Klaster Filantropi Lingkungan

Rumah Zakat · Filantropi Indonesia · Amanah Daya Nusantara — Together Guarding Our Sacred Trust

Climate Talk Episode 1 Report

Indonesia's Climate: Past, Present and Future

Translating Global Commitments into Locally Grounded Action







Greyhound Café Menteng, 8 September 2026

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Executive Summary

Climate Talk Episode 1 highlighted a persistent gap between Indonesia's national and global climate commitments and the ways climate change is understood and experienced at community level. While climate policy is commonly expressed through concepts such as NDCs, net zero, decarbonisation and energy transition, participants emphasised that communities encounter climate change more directly through floods, droughts, crop failures, water insecurity, forest and land fires, pressures on livelihoods and other economic consequences. The discussion therefore underscored the importance of translating climate issues into language and relationships grounded in people's lived experience, values and local realities. Indonesia's climate challenge was also presented as interconnected rather than exclusively environmental, linking forests and land, energy, water, food, livelihoods, economic development and governance. Fragmented planning and mandates, uneven implementation capacity, weak enforcement, competing interests and inconsistent approaches to data, measurement and communication were identified among the challenges affecting effective climate action.

The discussion placed particular emphasis on moving from fragmented responses towards collective and locally grounded action. Mr Agus Purnomo stressed the need to make ecological interdependence visible—for example, by connecting forests and watersheds with the water, livelihoods and wellbeing on which communities and businesses depend—and to communicate climate issues through terms people can understand. Mr Jalal complemented this through a systems-thinking perspective, arguing that visible climate impacts need to be understood in relation to deeper structures, mental models and values, and that responses should move beyond merely limiting further damage towards ecological regeneration. The panel and Q&A further explored how theology, ecology and economics could reinforce one another; how global commitments such as the Paris Agreement could become meaningful for vulnerable communities, including women and children; and how religious teachings could be connected with practical environmental action. Faith communities, houses of worship, philanthropy, businesses and grassroots networks were consequently discussed as potential sources of trust, social capital, resources and collective capacity for climate action.

The event ultimately pointed towards an approach in which climate action is built around values, ownership, collaboration and sustained commitment. Participants emphasised that environmental understanding needs to extend beyond technical knowledge and become connected with motivations and value systems that communities already recognise, while climate actors themselves need to maintain commitment despite changing political, economic and institutional circumstances. In closing, Mr Rizal Algamar linked these discussions to ongoing value-based research and segmentation intended to identify groups with the capacity to contribute to change, as well as to collaborative initiatives through interfaith climate action and the environmental and climate philanthropy cluster. Climate Talk Episode 1 therefore concluded not with a single prescribed solution, but with an emphasis on bringing different actors and capacities together, continuing to refine programmes through stakeholder input, and translating shared concerns and commitments into concrete action within communities.



Opening Remarks

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01



Source: Session Documentation

Mr Sonny Sukada
Executive Director, Perhimpunan Filantropi Indonesia

In his opening remarks, Mr Sonny Sukada highlighted the gap between the language commonly used in climate conferences, policy discussions and formal documents and the everyday realities experienced by communities. He observed that climate change is often communicated through complex terminology, emissions targets and concepts such as net zero, which can make the issue appear distant from the concerns of people living in villages, rural areas and urban peripheries. Yet, for these communities, climate impacts are already tangible in daily life, including rising food prices associated with crop failures, drying wells, increasingly frequent floods, and forest fires that threaten livelihoods. He therefore drew attention to a disconnect between high-level policymaking in Jakarta and the realities faced by communities on the ground.

