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PUBLIC STATEMENT

On Indonesia

As the Twelfth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) takes place 10 to 16 May 2017 in Windhoek, Namibia, more than 300 delegates from 145 member churches, from across seven regions of the world gather together. The Assembly sets the vision and priorities of the communion, it is the highest decision-making body.

As the Assembly started its meeting on 10 May 2017, information was received that Mr Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), former governor of Jakarta, Indonesia, had been sentenced to a 2-year imprisonment by the North Jakarta District Court on 9 May with reference to Indonesia's blasphemy law. Mr Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), a Christian, denied the accusation of blasphemy against him and plans to appeal. He argued that when he referred to the Qur'an in one of his speeches last year he did not at all intend to defame Islam.

Together with the LWF member churches in Indonesia present at this Assembly, the Assembly expresses its deep concern about the developments in Indonesia leading up to the court sentence. The judicial process was accompanied by mass mobilization of an unprecedented scale, which made it difficult for the judicial process to be impartial and free of political interests. The Assembly urges the Indonesian judiciary to maintain its independence. Instead of reference to a religious judgement of a religious community, this judicial process needs to be based on public regulations, not religious regulations.

The Assembly joins the many Christians, as well as leaders and people across different religions, who are deeply worried about the way religion has been politicized in this process. This is very detrimental to the goal of people of different religions in Indonesia living side-by-side in peace.

The Indonesian constitution guarantees freedom of religion or belief in Indonesia. It states that every person is free to embrace the religion of their choice, to worship according to their religion or belief and to choose their education and teaching, even as every person is entitled to freedom of belief and to express their thoughts and opinions in accordance with their conscience. This is in accord with the

commitment to fundamental freedom that guarantees the freedom of each citizen to profess their own religion and to worship according to their religion or belief.

The Indonesian churches, together with other religious communities and civil society actors, have raised serious concerns regarding the blasphemy law 1 and its implementation as they undermine constitutional guarantees.

With the Indonesian churches, the Assembly urges the appropriate authorities to review this law in order to ensure that the constitutional rights are guaranteed. The Lutheran World Federation, together with a civil society coalition from Indonesia, has submitted a report for the United Nations Universal Periodic Review on Indonesia, currently underway.

The Assembly calls upon all Indonesians to abide by the vision that the preamble of the Indonesian constitution sets forth as vision for their country, i.e. a society built on Pancasila in which people of diverse religions, ethnic groups and cultures live together to realize a just, peaceful and prosperous society.

Adopted by the LWF Twelfth Assembly 16 May 2017.

¹ Law Number 1 / PNPS / 1965, adopted into Article 156a of the Criminal Code.