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Diploma in Diplomacy 2020's Graduation Ceremony



The Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR) organised the Diploma in Diplomacy 2020 Graduation Ceremony on 1 October 2020 at the Hilton Hotel, Kuala Lumpur with strict compliance to the existing SOP.

The event was graced by the Honourable Dato' Kamarudin Jaffar, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia representing the Honourable Dato' Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia.

The ceremony was also attended by Dato' Sri Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Yaakob, Secretary General of the Ministry; Datuk Rostam Affendi Dato' Salleh, Director General, Research Division, Prime Minister's

Department; Dato' Dr. Zulkapli Mohamed, Director, Human Capital Development Division, Public Service Department; Senior Officers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and IDFR; DiD lecturers and speakers, IDFR's Distinguished Fellows, as well as family members of the graduates.

The ceremony commenced with the welcoming remarks by Dato' Mohd Zamruni Khalid, Director General of IDFR. He congratulated the DiD participants for successfully completing their eight-month programme despite the challenges faced amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Dato' Mohd Zamruni further commended the DiD participants for adapting to the new normal when the Movement Control Order (MCO)

was enforced. He also assured the participants that despite the pandemic related challenges, IDFR had worked tirelessly to ensure that the quality of the DiD Programme remains intact.

The graduation ceremony then proceeded with the address by the Honourable Dato' Kamarudin Jaffar, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia. In his address, Dato' Kamarudin expressed his felicitation to the DiD participants for successfully finishing the DiD programme. He added that the DiD programme conducted by IDFR has provided a solid foundation for Malaysian young diplomats to develop into well-rounded, dynamic and effective foreign service officers. The DiD Programme's core modules

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Feedback from the Participants

The DiD 2020 was unique because it was the first time participants had to attend classes through online platforms for 105 days out of eight months of the programme. Modules such as Negotiations for Junior Officers, Drafting of United Nations (UN) Resolutions, and Defending National Interests exposed the participants to real-life diplomacy and international relations with other nations. The programme was indeed beneficial in preparing foreign service officers for postings abroad. It also provided the best platform for young diplomats to enhance their soft skills, adaptability, and knowledge in preparation for various functions, roles, and responsibilities in future.

Muhammad Ashraff Nasaruddin **Prime Minister's Department**

The DiD 2020 programme has provided participants with opportunities to engage in highly interactive and experiential learning. Specifically, the participants were enriched, enlightened, and challenged through real-life case studies, simulations, role-plays, and the sharing of experiences by former and current Malaysian diplomats. The modules also provided insight into policy-making and implementation, diplomatic reporting and writing, negotiation and mediation, political and economic tradecraft, diplomatic protocol, the functions and management of embassies and consulates, public diplomacy and cross-cultural communication, and other skills and competencies. I believe that the DiD programme is an essential training ground for junior Malaysian diplomats. I gained a greater appreciation for the tools of the trade that would be essential to excel in the foreign service. Thus, I have striven to be more mindful and conscious of, inter alia, the need to contribute critical ideas confidently in pursuit of our national interest, accurately anticipate the situation and development around us so that the policy analysis and recommendation for our leaders would be more effective as well as

widen our engagement not merely with our foreign service counterparts but also with other relevant stakeholders. In this connection, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to IDFR. The Competency Enhancement Centre has provided me with an invaluable opportunity to improve myself in becoming a better diplomat and further, to best serve my beloved country, Malaysia.

Ahmad Fadhilzil Ikram **Americas Division** **Department of Bilateral Affairs**

DiD Programme 2020 provided a comprehensive training in various aspects of diplomacy. Despite the public health restrictions due to Covid-19, a big kudos for the team at CEC for arranging, for the first time in Wisma Putra, online classes and webinars. We also had state visits which were carried out in full compliance with the SOPs and public health measures.

Hoo Yip Soon **Southeast Asia Division** **Department of Bilateral Affairs**

Diploma in Diplomacy (DiD) is a great platform to help equip aspiring diplomats with the necessary skills required to serve in the diplomatic profession. The programme emphasises the grasp of substantive elements, language proficiency, and administrative matters in managing the chancery. Not only that, DiD also enabled participants to

broaden their horizons via a series of engagements with retired ambassadors, think-tanks, and captains of the industry. Hence, I believe this exposure better prepares participants for future assignments at missions abroad and shapes them to be more confident, composed, and competent diplomats.

Muhammad Haris Azman **Human Resource Management** **Division** **Department of Management Services**

Diploma in Diplomacy (DiD) is a unique and comprehensive programme designed to prepare young diplomats for their posting abroad. Given the intricate nature of diplomacy, DiD is currently playing a more crucial role than ever before in preparing Malaysian diplomats to face the 'battle' of diplomacy. IDFR has played its part in laying the groundwork in significance areas in diplomacy such as economics, politics, cultural and other important areas, for the young diplomats to experience diplomacy first hand. I believe this golden opportunity should be enjoyed by all diplomats that will be posted abroad regardless of their ministries/agencies.

Fatin Zafirah Haris **OIC and Regional Cooperation** **Division (ORCD)** **Department of Multilateral Affairs**





Malaysia-Philippines and the Sabah Issue: Maintaining Stability through Cooperation in the Post Covid-19 Era

Norraiha Zakaria
Aida Yasmin Azhar

Introduction

The tussle over Sabah between Malaysia and the Philippines has largely remained a game of diplomatic draughts. Although the issue of sovereignty was never questioned during more than 80 years of British control, the Philippines has carried on with disputing Sabah as part of Malaysia for more than 6 decades. Malaysia always maintains its stand that the Philippines' claim over Sabah has no legal bearing and vowed to never concede to the demand. Moreover, the people of Sabah have manifested their aspirations and decisions to join the Federation of Malaysia in 1962 through the Cobbold Commission. Malaysia continues to pursue an independent, principled, and pragmatic foreign policy. As neighbouring countries and ASEAN members, a stable bilateral relation between Malaysia and the Philippines must be nurtured and maintained as it is key to an effective diplomacy. There are numerous pertinent collaborations that could be ventured and cemented further, not just for shielding the strategic interests, but more so for sustaining the survival of both nations from multi-dimensional security threats in a post Covid-19 world.

The virus-related outbreaks are not novel phenomena in International Relations. The world has witnessed the upsurge in Influenza in 1918, Swine flu (H1N1) in 2009, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003, and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in 2012.¹ In contrast with the previous outbreaks, the recent Covid-19 pandemic has posed multifaceted security threats to the world at a mammoth scale in one go. It has endangered the entire human existence at an unprecedented soaring pace; triggered a severe worldwide unemployment in the history of capitalism; reversed the entire globalisation process with the espousal of lockdowns, travel bans, face masks, and 'physical distancing'; and plunged

the global economy into the worst crisis than the Great Depression of the 1930s. As of 1 December 2020, the coronavirus infection has surpassed 63 million people in 191 nations with the death toll has exceeded 1.4 million.² The cumulative infection cases in the ASEAN region have risen steeply over 1 million.³ More than 432,000 positive cases have been reported in the Philippines, over 67,000 in Malaysia and the numbers infected continue to grow rapidly.⁴ At present, Sabah has recorded about 43% of the total infected cases in Malaysia, making it the leading state that has the highest number of cases in the nation. Despite the imposition of certain Standard Operating Procedures to flatten the Covid-19 curve, the virus continues to spread. Due to the sporadic infection and unpredictable mutation, the D614G-type mutation detected among Covid-19 cases in Sabah has been claimed to be originated from the Philippines or Indonesia.⁵ Individuals alone or nations on their own are not competent to combat the multi-dimensional security challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. Malaysia and the Philippines too are no exception. Harping and bickering on 'Sabah is not in Malaysia' would not mitigate the mega security impacts of the outbreak, which have exceeded the World War I, World War II, and War on Terror.

