



**KEMENTERIAN PERPADUAN NEGARA**

**SPEECH**

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

**MALAM MUHIBBAH 2025  
(THE PURE LIFE SOCIETY)**

**21 JUNE 2025 (SATURDAY)  
4.30 PM**

**BATU 6, JALAN PUCHONG, KL**

Salam Perpaduan dan Salam Malaysia MADANI.

*\*(salutation will be given separately)*

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. Let me begin by expressing my heartfelt thanks to the **Pure Life Society** for inviting me to be a part of this meaningful occasion, **Malam Muhibbah**, an evening that has become a beautiful tradition of togetherness, understanding, and interfaith harmony in Malaysia.
2. While tonight we come together in fellowship and reflection, allow me to also share with you a deeper message: a message that lies at the heart of my Ministry's work. Our official theme this year is "**Harmony in Diversity**". And I want to stress: this is not just a catchphrase or a convenient slogan. It is the guiding principle behind every policy, every programme, and every engagement we undertake at the Ministry of National Unity.
3. **To me personally, Harmony in Diversity is a declaration of both pride and responsibility.** It reflects our pride in Malaysia's unique identity, a country where multiple ethnicities, religions, and cultures coexist on one land, under one flag. Our diversity is real. It is lived every day in the languages we speak, the food we eat, the festivals we celebrate, and the beliefs we hold sacred.
4. **But harmony does not happen automatically. Harmony must be nurtured. It must be built deliberately, through conscious effort, mutual respect, and shared values.** And so, the phrase also carries a responsibility to not only live among one another, but to live with one another. **To move from tolerance, to acceptance. From peaceful coexistence, to meaningful collaboration.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

**FAHAM, HORMAT & TERIMA**

5. To translate this harmony into daily practice, I always return to three powerful values that we promote in all our unity programmes: ***faham, hormat, and terima*** — which mean understand, respect, and accept.
6. **First: Faham (Understand).** Understanding is the foundation of all human connection. Too often, conflict or suspicion arises not out of real malice, but out of ignorance. We fear what we do not know. We judge what we do not understand. When we take the time to learn about another person's religion, their customs, their worldview we begin to see the human being behind the difference.
7. **Second: Hormat (Respect).** Respect goes one step further. It is not enough to know about someone, we must honour their dignity. Respect means acknowledging that even if someone believes, dresses, or speaks differently from us, they are equal in worth. It means giving others space to practise their faith, to voice their concerns, to live authentically without fear of discrimination or ridicule. Unity does not require uniformity but it does require decency, humility, and kindness.
8. **Third: Terima (Accept).** Acceptance is perhaps the most difficult, but most powerful, step. It is easy to "tolerate" someone. But tolerance can sometimes mean merely putting up with someone. Acceptance, on the other hand, means fully recognising the right of others to exist and flourish alongside us. Acceptance is where true harmony lives. It is the heartbeat of national unity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

## **ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS**

9. In any diverse and pluralistic nation, **the task of building and sustaining national unity cannot rest solely on the shoulders of the government. It requires the collective commitment of all layers of society.** Among the most critical partners in this mission are **Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)**, whose presence and influence at the grassroots level make them essential actors in shaping a more cohesive and harmonious Malaysia.
10. CSOs play a vital role because they are often the closest to the people. Unlike government agencies, which may operate through formal structures and procedures, CSOs engage communities in a more personal, accessible, and consistent manner. They are present in neighbourhoods, in rural areas, in urban settlements often serving as the first point of contact for people who feel unheard or left behind. Through this close proximity, they are able to identify early signs of social tension, cultural misunderstanding, or discrimination, and intervene constructively before these issues deepen into division or conflict.
11. **Equally important is the fact that CSOs are generally seen as trusted and neutral voices.** In a society where conversations around race, religion, and identity can sometimes become sensitive or politicised, civil society can act as a **credible bridge** between different communities. When CSOs speak about the need for understanding and respect, they often do so with the moral authority that comes from years of non-partisan, community-driven work. This trust enables them

to bring people to the same table, to foster difficult but necessary dialogue, and to mediate when disagreements arise.

12. Moreover, **CSOs play a critical role in complementing government efforts**. No matter how comprehensive national policies may be, there will always be gaps in implementation especially in communities that are isolated, and marginalised. CSOs help to close these gaps by being present, by listening, and by responding quickly and sensitively to local realities. Their ability to reach those at the periphery of society ensures that the message of unity is not just heard in policy statements, but lived out in everyday lives.

13. In short, civil society organisations are **the hands and feet of national unity at the ground level**. They amplify voices, build relationships, create safe spaces for dialogue, and hold us accountable to our values as a nation. Their work may not always make headlines, but its impact is profound and long-lasting.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

### **CLOSING**

14. And looking back at **your profile**; your **aims and objectives**, your **programmes and activities**, Pure Life Society is truly an NGO dedicated to promoting **interfaith harmony, social welfare, women and community development**, that serves as a model for civil society, role in advancing national unity and spirit of “Harmony in Diversity”, in line with our nation’s **vision of unity in diversity**.

15. And tonight's **appreciation event**, surely, **highlights** an organisation that genuinely embodies what we want to see more of in Malaysia, **people working together across differences, to build something better for Malaysians.**
16. As we look ahead to the future of Malaysia's social fabric, the Ministry of National Unity is charting a bold and deliberate course to **reinvigorate the agenda of national unity** through a renewed emphasis on the concept of "**Negara Bangsa**".
17. The Ministry is currently developing a new policy direction anchored on the concept of Negara Bangsa — a united and sovereign Malaysian nation. This vision embraces our rich diversity while uniting us through shared values, a common history, collective aspirations, and the constitutional foundations that bind us together.
18. We are moving beyond traditional, reactive unity campaigns towards a transformational approach that recognizes unity as a key national development priority. This approach involves aligning unity policies with sectors such as education, youth development, urban planning, and media narratives to create a cohesive and inclusive society.

19. As we reflect on all that has been shared tonight from the values of faham, hormat, and terima, to the essential role that each of us, including civil society organisations, must play in promoting unity I am reminded that harmony is not a destination, but a journey. It is a journey that requires effort, compassion, and above all, the courage to reach across boundaries with open hearts.

Let this event stand as a symbol of the harmony we continue to strive for as a nation. It is my honour to now officiate *Malam Muhibbah 2025*.

Thank You.