



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF FIANZ

Assalamo Alaikum Warahmatullah wabarkatohu

AL-Hamdolillah, last six months have been very productive for FIANZ. We co-hosted an international event i.e. RISEAP General Assembly in Auckland, had a successful first Muslim convention, supported a number of youth programmes, invested savings in a new property and recently co-hosted a successful economic forum.

The new Executive members are enthusiastic and working together as best as they can and the workload and outcomes are direct evidence of unity within the team. As a community we are faced with a multitude of challenges, we should remain united and focussed in developing and improving our religious and socio-economic life in a secular and peaceful environment of New Zealand.

FIANZ is acutely aware that over the years, our community has grown. With this growth, the religious and socio-economic needs of the community have also increased. Over the last 20 years, FIANZ has been in the forefront of facilitating and fulfilling the religious requirements of the Muslim community in New Zealand by providing monetary contributions towards building Masajid and Islamic Centres all around New Zealand. FIANZ has also been consistently supporting the needs of the Muslim community for Dawah activities through a regular contribution of annual Dawah grants to its affiliated Regional Associations. To date, FIANZ had assisted in the construction of Masajid and Islamic Centre projects in Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wellington, Dunedin, Tauranga, Invercargill and Rotorua through monetary grants and loans.

The aim of FIANZ is to establish resources for religious and social needs of the New Zealand Muslims. This is in line with its stated functions and obligations as the Apex body in New Zealand for coordinating Dawah, educational and welfare projects among the Muslims in Aotearoa. Future plans for FIANZ include construction of Islamic Schools, Islamic Libraries, Resource and



Research Centres in partnership with institutions like Islamic Development Bank.

Confronted with by the wind of modernisation and other non Islamic influences on our society, community leaders should be creative in tackling the youth issues and challenges facing them. We must move beyond the walls and the minarets of the Masajid into the wonders of cyberspace to reach out to our youths. For this, FIANZ's new Executive is committed to better engagement with our youths through the creation of an organisational infrastructure that is well supported by the Local Associations and Trusts as well as involving the tertiary students. We should recognise and appropriately affirm all round excellence among Muslim youths. In the last six months, FIANZ has provided assistance to six youth camps covering both Islands and collectively benefiting over 2000 Muslim youths.

In October 2009, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the New Zealand Police. The Police will work with FIANZ and Local Associations in the prevention of crime and protecting the community including youths. The NZ Police will also initiate recruitment programme for Muslim youths to join the Police.

Diverse as we are in our culture and heritage, together, we should continue to look beyond and work to uplift the Muslim community in New Zealand. If we come together, focus our energies to tackle various issues and challenges facing us, we will certainly make a long-term difference to our community in particular and the New Zealand society in general.

Our beloved Prophet (Sallalaahu Alaihi Wasallam) said that: "In relation to one another, the Muslims are like a building: every unit reinforces and is reinforced by all others". May Allah SWT guide us all on the right path and accept our humble deeds. May Allah SWT keep our community united.

Wasalaam Alaikum

Dr ANWAR-UL GHANI MNZM, JP



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NEW ZEALAND MUSLIM CONVENTION 24-25 OCTOBER 2009

The Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand Inc. (FIANZ), the national Muslim organisation, for the first time in the history of FIANZ, organised a national New Zealand Muslim Convention held during the last Labour weekend holidays (24-25 October 2009). This inaugural event was attended by Government officials, Non Governmental Organisations and members of the diplomatic community. Along with the VIPs, about 500 members of the Muslim community attended the opening ceremony. The event was officially opened by Hon Pansy Wong, Minister for Ethnic Affairs.

Hon Minister Pansy Wong, Minister of Ethnic Affairs in her speech emphasised the building of a strong Muslim families/ community as attributes of a Kiwi Muslim, the role played by FIANZ in leading them and the Muslim contribution to the economic and social development of New Zealand. She also applauded the Youth Excellence Program initiated by FIANZ.

Hon Phil Goff, Leader of the Opposition, alluded to the 48 different nationalities making up the Muslim population in New Zealand and the degree of harmony and tolerance in them. He said this was possible only with the important role played by FIANZ in bringing the different ethnicities together.

Mr Joris de Bres, Race Relations Commissioner, in his speech, paid tribute to FIANZ and the Islamic Women Council for amicably resolving the recent hijab (headscarf) issue of a sister from Hastings.