Repatriation Assistance

The initiative to put the differences on Sabah issue aside and the effort to discuss repatriation assistance demonstrated by both nations should be applauded. Several repatriation exercises to bring home the stranded Filipinos in Malaysia have taken place on 28 April (183 people), 11 June (180 people), 23 July (351 people), and 31 Aug (145 people).⁶ These include Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW), businessmen, tourists, and students who were affected by the unexpected cancellation of commercial flights following the implementation of

the Movement Control Order (MCO) in Malaysia and the curfew in the Philippines. Malaysia has also assisted repatriating 2,000 Filipinos grounded in Sabah and 3,000 more have yet to be repatriated.⁷ 81 Malaysians stranded in the Southern Philippines were brought back to Kota Kinabalu on 12 June and 76 more were repatriated through the sea route from Zamboanga to Sandakan on 28 July.⁸ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia and various agencies in both nations have been working closely to facilitate the repatriation arrangements and ensure safe passage for those affected.

Comprehensive Management on PATI

Apart from the stranded Filipinos and Malaysians, the Covid-19 pandemic too has accentuated a Herculean challenge of managing illegal immigrants or PATI in Sabah. As manifested by the 2013 Lahad Datu intrusion, the porous maritime border that stretches from the Sulu, Celebes, and to South China Seas can easily expose Sabah to foreign invaders. The vulnerability of sharing a long land border with Indonesia and vast maritime area with the Philippines have been exploited by PATI. 30% of the 39 million population or 1.2 million people in Sabah are PATI.⁹ A massive influx of PATI from the Philippines dominated the cities of Tawau, Sandakan, and Kota Kinabalu. They have been labelled as stateless, refugees, asylum seekers, and work migrants, among others. Their basic freedoms and human rights are challenged by these overlapping labels and fluid legal status.¹⁰ Considering the Covid-19 virus is invisible and border-blind, the curbing of the coronavirus demands the Philippines to look beyond its dispute over Sabah. The responsibilities to safeguard the lives and livelihoods of stateless women and children in Sabah for instance, should not be borne by Malaysia alone or any local and international NGOs. The Philippines must venture into future collaboration



with the relevant stakeholders including Malaysia, NGOs, private organisations, governmental agencies, and international bodies to attain a comprehensive management and a longer lasting solution on the challenges of PATI in Sabah. As proposed by the Community Empowerment Initiative Sabah (CEI), an effective cooperation requires the establishment of a consortium that oversees immigrants' classification, rights and responsibilities, detention and deportation, as well as enhanced border control.¹¹

Trilateral Maritime Patrol in the Sulu Sea

The Covid-19 pandemic does not halt terrorism and transborder crimes in the Sulu Sea, known to host important maritime trade routes estimated to accommodate more than 100,000 ships passing through its water every year, carrying 18 million people and 55 million metric tonnes of cargo.¹² Terrorist organisations have employed the Sulu Sea as their nest of operation. Piracy, sea robbery, kidnapping-for-ransom, and other transnational crimes during the past years have led the call for a concerted effort to prevent the area from becoming a 'New Somalia'. A regional defence initiative involving Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia, dubbed as the Trilateral Maritime Patrol (TMP) was launched in 2017. The TMP has aided the establishment of Maritime Command Centres (MCC) in Tarakan (Indonesia), Tawau (Malaysia), and Bongao (the Philippines) with the aim to overcome violent extremism and terrorist movement across the porous borders of the three nations.¹³ The joint operation is largely maritime-based but later followed by the involvement of land and air military assets. The Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia have established a set of agreed procedures, i.e. sharing information and improving communication. The establishment of TMP is aligned with the spirit and centrality of ASEAN to maintain its regional water's stability. In addition, TMP must be nurtured further to prevent the ASEAN region from becoming the Covid-19 new epicentre.

International Monitoring Team in Mindanao

Despite the differences on Sabah, Malaysia and the Philippines have strengthened their bilateral ties through the formation of the International Monitoring Team (IMT) in Mindanao. IMT was established in 2004. It has played a major role in supporting the peace negotiations between the government of the Philippines and the Muslim Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). IMT, among others, monitors the rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development phases in the conflicted areas. The deployment of IMT in Mindanao is authorised under the provision of Chapter 8 of the United Nations Charter which allows a peace settlement to be managed under a regional arrangement and upon the invitation of the host government. As third-party facilitator to the Philippines-MILF peace negotiations, Malaysia has been involved in the peace-making and peacekeeping in the affected areas. Besides leadership, Malaysia has also steered the IMT to be an effective channel engagement with the civil society organisations (CSOs). The commitment of the Philippines and the unequivocal support of Malaysia with IMT are vital to sustain stability and peace in the region. Both nations should continue the positive momentum to support the development of Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).¹⁴

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Mission

The Global Climate Index 2020 reported that the Philippines, an archipelago of over 7,100 islands situated along the "Ring of Fire" and typhoon belt at the Pacific Ocean, ranked third in the most disaster-prone nations in 2018.¹⁵ With active volcanic mountains and extreme weather patterns, the Philippines is susceptible to deadly natural disasters. The Philippines has suffered from numerous volcano eruptions, typhoons, and earthquakes. The Taal Volcano eruption, the triple-hitt typhoons of Quinta, Rolly, and Vamco in 2020, and the still unfolding Covid-19 pandemic have put

the Philippines vulnerabilities into stark relief. It is imperative for the Philippines to embrace the past cooperation on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief mission offered by Malaysia. Thus, the Malaysia-Philippines cooperation must not be jeopardised due to the spat on Sabah issue. Back in 2013, within a span of three weeks, the Philippines was hit by two natural disasters which resulted in loss of lives and destruction of property. The Philippines embraced a 7.2 magnitude earthquake, known as the Bohol Earthquake in Visayas on 15 October 2013. It had damaged 30,000 homes and displaced more than 100,000 people.¹⁶ The town of Loon located in Central Visayas was one of the hardest hit areas in the province of Bohol. Malaysia was one of the early nations that lend a helping hand to the Philippines by providing monetary aids particularly for assisting the affected children. Barely three weeks after the earthquake, the Philippines was hit by the Super Typhoon Haiyan in the town of Guiuan, Eastern Samar. The typhoon had sent tsunami-like waves and strong winds across the Philippines archipelago. More than 10,000 people were killed and over 4 million people lost their homes.¹⁷ The Malaysian government donated USD1 million chiefly in food and medicines while the state of Sarawak provided USD27,148 worth of aid in 2014.¹⁸

Trade and Investment Boost in BIMP-EAGA

Malaysia and the Philippines have relished multitudinous platforms of economic cooperation and have affirmed their commitment to enhance trade, investment, and infrastructure cooperation. The continuous interest on trade and tourism industry was cemented with the establishment of the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA). Launched in March 1994, BIMP-EAGA has enabled the facilitation of free flow of people, goods, and services as well as the sharing of common infrastructure and natural resources. The strong dedication of financial, human, and technical support

from the member states have warranted the BIMP-EAGA initiative to achieve noteworthy successes in the last 20 years.¹⁹ In addition, Malaysia and the Philippines continue to have a strong trade growth through the Malaysia-Philippines Business Council (MPBC) and the Philippines-Malaysia Business Council (PMBC). In 2019, Malaysia's exports to the Philippines were recorded at USD4.39 billion and the Philippines' exports to Malaysia were at USD1.83 billion.²⁰ However, the Covid-19 pandemic has severely reduced productivity, forced business closures, caused trade disruption, and decimated the tourism industry. The economic impacts of the pandemic will not be lessened with the bickering over Sabah. Both nations could embark on the online platform cooperation – swiftly embraced as the new normal – to revive their economies and simultaneously cushion the impact of Covid-19 pandemic. The digital connectivity would strengthen the existing Malaysia's cooperation in the Southern Philippines and also reinforce Malaysia's active participation in the infrastructure development, natural gas and chemical production, Halal advisory role, as well as boost other trade and investments potentials in the entire Philippines.

