



MINISTRY OF NATIONAL UNITY

SPEECH

BY

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MINISTER OF NATIONAL UNITY**

FOR

ICOFOM ASPAC INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM 2023

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12.15 PM

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SALUTATIONS

***Provided separately*

Good Afternoon and Salam Malaysia MADANI.

WELCOMING REMARKS

1. First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the **Department of Museums Malaysia and ICOFOM ASPAC** for orchestrating this International Symposium today, in collaboration with esteemed institutions such as the **International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM), ICOM Malaysia (ICOMMAL), Museums Association of Malaysia, and Melaka Museum Corporation (PERZIM)**. This collective effort has created an exceptional atmosphere for this symposium.

2. On behalf of the Ministry, I extend a warm welcome to **Madam Inkyung Chang, Vice President of ICOM**, as well as all the presenters from **Scotland, China, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Germany, Thailand, Philippines, and Malaysia**. We also welcome our online presenters joining us from **Siberia (Russia), Brazil, Egypt, and Nepal**.

3. The International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM), **founded in 1977**, plays a **crucial role in researching, studying, and disseminating the theoretical basis of museums and museology**, with respect to the diverse perspectives represented by an **international community of museologists and museum thinkers**. This symposium aligns with ICOFOM's vision to foster the development of quality knowledge in the museum field, reflecting all regional streams of museology through an affirmative action policy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

THE ROLE OF MUSEUM

4. Last year, **the definition of a museum has significantly changed for the first time in 50 years** after an unanimous vote by members of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in Prague. It includes, for the first time, phrases like **inclusivity, accessibility, sustainability and diversity**.

*“A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, **museums foster diversity and sustainability.....**”*

5. This new definition aligns with major changes in the role of museums, especially in Malaysia, where earlier this year, the Department of Museums Malaysia became a part of the Ministry of National Unity. **This positions museums as one of the main vehicles in making the agenda of “Unity in Diversity” a success.**

6. Futhermore, **museums in Malaysia act as custodians of our diverse heritage, showcasing the rich tapestry of our history, ethnicity, language, culture, customs, and religious practices.** By highlighting this diversity, museums contribute significantly to fostering knowledge and understanding within our communities.

7. At present, there are **232 museums** under the purview of the Department of Museums Malaysia, including State Museums, private museums, and personal museums across Malaysia. They play a pivotal role, not only in safeguarding our country's tangible and intangible heritage but also as **a catalyst and vehicle for promoting social unity and inclusivity.**

8. Museums have been diligently fulfilling their role by preserving the rich heritage of our nation and sharing it with the public through various programs and activities. I am proud to inform you that this year, the Ministry, in collaboration with the

Department of Museums Malaysia, has launched a new initiative called "**CitraNusa @ Muzium**". This innovative program is centered on **artistic and cultural heritage, designed with a carnival or fiesta concept, aimed at engaging a diverse community. Among the activities that have been conducted :**

- National International Museum Day Celebration
- 60th Anniversary of the National Museum
- My Homeland Malaysia Exhibition
- CitraNusa @ Matang Museum and Kota Kayang Museum
- Kebaya Secret Exhibition
- Exhibition of Wild Magic
- Village Nostalgia Exhibition
- Exhibition of 100 Years of Malaysian Cinema
- Numismatics-Currency Exhibition

9. These cultural repositories continuously breathe life into the legacies of our nation's civilization and culture. Through exhibitions and educational programs, museums become **dynamic platforms for educating the public, helping shape, build, and reinforce their beliefs, identity, and love for their homeland.** In essence, museums serve as vital tools in the ongoing effort to preserve and promote national unity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

WAY FORWARD FOR MUSEUMS

10. In this era, museums, in particular, need to elevate their plans, goals, and mechanisms to stay relevant to society and strive for greater inclusivity. **Museums should champion the idea of "Social Harmony"**. The pursuit of "harmony" is at the forefront of contemporary museum missions. As cultural institutions, museums carry the important responsibility of promoting dialogue between different cultures, advocating mutual respect and understanding among nations, and safeguarding cultural diversity.

11. **If we consider the notion of "museums for social harmony" as ideal, wise, and glorious, then the ways to realize this notion must be practical, multifaceted, and aimed at promoting social cohesion and progress.** Museums have a critical role to play in increasing knowledge, fostering cooperation, reaping mutual benefits from interactions, and promoting social harmony through transformation.

12. I have been informed that one of the subthemes for this Symposium is **"Futurescaping and the Digital"**. Museums, as custodians of our collective cultural memory, are undergoing

rapid changes worldwide. New technology provides us with expanded opportunities for sharing experiences and perspectives, breaking free from the confines of physical spaces.

13. There is an urgent need for innovative strategies in **developing digital collections and institutional acquisitions while fostering community engagement, digital inclusivity, and equitable accessibility.** In line with this, the Ministry of National Unity, Malaysia, through the Department of Museums Malaysia, will introduce the **Cashless Museum initiative next year**, promoting cashless payment methods. This effort aligns with Malaysia's digital agenda and the department's commitment to the transformation towards digital content and big data.

14. In future, the Ministry will focus on enhancing the digital transformation agenda through the "**Exploration of National Treasures.**" In the first stage, we will introduce the **Virtual Nature Museum Exhibition and 360-degree virtual exploration.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

CONCLUSION

15. In conclusion, the Ministry of National Unity remains committed to wholeheartedly supporting museum programs and activities. This international symposium is a shining example of such dedication, and we hope it will continue to serve as a platform for bringing together museum professionals from around the world to share their knowledge, experiences, and insights, ensuring the well-being of museums in the future.

16. However, I also hope that this symposium will delve into discussions and solutions for museums to be even more diligent and innovative in their future approaches and endeavors. Thank you for your attention, and with this I **officiate the ICOFOM ASPAC International Symposium 2023**