

(Check Against Delivery)

**SPEECH BY  
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CULTURAL APPRECIATION DAY 2019  
23 JULY 2019  
MULTIPURPOSE HALL, PUSPANITA**

*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*      *Assalamu'alaikum*      *Warahmatulahi*  
*Wabarokatuh, and Good Afternoon.*

**YBhg Dato-Dato, Datin-datin, Members of the Diplomatic Corp,  
Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. Praise be to Allah Subhanahu Wataala. We are grateful to Him for His blessings that we are able to gather here this afternoon for the Cultural Appreciation Day 2019 organised by the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome and thank everyone for taking your time off to attend this event. To our international guests, I bid you all '*Selamat Datang*' and welcome to Malaysia.

2. My special appreciation goes to Ambassador Zakaria Nasir, currently the Acting Director-General, Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR) for his opening remarks just now. This is the fourth year IDFR organizes one of its signature event, the Cultural Appreciation Day, since its inception in 2016. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organizing committee of the 'Cultural Appreciation Day 2019' for inviting me for the second time to deliver an opening speech at this significant and exciting event. It is indeed a great pleasure and privilege to once again not only to officiate this special occasion but to be part of this occasion as well. I am also delighted to note that IDFR not only invited the local community to attend today's event, but also representatives of foreign embassies based in Kuala Lumpur as well.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

3. Malaysia is a very colourful country which has numerous cultures and traditions. Thus, it should not be a surprise to you that our tourism tagline is "Malaysia Truly Asia". In Malaysia we also consider our religious and cultural

diversity as a source of unity. Mosques, temples and churches exist side by side and one gets the opportunity to see a lot of different religious festivals being celebrated by various religious followers and ethnic groups often with the participation of everyone in Malaysia.

4. Malaysian Government actively promotes the spirit of “unity in diversity” through the celebration of various religious festivals by different races and ethnic groups. The festivals are regarded as very important and for a number of festivals the government allocated public holidays to enable the people to celebrate them.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

5. Cultural diplomacy among nations, encompasses interaction of groups of people that could involve food, music, arts, songs, dances or fashion, resulting in better understanding and harmonious relations. Diplomats are expected to know every aspect of diplomacy including cultural diplomacy. Thus, it is very essential for them to have the knowledge on the culture of the people they are meeting and dealing with.

6. I hope the event this afternoon would serve as a good example how cultural diplomacy works. For our future graduates of the Diploma in Diplomacy (DiD) programme, I strongly believe this event will be a good platform for them to learn some of the cultures of the world. At the same time, I hope this occasion would be a reminder to all Malaysian young diplomats to promote our interesting culture and arts especially when they are posted abroad.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

7. Before I end, once again I would like to thank and congratulate IDFR for successfully organising the Cultural Appreciation Day this year.

8. With that, in the name of God, the Most Merciful and the Most Compassionate, *Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*, I hereby officiate the opening of the Cultural Appreciation Day 2019. Thank you.