Against this backdrop, he explained that *Climate Talk Episode 1*, collaboratively initiated by Perhimpunan Filantropi Indonesia, Yayasan Amanah Daya Nusantara (AYANA), and Rumah Zakat through the Environment and Conservation Cluster, sought to help bridge the distance between global climate commitments and the actual needs of grassroots communities. He cautioned that when climate change is communicated in ways that are detached from everyday experience, climate action risks being perceived as an elite trend rather than an issue directly relevant to people's lives. The discussion was therefore intended to bring the climate conversation closer to lived realities and encourage participants to listen to and exchange perspectives on how climate commitments can be translated into locally grounded action.

Mr Sukada concluded by emphasising the importance of collaboration rather than working separately across sectors. He noted that philanthropy, interfaith communities, businesses and grassroots communities each possess their own roles and strengths, and encouraged these different actors to bring those capacities together. Such collaboration, he suggested, could move the conversation beyond discussion towards concrete action whose impacts could be directly experienced by families across Indonesia. He invited participants to use the Climate Talk as an opportunity to listen to one another, exchange ideas and begin building forms of collaboration that are genuinely grounded in local realities.



Context Setting

02

Source: Unsplash



Source: Session Documentation

Mr Rizal Algamar
Chair of the Executive Board, Perhimpunan Filantropi Indonesia

In setting the context for the discussion, Mr Algamar highlighted the challenge of translating global and often highly technical climate narratives into issues that are meaningful to people in Indonesia. Climate discussions, he observed, encompass a wide range of interconnected issues and are frequently framed through concepts such as the 1.5°C temperature threshold, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), net zero, decarbonisation and energy transition. Drawing on ongoing value-based segmentation research in Java, he contrasted these narratives with people's lived experiences of climate-related pressures, including floods, droughts, crop failures and associated economic hardship. The research presented in his accompanying slide similarly identified extreme weather events, ecosystem degradation, food and water insecurity, and pressures on rural livelihoods as recurring risks, while its Phase 1 findings indicated that people understand climate disruptions through their experiences, worldviews and values. He therefore stressed the importance of making climate action socially relevant and locally owned, beginning with lived realities rather than abstract climate narratives.

Mr Algamar also raised concerns about the potential consequences of climate communication that remains disconnected from people's everyday concerns, including the risk of increasing polarisation and resistance to climate action. Against this background, he pointed to the potential role of trusted actors, particularly religious leaders, in communicating climate issues in ways that communities can understand, referring to AYANA's interfaith climate-action initiative. He also identified philanthropy as another potential platform for collective action, noting the presence of more than 100 members within the relevant Filantropi Indonesia cluster and its renewed efforts towards co-creation and collective action. These considerations framed a broader question for the Climate Talk: how climate action could become more locally owned by connecting it to the economic and social realities experienced by communities.

Finally, Mr Algamar invited the speakers and participants to examine which climate issues should receive strategic attention in Indonesia, particularly those contributing significantly to national emissions, the principal obstacles to addressing them, and whether existing policies and regulations adequately support effective action. He cited recurring forest and land fires (*kebakaran hutan dan lahan/karhutla*) as an example warranting discussion, questioning why similar problems, explanations and responses continue despite the availability of scientific early warnings, and raising the broader issue of how effectively scientific knowledge informs action. He consequently framed the discussion around the respective contributions that scientific expertise, interfaith climate action, philanthropy and collective advocacy could make, including whether policy or regulatory changes are needed to address priority climate issues identified through the discussion.



Source: Session Documentation



Speakers Session

Source: Unsplash

03

Bridging Climate Commitments and Everyday Realities



Source: Session Documentation

Mr Agus Purnomo
Former Executive Secretary of DNPI and Former Special Adviser to the President of the Republic of Indonesia on Climate Change and the Environment

Mr Purnomo opened by highlighting the scale of Indonesia's climate challenge and its consequences for communities, particularly coastal populations, farmers and fishers. His presentation identified forests and land, energy and waste as three major sources of greenhouse-gas emissions, while noting the limited time available to change the country's emissions trajectory towards its 2030 targets. He referred to Indonesia's national commitments, including its NDC, FOLU Net Sink 2030 and net-zero objective, as well as international support for energy transition through the USD 20 billion Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP). However, he emphasised a continuing disconnect between these commitments and people's everyday experience: technical climate terminology remains difficult to understand, while climate impacts are encountered more directly through crop failures, floods, pressures on incomes and livelihoods, and other economic consequences. He further observed that national commitments do not necessarily translate effectively into action at subnational and local levels, while the tangible benefits of climate finance and climate action remain unclear to many communities.

