

08/02/08 06:56

Regional youth interfaith dialog highlights common challenge of climate change

Jakarta, (ANTARA News) - Australian Ambassador to Indonesia Bill Farmer has welcomed Australia's participation in the Asia Pacific Interfaith Youth Camp 2008 held in Surabaya from 27-31 July 2008, the Australian embassy said in its website here on Friday.

According to the embassy, Farmer expressed his gratitude to the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia for organising the camp, which focused on encouraging 100 youths from Asia Pacific Interfaith Dialogue countries to share their ideas on how to best combat the common threat of climate change.

"Climate change is a problem faced by people of all ages, faiths and nationalities and the interfaith dialogue process provides a useful mechanism to increase understanding on this critical issue, particularly among the young generation," Farmer said.

Five Australians participated in the Youth Camp which Indonesia proposed during the Phnom Penh Dialogue on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace and Harmony held earlier this year.

Australian participant Tessa Dowdell, a 21 year old environmental engineering student from Sydney, said the camp allowed her to see similarities in the environmental challenges faced by both Indonesian and Australian communities.

"Our field trip to a village in the mountains of East Java, which is suffering water shortages, is an experience I want to share with other Australians," Ms Dowdell added.

Ms Dowdell was also able to tell Indonesian communities about the impact of drought on farmers in Australia's rural areas.

Ms Dowdell, who is also a member of the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, said that the camp demonstrated that youth from all faiths and nationalities across the Asia-Pacific region share the same concerns about climate change and global warming, which she also described as one of the biggest challenges of her generation.

The Australian and Indonesian Governments are currently working together to decrease the impact of global warming in Indonesia under the Forest Carbon Partnership, which was signed during Prime Minister Rudd's visit to Indonesia in June this year. (*)