



KEMENTERIAN PERPADUAN NEGARA
JABATAN MUZIUM MALAYSIA

SPEECH BY
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MINISTER OF NATIONAL UNITY

PROGRAMME:
ASEAN FABRICS SYMPOSIUM 2025
IN CONJUNCTION WITH MALAYSIA'S ASEAN CHAIRMANSHIP
2025

THEME: TEXTILE SUSTAINABILITY: TRADITION TOWARDS
TRANSFORMATION

9th JULY 2025 (WEDNESDAY)
10.00 AM

SASANA KIJANG AUDITORIUM, BANK NEGARA MALAYSIA,
KUALA LUMPUR

Menghadap Duli Yang Maha Mulia,
Tengku Permaisuri Hajah Norashikin, Tengku Permaisuri Selangor,

Ampun Tuanku,

Dengan penuh hormat dan takzim, patik bagi pihak Kementerian Perpaduan Negara serta seluruh warga kerja Jabatan Muzium Malaysia dan para hadirin merafak sembah dan menjunjung kasih di atas perkenan Duli Yang Maha Mulia Tuanku untuk mencemar duli berangkat hadir serta berkenan menyempurnakan Majlis Perasmian ASEAN Fabrics Symposium 2025 pada pagi ini.

Sesungguhnya, keberangkatan Tuanku menyerikan majlis ini amatlah patik sanjung tinggi dan hargai, dan ianya menjadi lambang sokongan Tuanku yang berterusan terhadap usaha pemeliharaan dan pemartabatan warisan tekstil serta budaya negara dan rantau ini.

Ampun Tuanku,

Dengan izin dan limpah perkenan Duli Yang Maha Mulia Tuanku, patik pohon menyampaikan sepatah dua kata kepada para hadirin yang mulia sekalian.

Ampuan Tuanku

Patik memohon perkenan Duli Yang Maha Mulia Tuanku untuk Patik
Meneruskan Sembah Ucapan Dalam Bahasa Inggeris.

SALUTASI

**Disediakan secara berasingan*

Your Royal Highness,

1. It is both an honour and a privilege to warmly welcome all of you to the **ASEAN Fabrics Symposium 2025**, a flagship event held **in conjunction with Malaysia's Chairmanship of ASEAN** this year.
2. I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation and congratulations to the **Department of Museums Malaysia** for successfully organizing this meaningful symposium. **The Department of Museums continues to be a leading force in shaping public understanding of culture and heritage not only within our national context, but also across the broader ASEAN region.**
3. More than just a cultural event, this symposium reaffirms our collective commitment to cultural diplomacy. By uniting ASEAN Member States in the spirit of mutual respect, understanding, and collaboration, we not only honour our distinctive heritages but also highlight our shared values and common aspirations for a more cohesive, inclusive, and culturally vibrant ASEAN.

TEXTILE THE LIVING HERITAGE

4. The theme of the symposium, **“Textile Sustainability: Tradition Towards Transformation,”** provides a timely and meaningful opportunity to reflect on how traditional knowledge, materials, and craftsmanship can be harmonized with the principles of environmental and economic sustainability.
5. The theme of this symposium **aligns seamlessly with Malaysia’s ASEAN Chairmanship 2025, which is anchored on the principles of Inclusivity and Sustainability,** principles we at the Ministry of National Unity have long championed through our national agenda of **Harmony in Diversity.**
6. Across ASEAN, our textile traditions serve as living heritage each unique in motif, material, and method. **From Malaysia’s songket and batik, to Indonesia’s ikat, Thailand’s mudmee, Cambodia’s hol, Vietnam’s silk brocades, and the Philippines’ hablon and piña,** we are woven together by threads of history, identity, and shared cultural values.
7. I take pride that **Malaysia’s songket has been recognised by UNESCO and inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2021.** Songket is

more than fabric, it is a national symbol of unity, dignity, and resilience.

8. Today, **preserving our textile heritage must go hand-in-hand with innovation.** The challenge is not whether our traditions can survive but how they can adapt responsibly in today's world. **Sustainability in textiles must include eco-friendly production, fair treatment of artisans, and efforts to pass on skills to younger generations.**

9. In fact, **studies have shown that organic dyes can reduce water pollution by up to 80% compared to synthetic dyes.** This shows that traditional practices are not just part of our past they offer real solutions for the future. Our heritage holds the key to building a textile industry that is both environmentally sustainable and culturally meaningful.

COLLABORATION THROUGH MUSEUMS

10. Museums must be seen as **catalysts for contemporary relevance and regional cooperation** not just as **custodians of the past.** Through exhibitions, symposiums, and co-creative programmes, museums have the potential to **inspire public**

dialogue, activate **intergenerational knowledge transfer**, and drive **cultural sustainability** at both national and ASEAN levels.

11. In the ASEAN context, I believe museums can become **regional nodes for cooperation**, offering opportunities for:

- I. **Joint research** on textile history, materials, and motifs;
- II. **Cross-border exhibitions**;
- III. **Capacity-building** for curators, artisans, and cultural managers.

12. Malaysia's **Department of Museums**, under the **Ministry of National Unity**, has actively engaged in regional dialogues and is committed to enhancing such collaborations. We are currently exploring avenues for **ASEAN Museum Networks** focused on **sustainable heritage** and **cultural innovation**.

13. Today, we must view museums not as passive repositories, but as **active platforms for collaboration** where **artisans, academics, communities, and policy-makers** come together to transform heritage into shared value. These collaborations hold the potential to **bridge differences** and elevate our **collective Southeast Asian identity** on the global stage.

14. In this regard, I am confident that this symposium will **catalyse meaningful conversations** and spark new collaborations **not just within Malaysia, but across ASEAN**. Let this gathering mark the beginning of deeper regional partnerships in **textile research, artisan empowerment, museum innovation**, and the **regional branding of heritage products**.
15. I also hope this platform will help pave the way for **future joint nominations to UNESCO**, much like the recent recognition of the **kebaya**, jointly nominated by **Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, and Thailand**. Such efforts not only honour our traditions but also affirm our shared commitment to **cultural diplomacy and unity**.
16. Let us not underestimate the power of the threads that bind us. In every **fibre of our textile heritage** lies the possibility to weave a future that is **just, inclusive, and sustainable** a future where **tradition and transformation coexist in harmony**.
17. To all participants, presenters, curators, and organisers your efforts today are not merely academic or artistic; they are **acts of unity**, of **preservation**, and of **nation-building**. May your discussions spark real action, may your insights find pathways

to **policy and practice**, and may this gathering leave a **lasting impact** for generations to come.

PENUTUP

Ampun Tuanku,

Sekian sahaja sembah ucapan patik. Akhir kata, patik mewakili seluruh warga Kementerian Perpaduan Negara khususnya Jabatan Muzium Malaysia ingin merafak sembah, menjunjung setinggi-tinggi kasih Duli Yang Maha Mulia Tuanku atas limpah perkenan mencemar duli serta menyempurnakan majlis perasmian pada pagi ini.

Keberangkatan Tuanku amat menyerikan majlis ini dan menjadi sumber ilham dan dorongan kepada semua yang hadir.

Ampun Tuanku.