Conclusion

Multiple pathways of cooperation have converged for Malaysia and the Philippines, yet the issue of Sabah has been a divergence for both nations. To Malaysia, Sabah is and will forever be a part of Malaysia. Sabah's territorial integrity and Malaysia's sovereignty will always be safeguarded. The Covid-19 pandemic has altered the concept of security that most scholars and practitioners have long accustomed to. The boundary of security is not bounded and limited by borders. It has evolved to incorporate traditional threats (i.e. physical military aggression), non-traditional threats (i.e. arise primarily out of non-military sources), and hybrid threats (i.e. traditional combined with non-traditional threats). The pandemic nudges the perimeter of security concept farther and simultaneously widens and

deepens the scope of Foreign Policy. Harping on the issue on Sabah will not curb, address, and mitigate the mega security impacts of Covid-19. The best way forward is to maintain and nurture the existing cooperation that are bounding the two nations together. Repatriation assistance, TMP in the Sulu Sea, IMT in Mindanao, Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief mission, and Trade and Investment in BIMP-EAGA should be the cornerstone of the Malaysia-Philippines relations. Venturing into new cooperation – comprehensive management on PATI and digital connectivity – will build bridges of friendship, strengthen mutual trusts, and enhance security and stability for a dynamic future in a post Covid-19 world.

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Malaysia's Efforts at Eradicating Trafficking in Persons

Aida Safura Niza Othman

It has been called modern slavery, and not without good reason. Trafficking in persons is a form of labour exploitation where human beings are recruited or obtained and forced to labour against their will either through coercion, force or fraud. It is a worldwide phenomenon, affecting countries whether they are a country of source, transit, destination, or all three. Trafficking in persons also does not have to be a cross-border crime, it can happen within the borders of a country too.

The International Labour organization (ILO) estimates that there are at least 2.4 million trafficked persons at any given time. Meanwhile, the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that 51% of identified victims of trafficking are women, 28% children and 21% men. It is further estimated that 43% of the victims are domestic victims who have been trafficked within their own country of origin. Human trafficking may happen for various reasons with victims ending up being used as beggars, forced into sham marriages, recruited as child soldiers or used in the production of pornography.

Human trafficking is a lucrative crime - the ILO estimates that total profits from human trafficking amount to USD150 billion a year. A breakdown of these profits by trafficking category shows the following:

- Sexual trafficking and slavery – USD99 billion
- Forced and bonded labour – USD43 billion
- Forced domestic servitude - USD8 billion

The crime of human trafficking can leave a devastating impact on its victims. Survivors may experience post-traumatic stress, memory loss, depression, anxiety, fear, guilt, shame and other serious forms of mental trauma. Beyond the personal sufferings of trafficking victims, the crime leaves

damaging effects on the community the victims leave behind as well as threats to the rule of law in source, transit and destination countries as human trafficking may exist within the bigger framework of transnational organised crime and facilitated due to corruption that permeates both the public and private sectors.

Corruption is particularly crucial to the existence of human trafficking activities. Corruption is not only an enabler, it makes the activity invisible, impedes the meting out of just punishment, and creates a cyclic situation where the trafficked victims are re-victimised.

The UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC, also known as the Palermo Convention) and its specific Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children are the principal international instruments to combat trafficking in persons. The UNODC oversees the implementation of the UNTOC. Other international organisations that carry out work against trafficking in persons include the ILO, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Like many other countries, Malaysia is also affected by this scourge. According to the statistics issued by the UNODC in its Transnational Organised Crime in Southeast Asia : Evolution Growth and Impact Report (TOCSA 2019 Report), the flow of trafficked persons in Southeast Asia moves from less-than-developed countries to more developed countries, including Malaysia. According to the same report, Malaysia detected 2,034 victims of trafficking in persons between 2013 and 2017. Based on this figure and time period, it was found that 34% of victims were in forced labour

conditions, with the largest number of nationals coming from Indonesia (30%), Vietnam (25%), the Philippines (10%), Thailand (8%), and the rest comprising nationals from Myanmar, Cambodia, Malaysia, and India. 81% of these forced labour victims comprised women and girls.

Malaysia recognises that trafficking in persons is a grave problem and poses a multi-dimensional threat to basic human rights and undermines the safety and security of countries on a global scale. Slavery and forced labour are prohibited under the Malaysian Constitution and further to this, as a responsible member of the international community, Malaysia is committed in doing its part in the fight against human trafficking.

Malaysia ratified UNTOC on 24 September 2004; Malaysia acceded to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, on 26 February 2009. At the regional level, Malaysia has also ratified the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP) on 7 September 2017. Malaysia is also an active member of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and related Transnational Crime (Bali Process).

At the domestic level, in accordance with Malaysia's ratification of UNTOC, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007 (ATIPSOM) was enacted in 2007 to address human trafficking. Through ATIPSOM, the Council for Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants (*Majlis Antipemerdagangan Orang dan Antipenyeludupan Migran – MAPO*) was established consisting of officials from government Ministries and representatives from non-governmental organisations.

ATIPSOM provides Malaysian courts with jurisdiction to hear prosecutions

of persons charged with the offence of trafficking in persons, whether or not the alleged offence occurred within or outside of Malaysia regardless of the nationality of the offender. In addition to fines, the offence of trafficking in persons for the purpose of exploitation is punishable for up to 15 years in prison; the punishment is further increased up to twenty years in prison if the offence involves threats, use of force, and abduction. Convicted perpetrators of trafficking in children can be punished up to a maximum of 20 years imprisonment.

In addition to the main offence of trafficking in persons, ATIPSOM also has provisions for Malaysian courts to prosecute related offences e.g. profiting from the exploitation of a trafficked person, recruiting others to participate in an act of trafficking in persons, providing facilities or services in support of trafficking in persons, and harbouring persons involved in trafficking in persons. An important part of the Act is the immunity granted to trafficked persons from prosecution in relation to illegally entering the receiving or transit country, unlawful residence in a country, or his or her procurement or possession of any fraudulent travel or identity document.

The ATIPSOM has undergone revisions in 2010 and 2015, with the most recent revision elevating MAPO to the Ministerial level, known as the High Level Committee (HLC) of MAPO chaired by the Minister of Home Affairs and comprising select government Ministers tasked with deliberating on and making decisions regarding recommendations made by MAPO.

A further improvement is the approval of three ATIPSOM Regulations:

- i) Permission to Move Freely and to Work (Foreign National) Regulations 2016;
- ii) Release of Trafficked Person (Foreign National) Regulations 2016; and
- iii) Payment of Allowance to Trafficked Persons Regulations 2017.

The regulations are part of Malaysia's commitment in carrying out a victim-centred approach where the well-being of the victim is given priority. Victims of human trafficking who are protected in shelter homes are provided with basic necessities as well as a monthly subsistence allowance. In addition, they are able to move freely and work in Malaysia. Alternatively, the victim may be repatriated if they wish to return to their home countries.

In August 2019, the First National Conference on Anti-Trafficking in Persons was held in Kuala Lumpur. The event was jointly held by MAPO and Joining Hands Against Modern Slavery (JHAMS) which is a coalition of non-governmental organisations working towards ending modern slavery. Issues raised during the inaugural conference included supply chain transparency, ethical recruitment, child trafficking, safe migration policies, victim protection, enforcement and prosecution, and prevention via effective campaigns.