Mr Purnomo then focused on implementation and governance challenges, including fragmented planning and mandates, limited implementation capacity within local bureaucracies, and regulations and permits that may conflict with one another. A central message was that climate change should not be treated as an exclusively environmental issue, but as an economic and development concern affecting livelihoods and everyday needs. Turning to responses, he identified five principal areas for mitigation—forests and peatlands, energy, transportation, waste, and agriculture and food—before distinguishing these longer-term efforts to reduce warming from the immediate need to adapt to climate impacts already being experienced. He illustrated adaptation through practical concerns such as protecting coastlines and water sources, maintaining trees, strengthening local capacity and improving waste management. His discussion

of household waste burning also underscored the importance of behavioural and cultural change, for which he saw potential contributions from religious communities and civil-society organisations.

Finally, Mr Purnomo highlighted the substantial gap between Indonesia's climate-financing requirements and currently available resources. His presentation cited an estimated need of USD 757.6 billion through 2035, compared with substantially smaller existing sources of climate and transition finance. Rather than treating this gap solely as grounds for pessimism, he presented it as an opportunity to consider what could be undertaken through numerous smaller-scale initiatives, wider resource mobilisation and greater public participation. He concluded by drawing attention to the fragmentation of climate action: organisations may compete for limited funding, use different data sources and measurements, and communicate through different voices, making their combined contribution difficult to demonstrate. He therefore emphasised the need for stronger collective action, including greater collaboration and greater consistency in ways of understanding, measuring and communicating climate action—summarised in his closing appeal to seek greater alignment in "how we perceive (*cara pandang*), how we measure (*cara hitung*)" and how actors work together.



Source: Session Documentation

Rethinking Climate Action Through Systems and Values


Source: Session Documentation

Mr Jalal
Chairperson of the Advisory Board, Social Investment Indonesia

Mr Jalal framed Indonesia's climate crisis through systems thinking, arguing that recurring events such as floods, forest and land fires, deforestation and rising emissions should not be understood as isolated problems, but as manifestations of an interconnected system. Drawing on the iceberg model, he encouraged participants to look beneath visible events to recurring patterns, underlying structures, mental models and, at the deepest level, what he described following Otto Scharmer as the "Source" from which those mental models arise. He contrasted an *ego-system* orientation centred on the interests of individuals or particular groups with an *eco-system* orientation concerned with collective wellbeing and interconnectedness. In this context, he linked the fragmentation and competition for climate finance raised by the preceding speaker to a wider problem of actors pursuing their respective interests rather than responding collectively to the scale of the climate challenge.

Using causal relationships identified from his previous writings, Mr Jalal then described several reinforcing dynamics within Indonesia's climate system. He connected deforestation with reduced ecological capacity, greater risks of flooding and landslides, economic losses and subsequent pressures for further land conversion; and linked ambitious economic-growth objectives, including downstream processing and captive coal for smelters, with higher emissions, climate risks, disaster costs and renewed pressure for economic growth. He also acknowledged the existence of climate and disaster policies and regulations, while identifying weak implementation and enforcement as a critical break in the intended corrective mechanism. A further problem, in his account, was the narrative distance created when climate change is communicated primarily through technical and global terminology. Drawing on experiences with coastal communities, he argued that people may understand changes occurring around them—including sea-level rise and impacts on their surroundings—without necessarily using the technical vocabulary of greenhouse gases or climate policy. The corresponding causal-loop diagrams in his presentation depicted these dynamics as the deforestation–disaster–development trap, the growth–energy extraction trap, a weak formal-policy balancing loop, and a reinforcing narrative-distance loop.

