



MINISTRY OF NATIONAL UNITY

**SHARED VALUES
ON PEACE AND HARMONIOUS COEXISTENCE**

**FEATURING THE EXHIBITIONS
ISLAM ON PEACE AND HARMONIOUS COEXISTENCE
&
THE LOTUS SUTRA – A MESSAGE OF PEACE AND HARMONIOUS
COEXISTENCE**

8 SEPTEMBER 2024

**SPEECH BY
YB DATUK AARON AGO DAGANG
MINISTER OF NATIONAL UNITY**

SALUTATION

(To be Confirmed later)

INTRODUCTION

1. First, I would like to convey greetings from YB Datuk Aaron Ago Dagang who could not be with us today due to other official work constraints. Therefore, I will read the full text of the Minister of National Unity's speech.
2. It is an honour to stand before you today to address an issue close to our hearts—harmony and diversity.” Today, we gather to celebrate the rich tapestry of cultures, traditions, and perspectives that make our community unique and vibrant.
3. It is a great honour to be here today at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC-IIUM) for the inauguration of this important event, themed “Shared Values on Peace and Harmonious Coexistence.”
4. In today’s world, where we face numerous global challenges, the importance of mutual understanding and respect among different cultures and religions cannot be overstated. The rise of extremism, misunderstandings, and conflicts underscores the need for platforms where diverse perspectives can come together, fostering dialogue and cooperation.

5. This event is a vital platform to emphasize universal values of peace and harmonious coexistence. I commend both ISTAC-IIUM and Soka Gakkai Malaysia for organizing this event. It is through such exchanges, dialogues, and collaborative initiatives that we can foster understanding, trust, and mutual respect among different communities.

Ladies and gentlemen,

SHARED VALUES

6. Islam, through the concept of 'Rahmatan lil-'Alamin' (mercy to all creation), teaches us that the message of peace and coexistence is universal, extending beyond the Muslim community to all humanity and the entire universe.
7. Similarly, Buddhism, and particularly the teachings found in the Lotus Sutra, advocate for a world where all beings can live together in peace and mutual respect. The Lotus Sutra teaches that every person has the potential for enlightenment, that each of us possesses an inherent dignity and worth that transcends our differences, and it emphasizes that all beings are interconnected. Peace can only be achieved when we recognize and honour this interconnectedness.
8. These shared values are not only the foundation of our respective faiths but also the key to fostering a world where diversity is celebrated, and conflicts are resolved through dialogue, understanding, and a commitment to the common good. In a world

where differences are often highlighted, this event reminds us of the profound commonalities that unite us and our collective desire for peace and happiness.

Ladies and gentlemen,

PURPOSE OF THE EXHIBITIONS

9. The two exhibitions we are launching today, **‘Islam on Peace and Harmonious Coexistence’** and **‘The Lotus Sutra – A Message of Peace and Harmonious Coexistence,’** beautifully illustrate these shared values. Through sacred texts, wisdom, and scholarly insights, these exhibitions invite us to explore the teachings that unite us and reflect on how these values can be applied in our daily lives and communities.

10. The **‘Islam on Peace and Harmonious Coexistence’** exhibition highlights the contributions of Islamic scholarship, which has consistently aimed to create societies based on justice, peace, and respect for all. Islamic teachings, as interpreted by scholars over centuries, provide a framework for peaceful coexistence that remains relevant today.

11. The Lotus Sutra exhibition offers insight into one of the most profound texts in Mahayana Buddhism, illustrating how its teachings guide us toward a life of peace and harmonious coexistence. The Sutra’s teachings on respect for the dignity of life, the potential for enlightenment in all beings, and the emphasis on

compassion deliver a powerful message that resonates deeply in today's world.

12. Together, these exhibitions have the power to transform our perceptions and actions. They remind us that these teachings are not just historical artifacts but living philosophies that continue to inspire and guide us.

Ladies and gentlemen,

HARMONI MADANI INITIATIVE

13. Ministry of National Unity launched the MADANI Harmony Initiative on April 27, 2024. This initiative aims to increase Malaysians' understanding of the diversity of religions, cultures, and customs in our country and to cultivate the practice of spreading harmony and goodwill (muhibah) among followers of various religions.
14. The initiative emphasizes the basic concept of national integration: 'Understanding (Faham), Respect (Hormat), and Accept (Terima)' to ensure that the culture of harmony between communities is always preserved. Sowing the seeds of unity, peace, and harmony is not just the responsibility of the government but of every citizen. Individually and collectively, we can make a difference in upholding the principles of unity. As a multiracial country with diverse religions and cultures, it is the duty of every individual to strengthen existing relationships by offering kind and inspirational words.

15. The government remains committed to ensuring that every citizen experiences justice, equality, and security, living together according to the principles of Rukun Negara, which is the pillar of our national unity.

Ladies and gentlemen,

CONCLUSION

16. Let's work together to build bridges of understanding and respect, ensuring that our differences become a source of strength rather than division. As we move forward, let us carry with us the belief that through harmony and mutual respect, we can overcome challenges and achieve great things together.

17. In conclusion, let us celebrate our diversity with pride and strive for harmony with purpose. Together, we can create a future where every voice is heard, and every person is valued. Thank you for your commitment to these ideals, and for working alongside us to build a community where harmony and diversity flourish.

18. Let this occasion mark the beginning of sustained interfaith cooperation and dialogue as we work together to honour and respect the beautiful diversity that enriches our communities.

Thank you.