The conference was an important event as the outcome from the sessions would be used as input for the National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons, currently in its third iteration, for the period 2021-2025. There are five guiding principles in the national Action Plan – the responsibilities of the Government, involvement by civil society, treatment of victims of human trafficking, coordination between the government agencies and NGOs, and the systematic evaluation to prevent and suppress trafficking in Persons.

Human trafficking presents a grave and difficult challenge to Malaysia. The problem is complex and far reaching and defies simple solutions carried out by unitary actors. The problem is further compounded by its trans-border characteristics and organised crime. Efforts to prevent the crime, prosecution of its perpetrators, and protection of human trafficking victims will require a comprehensive and coordinated approach. Areas that will require further attention include strengthening the judiciary so that prosecution of

human trafficking cases can be carried out more effectively and efficiently, increasing transparency on the outcome of the cases, rooting out corruption that enables the crime as well as increasing the overall awareness among the public on the existence of the problem itself.

Malaysia recognises that we cannot fight against human trafficking alone. While Malaysia is primarily a receiving/transit country, Malaysia is open to learning from all countries on their best practices in dealing with this problem. Malaysia would welcome opportunities to work together with other countries whether at bilateral, regional or at the international level in order to fight this heinous crime.

Ms Aida Safura Niza Othman is Principal Assistant Secretary at the Multilateral Security Division, Department of Multilateral Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia.

“Malaysia ratified UNTOC on 24 September 2004; Malaysia acceded to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, on 26 February 2009. At the regional level, Malaysia has also ratified the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP) on 7 September 2017. Malaysia is also an active member of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and related Transnational Crime (Bali Process)”

A Sojourn in New York: My Experience as a Long-Term Delegate to the UNGA

Shivanand Sivamohan

I was ecstatic when informed that I would be a long-term delegate (LTD) of Malaysia to the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)¹ from September to December 2018. After serving just over a year at the ASEAN-Malaysia National Secretariat, I had had a taste of multilateralism at the regional level, and was eager to explore the workings of the UN system.

Naturally, among our first destinations on arrival in New York was the Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the UN. I immediately recognised its distinctive red marble facade from a painting at the Foreign Ministry. The national crest emblazoned on the outer wall evoked a sense of pride and purpose, reminding me of the critical role played by Malaysia's diplomatic missions in defending our national interests.

When applying to university, in my undergraduate admission essay I had expressed the hope of joining the Foreign Service, and of someday experiencing life at the UN. It is therefore unsurprising that my recollection of first entering the UN complex was somewhat ethereal. The fluttering flags of the world's states; the portraits of Secretaries-General; the works of art adorning its halls – all created an almost ineffable sense of reverence. In the preamble of the UN Charter, the line 'to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war' reminds us of both the painful circumstances surrounding the establishment of the UN, and of the high ideals which it has since sought to realise.

We hit the ground running by assisting our Mission with logistical preparations for the UNGA High-Level Week, the annual highlight of the UN calendar characterised by an intense flurry of diplomatic activity. We also covered segments of the UNGA General Debate, featuring statements on a plethora of

contemporary issues. Here I witnessed first-hand how leaders from various regions, cultures, and faiths articulated their values and principles against the iconic green marble-backed podium of the General Assembly. Sifting through the aspirational language and rhetoric, a discerning observer would have to decide which claims best fit the reality on the ground, and which proposals could help meet the exigencies facing the international community. Additionally, I assisted with reporting on ASEAN meetings held on the sidelines of the UNGA.

Thereafter, we were quickly immersed in our core substantive tasks. I was introduced to the concept of 'morning prayers', meetings typically held several times a week during which the Head of Mission reviews the status of various matters by way of briefings from the officers in charge. Dato' Sri Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Yaakob, the then Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the UN – and presently Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry – asked penetrating questions which required advance preparation, and I greatly benefitted from his mentorship. On the walls of our Mission's meeting room, I glimpsed images of other master practitioners of previous eras – including Ambassador R Ramani, Tan Sri Zain Azraai, and Tan Sri Razali Ismail – testament to Malaysia's long-standing involvement and impact at the UN.

I was assigned to the First Committee of the UNGA, which focuses on disarmament and international security, and worked closely with Mr Amir Hamzah, First Secretary at our Mission. Mr Amir skilfully guided me on matters dealt with by the First Committee, as well as its processes and procedures. He was always ready to provide helpful comments on my draft reports and answer any questions that I had.

Stepping into the First Committee gave me invaluable exposure to the broad themes defining the disarmament and non-proliferation landscape. From the outset, I realised considerable reading and research were required to familiarise myself with the nuanced elements involved. Thankfully, there was no shortage of resources on which to draw, including the collective expertise of our Mission. I found that understanding the historical context was crucial in explaining why certain issues appeared intractable, provoked outcry from particular countries, etc. Concepts which I had encountered in foreign affairs journals and books on political theory seemed to come alive every day at the UNGA.

Contrasting pictures of key topics were presented by different states and groups, often in heated fashion. Nations which fiercely disagreed on a host of matters sometimes came together on others, as and when their interests converged. Of course, these are but banal truisms in multilateral diplomacy. Nonetheless, as a junior officer, being immersed in the tumult of it all was most thrilling!

The workload was heavy but richly rewarding. The debates provided me with 'tuition' on multi-faceted aspects of the global security architecture. Attending informal consultations on draft UNGA resolutions allowed me to better appreciate how the contours of the text – both substantive and stylistic – were shaped by hours, days, and weeks of painstaking deliberations, depending on their complexity and the level of contention they aroused. Proponents had to have strong arguments justifying particular paragraphs, phrases, and even words. Language too robust for some countries was too attenuated for the liking of others. I understood that an adopted resolution, appearing elegant in composition, may belie the

amount of effort and compromise required to shepherd it through. In any event, many resolutions – and in certain cases, paragraphs thereof – were put to a vote, requiring delegations to publicly pronounce their stance on a given topic.

Following a hectic day of meetings, we would run through key issues requiring follow-up action with our respective experts at the Mission. It was indeed challenging to process voluminous amounts of material and summarise salient aspects for transmission to headquarters, seeking guidance and instructions on specific points. Among others, we had to determine how we would vote on draft resolutions. Where necessary, explanations of vote (EOVs) would need to be prepared. Given the 12- or 13-hour time difference between Kuala Lumpur and New York,² we were on a tight schedule, and our work regularly carried us late into the night. Thankfully, pizza and soda from nearby outlets provided ready fuel – on my return to Malaysia, many colleagues remarked that I had truly ‘grown’ considerably! The next morning, we would meet early to review plans for the day. Multi-tasking was the norm, and Amir helped me determine which meetings and subjects should be accorded priority.

I was also tasked with assisting our Mission with groundwork ahead of Malaysia’s chairmanship of the 2019 NPT PrepCom.³ This involved engagement at the PR- and working level with national delegations and regional groupings, as well as disarmament experts and civil society organisations. Preparing briefing notes for such sessions and reporting on their outcomes increased my understanding of the role of the chair in a multilateral setting, as well as the complex challenges which had surfaced in preceding cycles of the NPT review process.

It was a particular privilege to have delivered a few statements on behalf

of Malaysia at the First Committee. Of course, I worked on the drafts with Mr Amir, and we cleared them with our superiors and headquarters. Nonetheless, even with a prepared script, it was exhilarating for someone so new to it all. I shall always treasure the memory of being introduced as the delegate from Malaysia, and of reading those statements from behind our country’s nameplate.