Against these reinforcing pressures, Mr Jalal highlighted local religious and customary values as a potentially positive pathway for strengthening locally grounded climate action. He illustrated how religious teachings could connect environmental stewardship with concerns already meaningful to communities—for example, the need to protect adequate and clean water for *wudu*, which can in turn connect with protecting upstream forests, water sources and riverbanks. In his systems framing, such locally legitimate narratives could strengthen community ownership and oversight rather than relying solely on formal government enforcement. He argued that dispersed experiences of this kind need to be brought together through a more common language, measurement approach and theory of change. Concluding with Donella Meadows' work on leverage points, he stressed the importance of working at the deeper level of paradigms and underlying values rather than relying only on parameters such as targets, subsidies, standards and incentives. Although personally pessimistic about the trajectory of the climate crisis, he distinguished such pessimism from giving up: his closing message was that recognising a worsening outlook should instead reinforce the importance of continuing collective efforts to reduce harm and pursue deeper systemic change.



Speakers Panel Discussion

Source: Unsplash

04

Seeing the Connections: Forests, Water and Communities



Source: Session Documentation

Mr Agus Purnomo
Former Executive Secretary of DNPI and Former Special Adviser to the President of the Republic of Indonesia on Climate Change and the Environment

Responding to the moderator's question of where climate action should be focused, Mr Purnomo cautioned against viewing forests as an isolated agenda and instead emphasised their connections with other systems, including energy and, particularly, water. He argued that environmental issues often remain psychologically distant when their relationship to people's own lives is not apparent: forests, watersheds or springs located in distant mountains may be regarded as someone else's responsibility. Using the example of a company investing in forest protection after recognising that its water supply depended on upstream ecosystems, he illustrated how awareness of such interdependence can create a stronger motivation to act. For Mr. Purnomo, the challenge was therefore to translate broad environmental paradigms into relationships that people can see, feel and regard as relevant to their own lives, while building communities around a shared concern for forests, trees, water and other sources of wellbeing. He subsequently stressed the importance of communication expertise in making these connections accessible, observing that technical, academic and mixed-language climate discourse can itself become a barrier; communication should instead begin with what people directly experience, observe and understand.

Beyond Economic Benefits: Ecosystems and Wellbeing


Source: Session Documentation

Mr Jalal
Chairperson of the Advisory Board, Social Investment Indonesia

Mr Jalal similarly emphasised the importance of rebuilding people's connection with the ecological systems that sustain their lives. Drawing on an experience involving fishing communities, he described how understanding the relationship between healthy upstream ecosystems, freshwater flows and improved coastal livelihoods encouraged communities to support conservation beyond their immediate locality. In his account, making these connections visible—including enabling people to see where their water and food actually originate—can strengthen appreciation for the people and ecosystems that sustain everyday life and help translate an abstract paradigm into action. He further illustrated this relationship through a community example in which environmental restoration had generated both livelihood benefits and changes in how people valued their wellbeing. For Mr Jalal, economic benefits were important and tangible, but community members could also value spiritual, social and psychological dimensions of improved wellbeing, suggesting that ecological, economic and religious meanings can reinforce rather than displace one another.

Connecting Ecology, Livelihoods and Values


Source: Session Documentation

Combined Speakers' Response

Taken together, the speakers' responses placed particular emphasis on connection, locally meaningful communication and lived experience as foundations for climate action. Mr. Purnomo stressed the need to communicate climate and environmental issues in simpler language grounded in what people experience, rather than expecting communities to engage through specialised terminology. Mr Jalal complemented this by arguing that ecological relationships can become more meaningful when people directly understand how forests, water, food, livelihoods and religious values are interconnected. In response to the moderator's proposition about connecting theology, ecology and economics within interfaith climate action, both speakers therefore pointed towards approaches that begin with people's existing experiences and motivations: making ecological interdependence visible, communicating it in accessible terms, and linking environmental stewardship with livelihood and value systems that communities already recognise.



