

The responsibility of religious leaders for peace and tolerance

DIALOGUE WITH LEADING MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF KORAN SCHOOL TEACHERS JUWAQUTA

On February 18th and 19th, Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the association of Koran school teachers JUWAQUTA brought together leading members of Muslim communities in the region Dar es Salaam, in order to discuss their own role understanding, and to work out proposals on how the communities might get involved into the socio-political discussion more effectively. Apart from the Koran school teachers, leading representatives of the umbrella organization of Tanzanian Muslims BAKWATA, as well as representatives of BAKWATA's youth and women organization attended the discussion.

After a brief introduction by the chairman of JUWAQUTA, Alhaj Sheikh Alhad Musa Salum, and a self-presentation of the participants, Stefan Reith, head of the office of Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Tanzania, warmly welcomed the leading members of JUWAQUTA and BAKWATA, and pointed out their special responsibility as religious leaders. Due to their moral authority and their leading role, they can contribute significantly to a peaceful coexistence, as well as to a constructive participation of Muslim communities in socio-political debates in Tanzania. Within his speech, Alhaj Sheikh Alhad Musa Salum appealed to the leaders, to put forward their matters of concern with a common voice, and therefore revise the organizational and communicative structures of the Muslim community as a whole. Only by this, interests of the Muslim community might be represented effectively in socio-political debates. Considering this, the workshop aimed to support the leaders of

the region Dar es Salaam, to develop a coherent strategy, which might be transferred to the level of communities later on. The JUWAQUTA chairman stated that besides their spiritual task, religious leaders also had the secular responsibility to be active in improving the living conditions within their communities, and to take care of social matters. Special attention had to be paid to the aspect of education. Education, the awareness of own values, as much as respect and tolerance were key factors to dissolve potential conflicts among the followers of different religions before they even arise, and to contribute to the Tanzanian development as well.

The participants agreed that only the one who knows about his own values and positions, may lead an interreligious dialogue on the same level. A strong awareness of own



Stefan Reith extends his gratitude to the Chairman of JUWAQUTA, Alhaj Sheikh Alhad Musa Salum, and appreciates that JUWAQUTA placed trust into KAS Tanzania.

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TANSANIA

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März 2012

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positions and a constructive cooperation with other religious groups might also diminish the threat of political interference. Another challenge is to spread the JUWAQUTA constitution, so that by bringing it to the communities, the coherence and acceptance of the leading structures can be strengthened. Furthermore, the duty of the leaders to distance themselves from public corruption and other grievances, in order to live up to the expectations put on them was stressed. To achieve these goals, the leaders have to act in a responsible, transparent, honest, determined and coherent way. In this respect, the cooperation with Konrad Adenauer Foundation would be a good means to organize advanced training and by this strengthening the organization of the Muslim communities, Alhaj Sheikh Alhad Musa Salum said. Finally, the participants agreed on an action schedule. First and foremost, the results of the workshop shall be written down and distributed to all local branches of JUWAQUTA, to make the agreements available for all members. Afterwards, priorities for future trainings with KAS shall be identified.

By the end of the second day, the chairman once again thanked KAS for its engagement within the dialogue with the Muslim community. According to JUWAQUTA, the training is an important contribution to the inter-religious dialogue and – during the last two years – helped to bring different religious groups more closely together. Stefan Reith also extended his gratitude, and appreciated the trust JUWAQUTA placed into KAS Tanzania. KAS Dar es Salaam is going to continue the close cooperation and support its partner in taking on its responsibility for the Tanzanian society and democracy.



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Impressum

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