To perform effectively, one had to cultivate links with a broad range of fellow delegates. The more friends one had, the easier it would be to keep track of evolving agenda items and to exchange views on difficult questions. In addition to the formal and informal meetings, numerous side-events and lunches furnished avenues for more casual interaction. In the evenings, there would be receptions and social events hosted by diplomatic missions or the UN. I learnt that such occasions could not be lightly disregarded in the interest of ‘work’; rather, they formed an important component of job. Seasoned officers explained to me that much could be achieved outside the rigid confines of conference rooms, and that building personal rapport is integral to the diplomatic function.

Personally, the culmination of the LTD experience lay in producing the draft report on the proceedings of the First Committee, which would serve as an official record for our Mission and capital. This required extensive note-taking over the course of roughly three months. I captured the gist of the deliberations as best I could, and attempted to provide some measure of analysis in my reporting. It was a deeply satisfying process.

I would be remiss if I did not also touch on the ‘non-diplomatic’ aspects of my LTD assignment, prior to which I had only been to New York for a brief weekend while pursuing graduate studies in the U.S. Despite the gruelling work

schedule, we did have some time to visit sites in the city. I especially enjoyed walks at Central Park, where I was awed by the striking colours of fall and the majesty of the Bethesda fountain. New York’s museums also captivated me; there I could (or rather, attempted to) savour the finer elements of history, art, and culture. And, needless to say, my palate was overwhelmed by the cuisine of the Big Apple!

I am immensely grateful to the Ministry for having given me the chance to participate in the LTD programme. It is my fervent hope that junior officers will continue to be afforded similar opportunities as part of their professional development. Many people made my sojourn in New York most memorable and fulfilling, although it is not possible to thank them all here. I wish to record my sincere appreciation to the Director-General of AMNS, Dato’ Ahmad Rozian Abd. Ghani, for encouraging me to apply for and participate in the programme, and to all officers at our Mission in New York for their support and guidance.

Endnotes

¹ The long-term delegation comprised H.E. Mohd Aini Atan, Ambassador of Malaysia to the Lao PDR; Ms Fadhliah Daud, Asst. Secretary, Multilateral Security Division; Mr Leong Wei Jia, Asst. Secretary, East Asia Division, and the author.

² Depending on daylight savings.

³ Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in New York from 29 April to 10 May 2019.

Mr Shivanand Sivamohan is presently a participant in IDFR’s Diploma in Diplomacy programme, a mandatory course for junior MFA officers prior to their first overseas posting. He previously served as Assistant Director at the ASEAN-Malaysia National Secretariat from June 2017 to October 2020.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in the Forum section are entirely the authors’ own and not those of the Institute.

The Most Fulfilling Lesson: Diploma in Diplomacy 2020

Muhammad Ashraff Nasaruddin

The Diploma in Diplomacy (DiD) 2020 programme commenced on 10 February 2020 with an opening ceremony officiated at the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR). The programme concluded with a graduation day ceremony on 1 October 2020 at Hilton Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. 22 participants successfully completed the programme with flying colours. The programme was indeed an eye-opening experience that triggered an insight about the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' culture and the desired characters of a diplomat that the Ministry is looking for. The fact that the programme was a marathon; not a sprint, has made the participants to go through the programme with a positive mindset and maintain a vibrant momentum over the long haul.



One of the fondest memories in the DiD 2020 programme was Work from Home (WFH) weeks during the Movement Control Order (MCO) period. The programme in 2020 was particularly unique due to the fact that the participants were required to attend classes through online platforms. As the MCO prolongs, the participants as well as the lecturers started to adapt to new way of learnings (and teachings) as materials available offline would easily be made available alive on online platforms. As IDFR resumed its businesses on 1 July 2020, the participants were exposed to international relations modules such as the Drafting of United Nations (UN) Resolutions and Defending National Interests (DNI). These modules were particularly beneficial towards the participants' career developments as

the programme laid the foundation for the participants to improve their soft skills and knowledge on diplomacy and international relations.

Overall, the DiD 2020 programme had reshaped the participants' understanding of the Ministry's culture and approaches especially on diplomacy and international relations with other nations. The IDFR – through the programme – has today successfully produced better representatives of Malaysia who are now well-rounded and have an in-depth knowledge on various issues, especially with regards to international affairs. The programme itself was not about focusing on oneself achievements and competition between all participants. The participants eventually ended up completing the course as a group of aspiring diplomats and immediately working off-the-clock as a new family of diplomats facing tough foreign policy challenges amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

Jason Low Tze Hian

When I joined Wisma Putra in 2016, I had been hearing a lot about a certain course which every Foreign Service officer ought to undertake before they are posted abroad – Diploma in Diplomacy (DiD). DiD is the flagship programme of the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR), a training institute under Wisma Putra.

As the primary training course for all Malaysian diplomats, it is not a surprise that DiD has assumed a very important position in the heart of many Wisma Putra officials. Those in Wisma Putra would see this as one of the important stepping stones paving the way to their missions abroad.

As it is the Ministry's call to decide when shall we attend DiD, I had patiently waited for my turn. Finally, the long-awaited dream was realised on 10 February 2020. Truth to be told, I spent

the most fulfilling eight months from 10 February till 1 October 2020.

Many academic classes attended; a significant number of visits to different international organisations and state agencies undertaken; and of course, one should not forget to mention the golf lessons we took up. Assuredly, all of the participants have progressed significantly after attending DiD.

This Diploma course has widened the minds and broadened the perspectives of its many participants. The heuristic nature of the DiD syllabus encourages the participants to ask questions and reflect upon the lessons learnt throughout the course.



This allows the participants to hone their skills and competency befitting a diplomat, as our job scope requires us to think and analyse critically. Discourses that we had with the speakers and teachers have made us more outspoken and confident in voicing out our ideas. We also learnt how to consolidate and structure our ideas to propound them cogently.

The effort by IDFR to come up with interesting and thought-provoking modules, I would say, is the determining factor that contributes to the success of this programme. The success of DiD 2020 participants also would not be possible without the relentless determination and unconditional commitment by the officials at IDFR. Recognising the contribution by IDFR and lessons from DiD, it might not be a stretch to say that the Foreign Service officers take pride in being the participants of this exclusive programme, as it is only accessible to

the selected few.

I could not express my gratitude enough to the Government, the Ministry, and IDFR for this opportunity given to me, as not many may have such privilege to participate in this training - a programme which is well known in producing excellent diplomats with attributes, mettle, and virtues required to defend our national interest. I will forever be grateful for everything learned and gained throughout my time in Diploma in Diplomacy 2020 at the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations.

Nur Atiqah Md Akim

Today marks one-month anniversary since the graduation ceremony of the DID Class of 2020. Some calls us "The COVID batch", due to the reasons that the pandemic of COVID-19 hit the nation right smack during the early phase of our DID course. I remember when we were caught off-guard with the situation, not knowing what to expect. In all its complexity between adjusting to the new norms of learning from home

and installing multiple virtual meeting applications, my batch, with guidance from IDFR, have risen above the storm and successfully overcame challenges of participating in virtual diplomatic training for about three months.

After the graduation ceremony, we were assigned to new roles in the office. We began to find ourselves swept away and caught up in the busy schedules of our new role. Even though this creates a sort of "whirl wind" of excitement as a graduated officer, and a constant flow where sometimes the days start to blend together, one should stop and wonder what have you done in the past that makes you who you are today.

Immediately after graduating from DID, my diplomatic skills and my multilateral substantive ability were put to a test when I was selected to undergo a temporary assignment as a Long-Term Delegate to the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. As someone who has dealt with various issues involving multilateral organisations before, I always have a keen interest in multilateral work.

