELOGUE: ROCKING BANDUNG!

By: Najwa Yosof

It has been weeks since the vibrant and incredibly exhilarating 4<sup>th</sup> Marketplace of Creative Arts took place in Bandung, Indonesia, but I still have songs stuck in my head and conversations with artists that I wish never ended.

The organisers did a great job making sure the programme was packed full of entertaining performances and quality dialogues – there was always somewhere to be and someone to see.

Against the backdrop of colourful modern and traditional fusion art, the artists' passion and love for their craft – in music, film, visual art and poetry – shone through their performances. The local and international line-up, featuring artists from ASEAN and the neighbouring countries, was phenomenal! When there were performances on stage, people would stop in their tracks to find out what was going on. And a lot was happening. The event dominated the heart of Ciwalk in Bandung in the two days it was held.

**The theme of the event, 'Design Nation: Carving Creative Spaces'**

**underlined the need for nations and communities to open their world to creativity and the arts. The argument for government and society to invest in the arts is that it is more than just singing, painting or dancing. It is a basis for business and livelihood and a huge number of young people's lives depend on it.**

At the Opening Ceremony, Tun Musa Hitam, Chairman of the World Islamic Economic Forum Foundation talked about his pride in the fact that the Marketplace series features a wide representation of people with different backgrounds but all carrying one common interest, which is to dedicate their lives to art and culture. This dedication is clear when you see how engrossed the invited artists were in each other's works of art, across the category.

Very much unlike the usual atmosphere of your run-of-the-mill music festivals, where artists are usually holed up in dressing rooms except during their own performances. Everyone seemed interested in everyone else's work. But I guess it is hard not to be, they were all so very talented!

**Tun Musa also talked about the contribution of young people to their societies, especially in arts and culture, which should never be disregarded. He said that countries should not ignore the demands of the young. More power to the (young) people!**

Another speaker, Bapak Tanri Abeng, stressed that creative innovation must be promoted through the 'market' as it is the place to network, learn and develop strategic alliances. The Minister for Indonesia's mint new Tourism and Creative Economy Ministry, Ibu Mari Pangestu, expressed her hope that the Marketplace of Creative Arts could possibly be an annual event in Bandung. She stated that creative economy has a very bright future as there is no end to

creativity as long as you nurture it.

The live performances following the Opening Ceremony started with a bang...in fact, several bangs by TRAH Project, a local group that explored a brilliant way to fuse traditional and modern music. Just the expressions on their faces made their whole performance incredibly entertaining. Fun - that's the word. The rest of the Opening Ceremony had a creative, head bobbing vibe that brought on a huge crowd. Saturday night saw the biggest crowd, bumped by the weekenders Jakartans who come to the Shopping Capital for a little bit of R&R. The serenade of Aparna, Amir Jahari's crooning guitar and Agung's mesmerising moves, to note a few, were memorable, while Shinji's (aka Abang Botak) frank spoken words cuts across the cultural/language barrier to fire up the crowd.

Another feature of the Marketplace of Creative Arts that I found intriguing was the dialogue sessions amongst the artists that took place throughout the 2-day

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event. As most of us know, artists use art to showcase what they desire to say in a creative way. Their knowledge of their art and the story behind their search for the right path to be heard and seen were something commendable. It is also exciting to look at the how the entry points into the industry are changing rapidly with the emergence of social media. You may not be known today, but if another artist recommends your work, you could all of sudden hear other people playing your song or watching your video tomorrow.

**On one hand, it is becoming faster for artists to get their work of art out there, but with the market liberated by technology, it could also be saturated with 'new artists'.**

In between dialogues and performances, I took to sneaking into the Reel Room, where the

works of young filmmakers were featured. Unlike mainstream films, there was a sense of rawness and honesty to the featured films. While the subjects were varied, many of them revolved around social issues in day-to-day setting, as seen through the eyes of young people. Some of the subjects explored were slum childhood, arranged marriage, criminality, religion and transparency.

This year's Marketplace focused on music and spotlighted some of the most talented, young – and I mean very young – artists. Two up-and-coming artists that have given me hope that our younger generation is going to make good music: Nisa Addina, violinist extraordinaire, who is only 15; and the adorable 13 year-old Aziz Harun, singer/songwriter from Brunei. It is Aziz's song, 'Peace and Harmony', that has been stuck in my head for weeks. His voice had this sweet, good natured soul

to it and his song, which he wrote when he was 10, is not only catchy but has an inspiring message behind it. He is definitely one to watch for.

The dancers were particularly graceful this year, and the fluidity of their movements was thought-provoking. Every muscle movement seemed to have a meaning behind it. Even their shadows were eloquent. Is that possible? My shadow looks like an irregular rectangle with limbs. Not pretty. One of the dancers, Sodachiv Chumvan (aka Belle) from Cambodia gave a dramatic performance one night, a contemporary fusion dance with hints of traditional and hip-hop – she pretty much was the epitome of cool.

**The closing performance, which involved collaborations between the artists during those two days took my breath away. There was an assortment of collaborations with singers,**

**dancers and musicians, their eclectic sounds and movements gelled perfectly. The best part had to be when the honourable Chairman of the WIEF came on stage and serenaded the audience of hundreds with a love song. Do I see a tradition for following Marketplaces? Definitely!**

During the collaborating performances, several dancers worked with other artists to create amazing pieces of work. The Marketplace really does open up the opportunity for the artists to work with different art forms crossing national boundaries, and the results were out of this world!

I'm really looking forward to see what the next Marketplace of Creative Arts in Johor Bahru, which will be held during the 8<sup>th</sup> WIEF Annual Forum, will bring. I can see the Marketplace growing into something phenomenal. As long as there are artists, there should always be a Marketplace!

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