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YOUTH EXCELLENCE RECOGNISED

The progress of any community is measured by the success of its individuals. The success of the individual is influenced by their upbringing and support received at home. In this regard, family elders (the grandparents and parents) play a pivotal role in moulding the youth with the right character attributes and behaviour, imbuing in them self-discipline and a sense of responsibility to their family, their community and to the country.



With Br Ahmed Bhamji (Chairman FIANZ Business Committee) handing over the medals and Br Daud Azimullah (Coordinator FIANZ Muslim Convention), Br Haider Lone (President of NZMA) presents the medals to the winners of the soccer team.

In recognising the good achievement of our Youth, FIANZ has initiated the Youth Excellence Awards. Last year, during the inaugural Muslim Convention in Auckland, following four youths were identified as recipients of the Youth Excellence Award:

Age Group 18-24

Sr Norzahirah Ahmad, B. Sc (Biotechnology) University of Waikato Hamilton.

Sr Norzahirah achieved overall "A" Grade in 18 courses. She is an active member of the Waikato Muslim Women Group. Sr Norzahirah is also active at University Muslim Youth programmes.

Age Group 14-18

Sr Ayesh Ghani, NCEA Level 3, Hillcrest High School, Hamilton

Sr Ayeshah achieved Excellence at NCEA Level 1 (61 E Points and Level 2 (58 E Points). She attained 70% at

the Cambridge Math Examination in 2008 and was selected amongst the top 30 in Year 12 Science students in Waikato region for the Gallagher-Hill Laboratory Summer Camp. Sr Ayeshah has represented Waikato at NZFMC Meetings. She is also an active member of the Waikato Muslim Youth Group.

Muzaffar Mohammed Ali NCEA Level 1, Auckland.

Muzaffar achieved Excellence at NCEA Level 1 (56 E Points), He had participated at Youth Camps, Qur'an Competition and Marshal Arts.

Waleed Ahmed Bukhari, NCEA Level 1, Waikato Hamilton.

Waleed achieved NCEA Level 1 with Merits. He has memorised the Qur'an and had led Tarawih Prayers at Local Masjid. Waleed is also an active participant in the local Youth programme and had played for his College 11 Cricket Team.

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HE Dato Hasnudin Hamzah, Malaysian High Commissioner, in his speech, outlined various events in history involving the Muslims and the attempts to bridge the differences between Muslims and Non-Muslims. He also stressed Malaysia's commitment to peace and its participation in events for racial harmonisation. He concluded by saying that he was happy to see that Muslims are living in peace and harmony in New Zealand.

In his keynote address, HE Justice (Rtd) M P H Rubin, High Commissioner of Singapore, shared his view of how the 21st Century has been for the Muslims. He also spoke briefly about the Medina Charter which was based on tolerance. The High Commissioner made a reference point of Singapore for mutual respect, self-restraint and obedience to God.

The idea of organising such an event was to bring together the Muslim community of New Zealand to discuss and strategise issues that are of concern to the Muslims of New Zealand. Our objective was to strengthen our Islamic belief and way of life and yet identify ourselves as Kiwi Muslims. Alhamdulillah, the event has been a tremendous success. We believe it has evoked the community-spiritedness and passed on the messages of acceptance, tolerance, unity, understanding and cohesiveness in living together as a community and with the wider communities of New Zealand.



Sheikh Mohamed Amir, Chairman of FIANZ Ulama Board assisting Dr Anwar Ghani, President of FIANZ in presenting the FIANZ Shield to the overall winner of the Qur'an/Islamiat Competition from Al-Madinah School.

FIANZ is mindful that the economic downturn has hit every sector of society including our community. To uplift the economic wellbeing of the community, we are engaging with the Office of Ethnic Affairs and the Ministry of Social Development. The recently (11th March) held Muslim Economic Forum in Auckland which was organised in partnership with the Office of Ethnic Affairs. Hon. Pansy Wong highlighted potential for NZ businesses to grow in Muslim markets. Drs Anwar Ghani, Mustafa Farouk and Asad Mohsin spoke on various topics highlighting Muslims' contribution to NZ economy and identified future opportunities. Government and private business entities were given an opportunity to showcase the potentials of the Muslim community. Insha Allah, we hope that there will be positive flow-on effects following this Forum that will be beneficial to the community. In an interview to Ethnic Whispers Dr Anwar Ghani said "It was a good meeting involving Muslim entrepreneurs, community leaders, business leaders and government policy agencies. Topics discussed provided opportunities to explore how NZ Muslim community can be a conduit to grow various sector of NZ economy. Idea of Halal tourism appears to be worth following further and FIANZ as the Umbrella Muslim Organisation in New Zealand is willing to work with Tourism NZ to develop this specialised and untapped area of NZ Tourism market. Intra diversity within New Zealand Muslim community can be strength in this regard.