However, the transition from working in Wisma Putra to working in a multilateral mission is a daunting thought. As I endeavour to facilitate the work of our Mission in New York, I could not thank my lucky stars enough for allowing me to experience this opportunity right after I completed the DID programme. The opportunity itself conveys a fresh opportune reflections of what I have learnt in DID especially about what to expect in multilateral diplomacy settings.

Overall, the DID programme has been particularly a multi-faceted programme for junior officers and it has definitely given a positive impact in preparing me to be a full-fledged Malaysian diplomat. Of all the diplomatic trainings that I have attended, DID stands out for me because it offers plenty of across-the-board opportunities that none of the other trainings could offer. As a graduating officer, I look forward for more opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills that I have learnt from DID and integrate those skills and build expertise rapidly into practice, at home or abroad, for the sake of Malaysia's interest.

Economic Diplomacy Workshop for Malaysian Participants 2020

IDFR conducted the *Economic Diplomacy Workshop for Malaysian Participants 2020* from 13 to 15 October 2020. The course focuses on exposing the participants to, among others, Malaysia's strategic plans and economic policies, negotiation, international trade, and providing an overview of Malaysia's transformation and the National economic growth.

This year, due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the course was conducted fully via online platform. A total of 21 participants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries, and Ministry of International Trade and Industry were

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selected to attend this three-day course.

The course was designed to enhance the participants' knowledge through lectures, discussions, and online simulation exercises. The topics covered include *Malaysia's Foreign Policy, ASEAN Economic Community, Malaysia's International Trade Policy, Malaysia-Turkey Economic Relations,*

Post-COVID 19 Economic Recovery, Malaysian Palm Oil & International Market Potentials, and Future Scenarios & Economic Diplomacy.

In a nutshell, the course received positive feedbacks from the participants, with many citing that knowledge obtained from the course will help them with their daily tasks ahead.

Diploma in Diplomacy: Defending National Interests (DNI)

Defending National Interests (DNI) is one of the main highlights of the Diploma in Diplomacy (DiD) 2020 programme. The DNI module was held from 23 to 25 September 2020 at the VIP Dining Hall, Hostel Block, IDFR.

Twenty-two DiD participants undertook the DNI module, which was organised by the Competency Enhancement Centre (CEC). The module was conducted through a press conference simulation exercise whereby the participants had the opportunity to demonstrate their skills in effective communication, media handling, and English proficiency that they have acquired during the DiD 2020 programme.

Participants also presented press releases and were required to respond to a variety of questions from the panellists. In addition to communication skill, the participants were assessed based on other criteria including their knowledge on the subject matter, the



ability to remain calm under stressful situations, analytical thinking, and stewardship in their presentations.

Among the permanent panellists for the DNI were Mr. Brian Cracknell as lead Consultant from Language Works; Dr Azhari Karim representing the Association of Former Malaysian Ambassadors (AFMA), and Associate Professor Mr M. Krishnamoorthy, Journalist representing Foreign Correspondents Club of Malaysia. Other panellists included Dato' Mohd Zamruni Khalid, Director General of IDFR; senior officers from Wisma Putra and IDFR.

Overall, the DiD participants had shown composure in handling questions from the panellists. Through the DNI programme, the participants had shown an increased competency in their communication and handling media skills. CEC hopes that with the enhanced knowledge and skill set, our future diplomats will be able to execute their duties in furthering and protecting Malaysia's national interests and foreign policies internationally.

Note:

IDFR would like to express its utmost appreciation to all the panellists for taking their time off their busy schedules to become one of the panellists during the Defending National Interests module. IDFR would also like to express its appreciation to the Institute of Public Relations Malaysia Students Association (IPRMSA), UiTM Malacca Chapter for their professionalism and coverage of the DNI module from 23 to 25 September 2020.

Diploma in Diplomacy: Study Visit to the State of Johor

The Competency Enhancement Centre (CEC) and Diploma in Diplomacy (DiD) 2020 participants organised a study visit to Johor from 12 to 14 September 2020. The delegation was led by Dato' Mohd Zamruni Khalid, Director General of the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR).

The study visit commences with an interactive session with Ms Nor Baizura Basri, Johor Bureau Chief, Malaysian National News Agency (BERNAMA). During the interactive session, participants were briefed on the role of BERNAMA's Johor Bureau Chief in covering both national and international news in Johor. She also highlighted the need for diplomats to be knowledgeable, resourceful and possess good communication skills in handling the media. She urged the participants, who will one day serve

at Missions abroad, to continuously engage with Malaysian media so that reliable and accurate information could be presented to Malaysian public.

On the second day of the study visit, the DiD participants received briefings from the Johor Petroleum Development Corporation (JPDC) on the functions and future expansion of the Pengerang Integrated Petroleum Complex (PIPC). As one of Malaysia's mega-projects development in Johor, the PIPC spans over an area of 80 km² and houses oil refineries petrochemical plants, liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals, and others. Participants also visited the PIPC general areas of DIALOG, PETRONAS complex, and few other facilities.

On the final day of the visit, the DiD participants visited the office of the Iskandar Regional Development

Authority (IRDA) to further understand the development project of Iskandar Malaysia. The briefing session was held by Datuk Ismail Ibrahim, Chief Executive of IRDA and his team whereby the DiD participants had exchanged views and posed questions on Iskandar Malaysia development project. One of the key highlights mentioned was Iskandar Malaysia's feat in attracting RM16 billion in investments in the first half of 2020 despite challenges faced by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The visit was concluded with a study visit to the Johor State Secretary Office. The delegation was received by Dato' Dr. Badrul Hisham Kassim, Johor Deputy State Secretary (Development) and his team. DiD participants were briefed on the state governance including the Johor Sustainable Development Plan 2019-2030. The briefings by the Johor

State Economic Planning Division and the National Security Council have broadened the participants' views on how the state manages and utilises its resources in carrying out the state's economic plan and addressing the border security issues.

Besides briefings and interactions, the participants also toured the landmarks of Johor Bahru such as Sultan Abu Bakar Mosque, Johor Craft Complex, B5 Johor Street Market, and Sultan Ismail Building. The representative from



the Johor State Tourism Department provided a briefing on the tourism industry in Johor.

Overall, the study visit to Johor was a

meaningful visit and had provided the DiD participants with new insight on the administration and management of Johor. It certainly fits the objective of the programme which is to provide exposure to the participants on the importance of economic diplomacy as Malaysia develops the state of Johor into its southern economic and development corridor.

The DiD 2020 Dinner Talk by Dato' Sri Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Yaakob, Secretary-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs



The DiD 2020 participants attended a Dinner Talk by Dato' Sri Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Yaakob, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 27 August 2020 at the Shangri-La Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. Co-organised by the Competency Enhancement Centre (CEC) IDFR, the event was also attended by Dato' Mohd Zamruni Khalid, Director General of IDFR, Heads of Centre of IDFR, and YM Raja Intan Nor Zareen, Special Officer to the Secretary General.

The Dinner Talk commenced with a video presentation recapping the journey of DiD 2020 participants since joining IDFR on 10 February 2020. Subsequently, Mr. Ahmad Fadhlilzil Ikham Abdullah, the

President of the DiD 2020 Programme, delivered his welcoming remarks. Mr. Fadhlilzil expressed the participants' appreciation to IDFR and the Ministry for organising the event despite the challenges brought upon by COVID-19. He also emphasised on the participants' commitment to continuously enhance their diplomatic skills and knowledge to enable them to become sterling Malaysian diplomats of the future.

