



MINISTRY OF NATIONAL UNITY

SPEECH BY

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**THE GRAND FINALE OF “LAGU KITA” – SABAH
MULTICULTURAL SONGWRITING AND BAND
COMPETITION**

29th JUNE 2025

**AUDITORIUM KOMPLEKS JKKN, KOTA KINABALU,
SABAH**

Salam Perpaduan and Salam Malaysia MADANI.

SALUTATIONS

***Provided separately*

WELCOMING REMARKS

1. It is a great honour for me to address this distinguished gathering at **Grand Finale of the “LAGU KITA” – Sabah Multicultural Songwriting and Band Competition**.
2. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the **Sabah Unity in Diversity Community Partners (SUIDCP)**, **Kelab Rotary Kota Kinabalu** , **Society of Performing Arts Kota Kinabalu** and the **Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment Sabah** for organising this meaningful programme.
3. Tonight, we gather for a grand celebration of culture and creativity at the grand finale of “**Lagu Kita**”, a competition that reflects the heart and soul of **Sabah’s multicultural spirit**. **Through song and performance, we embrace the vibrant mosaic of our traditions, languages, and identities.**

Ladies and gentlemen,

SABAH'S DIVERSITY

4. **Sabah is not just Malaysia's "Land Below the Wind."** It is a land rich in stories, spirit, and diversity, a cultural tapestry unlike any other in our nation. Sabah is home to **42 distinct indigenous ethnic groups and over 200 sub-ethnic communities**, each of which preserves a unique language, heritage, and worldview. This is not just a statistic; it is a profound reflection of how deeply rooted harmony and respect for differences are in Sabah's identity.

5. In every corner of this beautiful state from the highlands of the interior to the coastal kampungs, we see vibrant expressions of culture, whether through traditional dress, dances, oral histories, or community rituals. **Each group, no matter how small, contributes to the rich mosaic that makes Sabah a living symbol of Malaysia's multicultural strength.**

6. **Our multiculturalism is Malaysia's backbone. Malaysia is stronger because of its diversity.** Sabah and Sarawak have provided indispensable voices to our national identity, they enrich our perspectives and amplify our global appeal. Diversity fosters innovation, creativity, and diplomacy, and helps us thrive in a globalized world.

7. **We are more than a multi-ethnic society, we are a multicultural nation that shines as a model of harmony and mutual respect in the region.** This distinctive character sets us apart as a destination for tourism, culture, and investment.
8. Sabah's model of multicultural coexistence should serve as a national inspiration. **I urge federal and state bodies to promote cultural exchanges, inter-state arts tours, and national multicultural festivals.** Together, we can deepen the ties that bind us as Malaysians.

Ladies and gentlemen,

“LAGU KITA” – SABAH MULTICULTURAL SONGWRITING AND BAND COMPETITION

9. In tonight's competition, music serves as our universal language, a bridge across languages, faiths, and customs. **Unity requires more than coexistence; it demands mutual understanding, respect, and acceptance.** When a Kadazan-Dusun melody blends seamlessly with a Bajau beat, we do not just hear instruments, we hear unity in action.

10. I understand that **LAGU KITA** was first conceived in June 2024 with the noble aim of celebrating Sabah's rich cultural diversity and empowering young talents through the creation of original music. Recognising the value and potential of this initiative, my Ministry was pleased to support it with a grant of RM30,000.
11. All of you are more than just performers you are storytellers, custodians of culture, and ambassadors of unity. Through your songs, you do more than deliver rhythm and melody; you give voice to the dreams, struggles, and rich heritage of Sabah's diverse communities.
12. To the young people and performers gathered here today, you are the heartbeat of our nation. Your creativity is not only a talent, but a responsibility. Use it to tell your story. Use it to honour those who came before you. Use it to inspire a more inclusive, harmonious, and hopeful Malaysia.
13. In this era of rapid change and global influence, I encourage you to stay rooted in your identity. Learn your mother tongue. Embrace your traditions. Let your heritage be the soul of your art. But do not be afraid to innovate blend the old with the new, marry traditional instruments with contemporary sounds.

14. Most importantly, use your music to unite, not divide. To heal, not to hurt. To connect, not to conquer.

15. The Ministry of National Unity stands ready to support platforms that uplift your voices, your talents, and your dreams. We believe in you.

Ladies and gentlemen,

CONCLUSION

15. **To the finalists: Congratulations. By sharing your creativity and heritage, you have enriched all of us.** To the audience: Let tonight be more than a spectacle. Let every note and lyric remind you of unity. Become ambassadors of unity in your communities through music, dialogue, and compassion.

16. Let Sabah continue to lead as a beacon of harmony. Let us renew our pledge to uphold unity in diversity not only tonight, but every day. May “Lagu Kita” be a clarion call to all Malaysians: In our differences, we find strength; in our unity, we find purpose.

Thank You.