



KEMENTERIAN PERPADUAN NEGARA

SPEECH BY

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

**PROGRAMME:
MALAYSIA INTERNATIONAL MUSEUMS DAY
SEMINAR 2025**

**THEME: THE FUTURE OF MUSEUMS IN RAPIDLY
CHANGING COMMUNITIES**

18 MAY 2025 (SUNDAY)

10.00 AM

M RESORT HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR

SALUTATIONS

**Provided separately*

Salam Perpaduan and Salam Malaysia MADANI,

WELCOMING REMARKS

1. First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Department of Museums Malaysia for organizing this year's **Malaysia International Museums Day Seminar**, in collaboration with esteemed institutions such as the **International Council of Museums (ICOM) Malaysia (ICOMMAL)**, and **Kedah State Museum Board**.
2. Since 1977, **ICOM** has celebrated **International Museum Day (IMD)** to highlight the vital role museums play in cultural exchange, mutual understanding, and global peace. This year's theme, *"The Future of Museums in Rapidly Changing Communities,"* invites us to reflect on the evolving role of museums in a world marked by profound social, technological, and environmental transformations.
3. In a historic shift, **ICOM** redefined "museum" for the first time in 50 years during its Prague meeting. The new definition now emphasizes **inclusivity, accessibility, sustainability, and diversity**.

4. This development is particularly pertinent to Malaysia, where the Department of Museums now operates under the Ministry of National Unity. **This alignment underscores our commitment to fostering "Harmony in Diversity," a vision that is central to our national identity.**
5. In Malaysia, where our rich tapestry of cultures, traditions, and histories converge, **museums have always been more than just places of learning. They are custodians of our collective memory, bridges connecting past and present, and platforms for dialogue among diverse communities.**
6. **The new ICOM definition aligns seamlessly with our national objectives.** By integrating the Department of Museums into the Ministry of National Unity, we are reinforcing the idea that museums are pivotal in promoting national unity and understanding.
7. **Our museums are not just about preserving the past; they are about engaging with the present and shaping the future.** They provide spaces for reflection, foster mutual respect, and celebrate the diversity that makes Malaysia unique.

8. Today, **Malaysia is home to 232 museums**, encompassing federal level museums, state-run institutions, private collections, and personal museums. These establishments are not merely custodians of our past; they are vibrant centers that safeguard our heritage and promote national unity and inclusion.

9. However, as we celebrate this rich tapestry of museums, we must also acknowledge the challenges they face. **Rapid societal changes, technological advancements, and the forces of globalization present new hurdles for these institutions.** The key question now is: how can museums stay relevant in this ever-evolving landscape?

Ladies and gentlemen,

WAY FORWARD FOR MUSEUMS

10. The Ministry of National Unity is committed to ensuring that our museums reflect the values of inclusivity, accessibility, sustainability, and diversity. We will work closely with the Department of Museums to develop and implement strategies that align with these principles. This includes:

- **Enhancing accessibility** to museum resources for all segments of society.

- **Promoting inclusive narratives** that represent the diverse cultures and histories of Malaysia.
- **Implementing sustainable practices** in museum operations and exhibitions.
- **Encouraging community participation** in museum activities and decision-making processes.

11. In an age where technology permeates every facet of our lives, it is imperative that our cultural institutions evolve to meet the expectations and needs of the modern world. Digital transformation offers us the opportunity to preserve our rich heritage while making it accessible to a global audience.

12. By integrating digital technologies, we can enhance the visitor experience, engage with diverse communities, and ensure that our cultural narratives are preserved for future generations. For example, several strategic initiatives that should be implemented by all museums:

- **Digitization of Collections**
- **Virtual and Augmented Reality Experiences**
- **Interactive Digital Exhibits**
- **Mobile Applications and Online Platforms**
- **Community Engagement and Inclusivity**

13. **Museums are more than repositories of artifacts; they are spaces where stories are told, identities are formed, and communities are united.** In embracing digital transformation, we are not only preserving our past but also shaping our future. By making our cultural heritage accessible and engaging, we are fostering a sense of belonging and unity among all Malaysians.
14. In the meantime, **the ministry is in the final stages of drafting a specific act to regulate activities in museums nationwide.** This act is intended to provide a clear legal framework for museums and to ensure that they are managed effectively and sustainably.
15. The Ministry's goal is to create museums that are not only educational but also transformative spaces that inspire creativity, critical thinking, and a deeper appreciation for our shared humanity.

CONCLUSION

16. As we celebrate today's International Museum Day, let us **remember that museums are more than just buildings.** They are living institutions that connect us to our past, guide us in the present, and inspire us for the future. In a rapidly

changing world, they remind us of the values that unite understanding, respect, and acceptance.

17. To all museum professionals and cultural workers, I extend my deepest appreciation for your dedication and passion. Your efforts ensure that our heritage is preserved, and our stories are told. Let us continue to work together to build museums that are inclusive, innovative, and impactful.

18. May our museums continue to be beacons of knowledge, unity, and inspiration for generations to come. I also hope that this seminar will delve into discussions and solutions for museums to be even more diligent and innovative in their future approaches and endeavors.

19. Thank you for your attention, and with this I officiate the **MALAYSIA INTERNATIONAL MUSEUMS DAY SEMINAR 2025.**

Thank you.