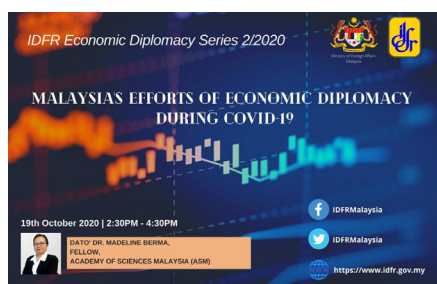
During his speech, Dato' Sri Muhammad Shahrul Ikram highlighted the importance of the Diploma in Diplomacy Programme to the Ministry. As IDFR's flagship programme, the DiD Programme is considered as a special

Programme because in addition to providing the substantive elements, the Programme also focuses on providing the practical skillsets to enhance the participants' competency as diplomats.

Following the talk, the DiD participants held an engagement session with the Secretary-General whereby Dato' Sri Muhammad Shahrul Ikram shared many of his experiences serving the nation in the Ministry as well as at various Missions abroad. He also shared his expectations of the DiD participants and advised them on how they could further contribute to the betterment of Wisma Putra.

At the end of the Dinner talk, the participants presented a memento to Dato' Sri Muhammad Shahrul Ikram as a token of their appreciation for his time with the DiD participants and for the memorable Dinner Talk.

Economic Diplomacy Series 2/2020



Economic Diplomacy Series 2/2020 was held on 19 October 2020. The informative session was presented by Dato' Dr. Madeline Berma, Fellow at the Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM) on the topic of *Malaysia's Efforts of Economic Diplomacy during Covid-19*.

The whole world is currently facing a pandemic, Covid-19 which is not only a health crisis – it is also a social and economic crisis that is hitting the people the hardest. To discuss the topic, Dato' Dr. Madeline had her lecture focused on several key points;

the correlation between the presence of Covid-19 and the economy, the form of economic diplomacy in the current settings, ASEAN's response to the pandemic, and lessons learnt during the pandemic. During her lecture, she showed Malaysia's position which was impacted to China's economic decline among other nations. It also showed how it has impacted the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). She then further elaborated on the details of its consequences on employers, employees, and companies/ firms alike.

Dato' Dr. Madeline praised the Malaysia's government's efforts in providing assistance to the public who are undeniably struggling with the sudden loss of income which was due to the enforcement of the Movement Control Order (MCO) to help flatten the Covid-19 curve. Some of the stimulus package includes the *Prihatin*

Rakyat Economic Stimulus Package to ease the people's financial burden, *PRIHATIN Package for SMEs* which is specifically to help the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), as well as the National Economic Recovery Plan (PENJANA) which was announced prior to the Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO) to empower the people, propel businesses and stimulates the economy. The speaker also spoke about ASEAN's response to Covid-19, which includes the measures taken by participating ASEAN members to curb the Covid-19 together as a regional organisation.

The session was held via Google Meet and participated by representatives from various ministries, foreign missions, universities, think tanks and financial institutions as well as students from IDFR's Economic Diplomacy Workshop programme.

Ambassador Lecture Series 2/2020



On 14 October 2020, Her Excellency Dr. Merve Safa Kavakçı, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to Malaysia presented the topic *Malaysia-Turkey Bilateral Relations* for IDFR's second Ambassador Lecture Series. The lecture was held online via the Google Meet platform.

Her Excellency Merve Kavakçı has a Ph.D in Political Science from Howard University and was a professor of International Relations at George Washington University and Howard University in Washington DC from 2004 to 2014. She has been serving in

Malaysia since 2017.

The ambassador briefly presented Turkey's foreign and economic policies, especially under President Erdogan's government. H.E. Kavakçı highlighted the efficient engagements between Turkey and Malaysia to promote beneficial trades and projects which are not just limited to economic sustainability but also political and socio-cultural grounds. She also highlighted several key points on bilateral relations between the two countries in her answers during the Question and Answer session, among others, the role of SMEs to further strengthen the existing sustainable economic platform that could become the key to future progression of economic interactions. H.E. Kavakçı also spoke about Turkey's commitment in fighting against Islamophobia, as it has become a global threat to security issues. She also shared Turkey's commitment in its battle against COVID-19 in Turkey as well as

its humanitarian foreign policy efforts. H.E Kavakçı stressed that Turkey is also active in the multilateral platforms such as the D8.

The one-hour session was attended by approximately 58 participants, comprising officials from various ministries, Malaysian Missions, Foreign Missions based in Kuala Lumpur, and academics and representatives from universities and think tanks, as well as Malaysian businessmen based in Turkey and participants of IDFR's Workshop on Economic Diplomacy.

IDFR Lecture Series 2/2020



IDFR Lecture Series 2/2020 was held on 25 August 2020. Titled *The United States (US) and Iran: Beyond the Nuclear Weapons Issue*, the lecture was delivered by Tan Sri Mohamed Jawhar Hassan, one of the IDFR's Distinguished Fellows, and Former Chairman and Chief Executive of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia.

The session commenced with Tan Sri Jawhar giving an overview of two current international security issues revolving around nuclear weapons; the US-Iran conflict and the conflict with North Korea. According to Tan Sri Jawhar, in both cases, the roots of the conflict extend well beyond the issues of nuclear weapons. Even though the underlying motives, interests, and security concerns of all parties should be the primary focus, nuclear weapons have been made the central issue by the international community.

With regard to the US-Iran relations, Tan Sri Jawhar added that both countries had good relations in the 19th century. He highlighted that interestingly, it was the US that helped Iran embark on its nuclear journey in the 1950s when they were still enjoying good relations. Iran, together with nearly 30 other countries, received technical assistance

from the US under its Atoms for Peace programme. Tan Sri Jawhar then expanded on the factors leading to the US-Iran tension.

Tan Sri Jawhar concluded his lecture by stating that Malaysia wishes to see a West Asia that is at peace with itself and the rest of the world; for outside powers to abide by international law, pursue peaceful policies and respect national sovereignty; for our country to be friends with all and prosper together with them. He also believes that many of us would



like to see a West Asia that resembles Southeast Asia more: a region whose peace and prosperity is underpinned by cooperative norms, principles, and processes that characterises an organisation like ASEAN or something even better.

The lecture was attended by more than 100 guests, including His Royal Highness Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah, Sultan

of Perak Darul Ridzuan and the Institute's Royal Patron; Dato' Kamarudin Jaffar, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs; YAM Tunku Zain Al-'Abidin Tuanku Muhriz, Founding President of IDEAS and IDFR's Distinguished Fellow; former ambassadors; academicians; and officials from various Ministries and agencies.

IDFR would like to take this opportunity to extend its deepest appreciation to His Royal Highness Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah, Sultan of Perak Darul Ridzuan, for gracing the lecture. The Institute would also like to thank Dato' Kamarudin Jaffar, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and all the guests for attending the lecture and supporting its programmes.

“Malaysia wishes to see a West Asia that is at peace with itself and with the rest of the world; for outside powers to abide by international law, pursue peaceful policies and respect national sovereignty; for our country to be friends with all and prosper together with them. Many of us would like to see a West Asia that resembles Southeast Asia more: a region whose peace and prosperity is underpinned by cooperative norms, principles and processes that characterises an organisation like ASEAN or something even better.”

Media Skills Workshop for Mid-Level Officers 2020

IDFR successfully organised *Media Skills Workshop for Mid-Level Officers 2020* at Dorsett Hotel, Kuala Lumpur from 25 to 27 August 2020. It was attended by 17 participants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation, Royal Malaysia Police, and Malaysian Palm Oil Board.

The aim of this workshop was to raise awareness among government officials about the role of public diplomacy in promoting and defending national interests. In addition, this workshop served as an exposure, preparation, and information sharing to middle-level officials (Grades 48-52) in handling questions and answers during media press conferences and interview sessions through media simulations.

