



KEMENTERIAN PERPADUAN NEGARA

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**YB DATUK AARON AGO DAGANG
MENTERI PERPADUAN NEGARA**

IN CONJUNCTION WITH

**CELEBRATING 57 YEARS OF THE TUNKU ABDUL
RAHMAN FOUNDATION**

23 SEPTEMBER 2023 (SATURDAY)

1.00 P.M.

PULLMAN, KUALA LUMPUR CITY CENTRE

Salam Sejahtera dan Salam Perpaduan Malaysia MADANI.

SALUTASI

**Prepared separately*

INTRODUCTION (HISTORY OF TUNKU ADBUL RAHMAN FOUNDATION)

1. This year, we celebrate the **57th anniversary of the Tunku Abdul Rahman Foundation (YTAR)**, which was established in 1966 to honour the late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al Haj.
2. YTAR fund was **initiated with a humble amount of RM 400,000** crowd source by the people from various walks of life, including prominent leaders, private sector enterprises, associations, and individuals. **Today, the fund has grown into a substantial amount of RM 100 million endowment fund through series of dedicated fundraising efforts.**
3. This remarkable transformation stands as a testament to the enduring belief that **education can uplift communities and drive progress.**

TUNKU'S VISION FOR A UNITED MALAYSIA

4. Standing here in the month of September is particularly memorable, as we honour Tunku's role in the formation of the nation we all love today.
5. Tunku envisioned a Malaysia that is compassionate and united- a Malaysia that prospered not just economically but also socially; a country where people of all backgrounds, races, and religions would come together in unity, working hand in hand to build a brighter future for all.

THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL UNITY'S MISSION

6. The concept of **Malaysia Madani is the key to uniting Malaysians of all races and religions to better appreciate the peace and freedom enjoyed for 66 years until today.** In the Concept of Malaysia Madani, unity is the main key to ensure that the people experience all forms of progress and modernity based on the sustainability of the nation's culture, creativity, confidence, well-being, respect, and compassion.

7. At the Ministry of National Unity, we strive to honour **Tunku's vision for a progressive Malaysia as enshrined in our Rukun Negara**, one where unity in diversity forms the bedrock of our nation's strength.
8. As we focus on unity, it is not enough that we speak of embracing the diverse races, cultures and religions of Malaysia. We must also champion a just society where the nation's prosperity can be enjoyed by all in a fair and equitable manner, regardless of class and socioeconomic backgrounds.
9. This is evident with regards to education where some citizens may have access to abundant resources, opportunities, and privileges while attaining high-quality higher education, while others do not. This divide perpetuates inequalities and hinders the potential of talented young Malaysians, and so, the potential of this nation.

THE ROLE OF THE TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN FOUNDATION

10. To this end, the Tunku Abdul Rahman Foundation, now under the stewardship of the Ministry of National Unity, holds immense potential to address these challenges.

11. Through its **focus on higher education access and leadership development as enablers of social mobility and social change**, the Foundation's mission not only seeks to close the socioeconomic class gap among youths, but to empower them as confident values-driven agents of progress and nation building.

EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH EDUCATION

12. Over the last 57 years, the Foundation has empowered over **8,500 youth across Malaysia through scholarships, loans, financial assistance, higher education upskilling programmes, and employability programmes**. Our gift is a gift that keeps on giving and a legacy that keeps on living.
13. Our Alumni can be found in every corner of Malaysia making an impact through education, business, healthcare, science, technology, the arts and more. We have **Sathish Rao, a 2012 Tunku Scholar, who has since become a Lecturer at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris** and serves as a Board Director of Yayasan Sukarelawan Siswa (YSS), demonstrating his unwavering commitment to empowering youth.

14. As well as **Sara Salimi, a 2020 Tunku Scholar** who recently earned her degree in Anthropology from Universiti Malaya. Sara is currently an **Education and Community Officer for Persatuan Pelindung Harimau Malaysia (RIMAU)**, where she coordinates and administers early childhood education programmes for the Jahai children in Royal Belum State Park, Pahang.

STRATEGIC FOCUS OF THE FOUNDATION

15. As mentioned in the opening speech by the CEO of YTAR, Ida Thien, we aspire to take our mission even further by adopting an in-depth and comprehensive approach towards nurturing young talents in Malaysia. We hope to do this through our **3 strategic focusses: accessing higher education, thriving in higher education and, succeeding in society.**
16. The milestones we have achieved so far are only made possible by the steadfast support of our valued partners. Today, we gather to commemorate the formalization of partnerships with **eight distinguished organizations through the the exchange of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)**, valued at **RM 7.6 million**. Thus,

I would like to take some time to convey my heartfelt gratitude to our following partners:

17. To **OSK Foundation**, for your sponsorship of **RM 750,000 towards the Closing The Gap programme**, which has impacted more than 400 secondary school students to unlock RM 11 million in scholarships and financial aid to pursue higher education in institutions such as Stanford University, University of Melbourne, University Malaya, Sunway University and EPSOM College.
18. To **AHAM Capital for sponsoring 5 AHAM - Tunku Scholars worth RM 500,000** and the **Asia Philanthropy Circle, who have donated RM750,000 million to sponsor 8 Towards Inclusion and Equity Fund - Tunku Scholars** under the Tunku Abdul Rahman Scholarship, allowing students like Razman, Kuhaneetha, Aidil and Afiza to thrive in higher education while serving their communities in various capacities.
19. To our university co-sponsors and partners, **Yayasan Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS, Heriot-Watt University, University of Nottingham Malaysia and Yayasan Universiti Multimedia who pledged RM 5.2 million** in order to raise representation of students from

high-need communities in your campus and providing more opportunities for our students.

20. To **Accenture Malaysia who co-launched and sponsored RM 476,000 for the Future Ready programme** which equipped 137 students with futureproof skills, knowledge and experience to thrive in today's competitive graduate job market.

21. I also wish to express our deep appreciation to our dedicated trustees, esteemed Scholars and Alumni, public university partners, supporters, mentors, volunteers and the team at the Tunku Abdul Rahman Foundation. Over the past 57 years, you have been the architects of the Foundation's legacy.

RENEWING HOPE FOR MALAYSIA'S FUTURE

22. But this is only the beginning. As we look ahead to the future, the Foundation hopes to impact up to 1,000 more students over the next five years. We invite corporates and individuals who share our vision and mission to help make this a reality.

- 23. If you want to change the life of an aspiring individual not only to afford higher education, but to grow and thrive as a service-centered and values-driven Malaysian young leader, sponsor a Tunku Scholar through the Biasiswa Tunku Abdul Rahman (BTAR).**

CLOSING

24. The Tunku Abdul Rahman Fund was made possible only through the collective contributions of like-minded Malaysians in the past who believed in uplifting our youth. I believe there are many more such like-minded Malaysians here in the room today.
- 25. Although Tunku is no longer with us now, his hope and optimism for the country lives on. So as we remember his legacy of the past, let us also renew hope to build a future for Malaysia.**

Thank you.