Q & A Session

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05

The Q&A broadened the discussion from climate communication to questions of responsibility, vulnerability and the translation of commitments into action. Participants raised the role of religious leaders in improving public understanding of environmentally harmful practices while questioning how larger corporate impacts, including forest clearing, should be addressed. Other interventions explored the relationship between theology, ecology and economics; how international commitments such as the Paris Agreement could translate into meaningful outcomes for vulnerable communities, particularly women and children; and how faith communities and houses of worship could serve as social capital for climate resilience. Participants also returned to the event's central theme by asking how Indonesia's climate situation had changed over time and how existing global and religious commitments could become practical local action rather than remaining primarily conceptual or institutional.

Responding to the questions collectively, Mr Purnomo emphasised the importance of sustained environmental commitment, including when political leadership, economic incentives or prevailing narratives change. He argued that environmental understanding needs to move beyond intellectual awareness and become sufficiently embedded in people's values that it is not easily displaced by competing interests. Rather than attempting to return to a pre-industrial past, he focused on present choices: protecting what remains, stopping further degradation, restoring damaged areas where possible, and ensuring that development contributes to people's wellbeing. He also stressed that governments alone would not be sufficient to achieve these objectives and returned to the importance of long-term commitment among religious and community actors. His closing reflection—whether one's own fundamental direction remains the same—placed responsibility not only on institutions and leaders but also on those seeking to advance environmental action.

Mr Jalal likewise argued that the response must go beyond merely stopping further damage towards regeneration, applying this responsibility to communities, government and business alike. He distinguished regeneration from simply returning to previous conditions after a crisis, arguing instead for improving ecological conditions, including forests, water systems and other ecosystem functions. He strongly supported mobilising faith communities and their networks as social capital for climate action and emphasised that religious communication should become practical rather than remain theoretical—for example, by connecting religious teachings on cleanliness or ablution with concrete care for drainage, water sources and surrounding ecosystems. Looking to the future, he reiterated his concern about the climate trajectory but stressed that future improvement remains dependent on choices made in the present, particularly the capacity to imagine and undertake collective action. He concluded that actors can commit themselves to sustained effort but cannot guarantee success; progress therefore depends on continuing to act and finding others with whom meaningful collaboration becomes possible.



Key Takeaways

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06

In his closing remarks, Mr Algamar returned to the importance of values, ownership and collective action in translating climate commitments into meaningful action at the community level. Referring to the ongoing value-based research and segmentation approach, he emphasised that different groups may need to be engaged in different ways and encouraged participants to continue contributing ideas and constructive input as collaborative initiatives are developed through interfaith climate action and the environmental and climate philanthropy cluster. He closed the first Climate Talk by reiterating the importance of different actors working together to turn shared concerns and commitments into practical action.

The discussion throughout Climate Talk Episode 1 highlighted four interconnected takeaways:

Key Takeaway	Main Insight
1 Translate climate commitments into lived realities	Climate terminology and national or global commitments become more meaningful when connected with people's direct experiences of water, food, livelihoods, floods, droughts, forests and other everyday concerns.
2 Make ecological interdependence visible	Forests, water, energy, food, livelihoods and economic development are interconnected. Making these relationships visible can help communities understand why environmental protection is relevant to their own wellbeing.
3 Connect climate action with values and trusted social networks	Religious values, faith communities, houses of worship and other trusted community networks can help connect environmental responsibility with locally recognised motivations, practices and values.
4 Move from fragmented efforts towards collective action	Government, philanthropy, businesses, faith communities, civil society and grassroots actors bring different capacities. Collaboration and locally grounded approaches can help translate shared commitments into practical community action.



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