Ms Chenderawasih Abdul Malak from the Public Diplomacy and Communication Division, MFA was invited to further explain Malaysia's public diplomacy, the Ministry's roles in promoting national interests, and also the usage of social media and alternative channels to disseminate national's message and



information to the global audiences.

IDFR also invited Ms Wan Syahrina Wan Ab Rahman from the Malaysian National News Agency (BERNAMA) to share her personal experience as a media practitioner. The two-day media practical and simulation exercises were conducted by Datin Yusanani Yushak, a well-known professional media consultant in Malaysia. Participants were given role-play and hands-on tasks such as performing press conference and interview sessions. This workshop is vital for mid-career and senior officials of any Ministries and

government agencies whose nature of work involves the handling of media and public diplomacy.

The workshop helps the participants to obtain a lot of information, increase their awareness on public diplomacy and fully understand the importance of public diplomacy in promoting Malaysia's interests, and acquire the necessary skills required to better communicate and handle the media effectively within the context of public diplomacy and advocacy.

SPKM Pre-Posting Orientation Course for Home-Based Staff and Spouses Series 1/2020 and Series 2/2020 Participants 2020

Government officials who have been selected or nominated to work as administrator abroad in Malaysian missions and external offices all around the world, must first understand and be trained and exposed to related regulations, challenges, and expectations before being posted. Posting abroad is a task entrusted to them to serve the country and preserve the national interests be it a trade, security, bilateral relations, and so on. Spouses too, by following their husband or wife who are government officials, play an important role in social activity and engagement at Malaysian embassies to further promote our culture, cuisine, and

customs.

In this regard, IDFR successfully hosted two SPKM series for year 2020 - *Pre-Posting Orientation Course for Home-Based Staff and Spouses Series 1/2020* from 21 to 30 September 2020 at the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) and Series 2/2020 from 5 to 9 October 2020 at IDFR. Series 1/2020 was specially designed for government officers Grade 41 and above while Series 2/2020 was for Grade 38 and below to boost and develop their diplomatic, administrative, and social etiquette skills as well as to enhance their knowledge in international

diplomatic practices applicable in their future postings.

SPKM Series 1/2020 was attended by 63 participants, comprised of 37 government officers and 26 spouses. The officers were from 12 different ministries and agencies/departments namely from the Prime Minister's Department, Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Malaysian Armed Forces, Royal Malaysia Police, Tourism Malaysia, Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation, Malaysia Investment Development Authority, Immigration Department of Malaysia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National



Trust Council (MARA), Public Service Department, and Yayasan Islam Negeri Kedah.

SPKM Series 2/2020 was attended by 43 participants comprised of 22 government officers and 21 spouses. The officers were from six different ministries and agencies/departments of the Malaysian Armed Forces, Royal Malaysia Police, Immigration Department of Malaysia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia Nuclear Agency, and Majlis Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan.

SPKM course was aimed at preparing the participants on administrative and management matters related to their roles and duties when they are assigned at Malaysian Missions abroad. Among the modules designed for them were lectures on *Malaysia's Foreign Policy; Cross-Cultural Awareness; Grooming and Social Etiquette; Fine Dining; Protocol and Consular Works at Mission; Auditing and Finance Matters*; as well as *General Administrative and Asset Management at Mission*. The participants also benefitted from

the briefings on *Enhancing Personal Security, Counter Terrorism 101*, and *Counter Espionage* delivered by the Special Branch Division, Royal Malaysian Police, the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter Terrorism (SEARCCT), and the Research Division, Prime Minister's Department respectively.

Datin Sri Izdina Izaidin, president of the MFA's Ladies Association and also wife to the Secretary General of MFA, make an honoured appearance by attending and sharing her personal experience on the roles of Spouses at Missions abroad. In addition, Datin Sharifah Ikhlas Syed Ismail from the Ministry of Education Malaysia was also invited to share her vast experience as a diplomat wife to host a formal dining and official entertaining in the *Fine Dining and Social Etiquette* slot. She is a spouse of former Malaysian Ambassador to Indonesia.

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would equip the young diplomats with the necessary knowledge and skillsets to serve the country abroad.

The Honourable Dato' Kamarudin was also pleased with the DiD participants' dedication and commitment in overcoming the obstacles brought about by the pandemic and in completing this course with distinction. He ended his address by reminding the participants on the importance of upholding the highest standard of professionalism and integrity, to always improve oneself and shoulder the responsibility of a diplomat with humility.

The highlight of the Graduation Ceremony was the presentation of three special awards by Dato' Kamarudin Jaffar. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Award for Overall Best Student was

awarded to Mr. Muhammad Ashraff Nasaruddin; the Secretary General of Foreign Affairs Award for Outstanding Leadership was accorded to Mr. Jason Low Tze Hian and the Director General of IDFR Award for Best Academic Achievement was presented to Ms. Nur Atiqa Md. Akim.

In his best student speech, Mr. Muhammad Ashraff thanked all those who have guided him to the success as the programme fortified the participants' skills and knowledge in the field of diplomacy and international relations. He also highlighted the importance of DiD Programme in providing the platform to inculcate the right attitude, mindset as well as the necessary knowledge and skills in order to equip themselves for their roles and function at Missions abroad.

At the end of the event, a montage showcasing the DiD 2020 participants' activities throughout the eight-month journey was displayed to the audience, highlighting their memorable events during the whole Programme. The participants also gave their all in entertaining the audience through two beautiful and creative performances – traditional *zapin* dances and foreign language skits.

Overall, the DiD 2020 graduation ceremony was a huge success. In view of the Movement Control Order (MCO) during the Covid-19 pandemic, all Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were adhered to by all guests to ensure public health, safety, and well-being.

News Contributors

Johan Arief Jaafar, Muhammad Ashraff Nasaruddin, Jason Low Tze Hian, Nur Atiqa Md Akim, Ezrin Balqis Abd Lataf, Nur Qistina Mohd Farid, Imran Ariff Mohammad Amin, Amirul Khairi Mustafa Bakri



Courtesy Call by H.E. Mr Md. Shahidul Islam, High Commissioner of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to Malaysia, 23 September



Courtesy Call by Mr Amir Hamzah Harun, Ms Khadijah Ishak, and Ms Nur Ayuni Zainal Abidin from Petronas Leadership Centre, 21 September



MTCP Economic Diplomacy Course for International Participants 2020, 29 September to 1 October



Fine Dining, Receptions and Official Entertaining Session By Datin Sharifah Ikhlas Syed Ismail, 7 October



Institute of Public Relations Malaysia Students Association (IPRMSA), UiTM Malacca Chapter Providing Coverage of the DNI Module, 23-25 September



Media Skills Workshop for Mid-Level Officers 2020, 26 August



DiD 2020 Participants' Group Photo with Ambassador Shahril Effendi Abd Ghany, Director General, Department of Policy Planning and Coordination (JPDP) Wisma Putra, 9 September



DiD 2020 Participants' Study Visit to Johor, 13 September



Dato' Mohd Zamruni Khalid, Director General of IDFR and IDFR's Assistant Directors during DiD 2020 Graduation Ceremony



DiD 1/2021 Participants' Online Session with Professor Dr Sufian Jusoh, 30 November



Luncheon & Cooking Demonstration by Foreign Language Classes, 29 September



Among the Participants of SPKM: Pre-Posting Orientation Course, 21-30 September



IDFR-UKM Master Students Group Photo with YM Raja Saifful Ridzuwan Raja Kamaruddin, Deputy Director-General, Department of Policy Planning and Coordination (JPDP), Wisma Putra, 13 October