Malay society, while recognising the special role of the Hadrami sayyids in propagating Islam to this part of the world. At the local (or “meso”) level, zapin is cement for social cohesion and provides the community with a religious identity, providing an avenue to be religious in a creative and artistic way. When interiorised (the “micro” view as Professor Anis described it), zapin functions as dhikr (remembrance of God), particularly when performed and undertaken by devotees of Sufi orders (tariqah), with the zapin music seen as silent dhikr, while the rendition of zapin songs or qaṣīdah is seen as passionate praises to the Divine Names or to the Prophet (pbuh).

By the three-fold analyses he showed the multi-layered meaning and role of zapin: the macro view connects civilisations and humanity through cultural exchange and dialogue; the meso-view offers space and scope for the locals to indigenise what seems foreign to them while instilling a local sense of ownership; and the micro-view affords the transposition of sonoral forms and physical movements of zapin as exterior support for the inward mystical journey.

12th International Conference on Islamic Studies  
(Surabaya, Indonesia, 5-7 December 2012)

Karim D. Crow, IAIS Malaysia

12th International Conference on Islamic Studies, 5-7 November 2012, Surabaya: "Islamic Studies Revisited: from theoretical to practical knowledge". Convened by the Directorate of Islamic Higher Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Republic of Indonesia; local host – State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Sunan Ampel.

This annual gathering of 360 leading university Islamic academics and graduate students from every corner of Indonesia held in the nation’s third largest city was an important occasion for Islamic higher education in the most populous Muslim nation. Plenary sessions interspersed with concurrent panels, some delivered in English, displayed the impressive diversity and competence of Muslim researchers and the contemporary interests of students. Major keynote addresses were delivered by Professor Dr H Dede Rosyada (Director, Islamic Higher Education) and Dr Karim D. Crow (IAIS). Visits to the famous mosque of Saint Sunan Ampel in the Arab quarter and to Madura Island were memorable.