



UID Bids Farewell to Co-founder Frans Seda!

It is with great sadness that we share with you the news of the passing of our co-founder and first chairman Frans Seda.

Franciscus Xaverius Seda, known as Frans Seda, died on 31 December at age 83. Prior to joining the leadership team of the United in Diversity (UID) foundation in 2003, Pak Frans had had such a distinguished career, holding numerous minister posts during the Sukarno and Suharto presidencies and being a close advisor to former president Megawati Sukarnoputri—until his very last days, actually.

Indonesia has just lost one of her finest sons. “On behalf of the nation..., we will give Frans Seda a military funeral,” Indonesia’s transportation minister Freddy Numbery, representing the government, told Frans’s family before his burial.

“He was still full of spirit in his last days, and always gave me useful advice,” said former president Megawati Sukarnoputri.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who came to pay respect to Pak Frans, said that he was one of Indonesia’s leading figures of democracy.

Indeed, it was Pak Frans who coined the name “United in Diversity” for our foundation as he shared with UID co-founder Aristides Katoppo that he felt the phrase “Unity in Diversity”—the founding motto of Indonesia as a nation—implied coercion. What he wanted was a new era that is “united in diversity” as it has to be uniting through democracy and the hearts and minds of the people.

Since the founding of UID in 2003, Pak Frans participated in our meetings in which he gave us great advice and guidance. We at UID—and anyone who has come to know Pak Frans—will miss him and his kind and calm character dearly. To be sure, UID will never be the same without his support, guidance and wisdom.

And to honor Pak Frans, UID is working on some scholarships that will be named after him, along with former president Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) who died just hours before him and the late UID trustee Ali Alatas.

These are Indonesian heroes who served the nation and hoped that Indonesia will be a nation united in diversity. May we live up to their hope.