ECONOMIC FORUM



Dr Anwar Ghani, (President of FIANZ) presenting at the Economic Forum



FIANZ visit to Saudi Consulate in New Zealand

FIANZ Executives recently called upon the newly appointed Saudi Consular General HE Ahmed Al-Johani and welcomed him in New Zealand on behalf of the Muslim community. The Consular General assured of good working relationship with FIANZ and praised the work of FIANZ. He presented a framed replica of Kabah to Dr Anwar Ghani.



Dr Anwar Ghani accepting a gift on behalf of FIANZ from HE Ahmed Al-Johani (Consul-General, Saudi Arabia)



14TH RISEAP GENERAL MEETING AUCKLAND

The 14th Annual General Assembly of the Regional Islamic Da'wah Council of Southeast Asia and the Pacific (RISEAP) was held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Auckland, New Zealand from 26-30 November 2009. The Minister of Ethnic Affairs, Hon Pansy Wong, was the Chief Guest of Honour at the Opening Ceremony. Approximately, 65 delegates and observers from 14 member countries attended the General Assembly.

The President of FIANZ, Dr Anwar-ul Ghani, welcomed the overseas and invited guests and outlined the activities that the Federation was undertaking for and on behalf of the Muslim community of New Zealand. He wished the participants a very pleasant stay in New Zealand and urged them to visit other parts of the country before departing for their respective countries.

In her address to the General Assembly, Hon Minister Pansy Wong referred to the strengthening economic, trade and educational relations between Malaysia and New Zealand and appraised the audience of the enormous contribution that the New Zealand Muslim community, under the strong leadership of FIANZ, has made to the growth and development of the New Zealand society, its economy and culture. "The Muslim community", she said, "while maintaining its religious identity, has peacefully settled and adapted itself to the ethos of the New Zealand society".

The President of RISEAP, Pehin Sri Dr. Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, in his opening address stressed the importance of democracy to the healthy development of any community and noted that Muslims in New Zealand are fortunate to live in a democratic environment in which they can preserve their identity while playing a positive and productive role in the mainstream affairs of their adopted country. He also applauded the government of New Zealand for choosing the path of dialogue with Muslims rather than the confrontational and conflictive approach opted by some other Western countries.

He also observed the increasing participation of Muslim women in community activities and urged that their participation must be enhanced even further. "Muslims have learned", he said "to adapt themselves to the changing global environment since 9/11 and are able to avoid falling into the trap of extremist ideologies".



Dr Ashraf Choudhary (Member of Parliament), Pehin Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud (President of RISEAP), Hon Minister Pansy Wong (Minister of Ethnic Affairs), Javed Khan (First Vice President, FIANZ), Dr Anwar Ghani (President of FIANZ) and Ikbal Patel (President of AFIC)

Pehin Sri Taib Mahmud congratulated FIANZ for the enormous achievements it has made over the past 30 years and prayed for its continuous success in the future.

In keeping with RISEAP's philosophy of interfaith understanding, Dr. Keith Row, the Anglican preacher in Auckland was invited to address the assembly. "Let us, Christians and Muslims, hold our hands together", he appealed, "and cross our hurdles with confidence to reach our common destination of achieving success in this world and the Hereafter".

The AGM, after two days of deliberations decided, among other things, to establish a Natural Disaster Relief Fund in order to be prepared to face the frequent natural calamities that are occurring in our region and urged FIANZ and AFIC (Australian Federation of Islamic Councils) to seriously consider establishing a Baitulmal Fund in their respective countries from zakat and donations to assist the needy and poor in the Pacific region.

The Annual General Assembly thanked the New Zealand government and FIANZ for facilitating the assembly to take place in their beautiful country.