

DIPLOMA IN DIPLOMACY 2017
GRADUATION CEREMONY
22 JANUARY 2018
MULTIPURPOSE HALL, IDFR

Welcoming Remarks
by
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Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

Yang Berhormat Dato' Sri Reezal Merican Naina Merican
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia;

Yang Berbahagia Dato' Sri Ramlan Ibrahim
Secretary General
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia;
Excellencies & Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Heads of Departments;

Distinguished guests;

Graduating participants of DiD 2017 and their parents and family members

Colleagues and Friends,

1. At the outset, please allow me to express our appreciation to YB Dato' Sri Reezal Merican Naina Merican, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia for gracing our

ceremony today. It gives me great pleasure to warmly welcome you Dato' Sri to this momentous occasion despite your hectic schedule. Your presence here this morning is a testimony of the importance that you place on the training of our officers.

2. We gather here this morning to celebrate the completion of the Diploma in Diplomacy (DiD) programme and I take this opportunity to congratulate all the eighteen (18) graduating participants who have successfully completed their six months training programme at IDFR. Five of the participants will receive special awards based on the assessment made by the invited lecturers, consultants and Heads of Centers throughout their six months programme.

Yang Berhormat Dato' Sri,

Ladies & gentlemen,

3. The Diploma in Diplomacy programme (DiD) is Malaysia's premier in-house diplomatic course conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through IDFR. The DiD is aimed at providing in-depth exposure on the inner workings of diplomacy and international relations. Early last year, I sat down with KSU on his vision to further improve the various training programme at IDFR including the modules for the DiD programme. Based on that directive and regular consultations with KSU, the DiD programme was carefully designed and conducted to equip our officers with the knowledge and necessary skills to represent Malaysia and pursue our national interest abroad.

4. I am very pleased to report that every graduating participant here today has shown their deep commitment and worked diligently to make the best of themselves for the past six months.

5. They have been urged to not only continue to polish their diplomatic and soft skills but also equally important to advocate for a collective team work. Above all, I echoed KSU's emphasis on the importance of always maintaining an open and positive attitude and to stay away from any forms of insubordinations and disrespectful behaviour. They have been regularly reminded to maintain the highest degree of integrity and moral values at all times.

6. They have also been exposed to the realities of modern day diplomacy, including realising the roles they have to play in in this new era of Fourth Industrial Revolution. We have arranged for a talk by the Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT) to create awareness on the Fourth Industrial Revolutions and its impact on the Diplomacy and International Relations this coming Friday, 26 February 2018.

Yang Berhormat,

Ladies & gentlemen,

7. IDFR continues to transform itself from a mere training institute into a premier learning institution. Various programme has been plan and put in place which includes appointments of new research officers and collaboration with selected local universities in niche areas of International Relations. Last year 2017, IDFR has signed

a memorandum of Agreement with UiTM and undertook fruitful discussions with University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and University Utara Malaysia (UUM). We look forward to strengthen our engagement with University Malaya soon.

8. We are confident that the collaboration between IDFR and these institutions of higher learning could further enhance the capability and capacities of our officers. It is a commitment taken by the top management on the need to combine the expertise of the practitioners of diplomacy with strong academic credibility.

Ladies and gentlemen;

9. IDFR is very fortunate to benefit from the wisdom of its royal patron, HRH Sultan (Dr.) Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah ibni Almarhum Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah Al Maghfur-lah of Perak. In his royal address at this august institute last July, HRH had stressed on the necessity to transform and adapt in the conduct of modern day diplomacy. HRH acknowledged that given the increasing significant role played by civil society, it is best for diplomats to work closely with them to address their shared interests. In this connection, IDFR continues to engage the civil society and NGOs in its training modules.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

10. The successful completion of the DiD programme would not have materialize if not for the strong collective efforts and dedication of many people in the team. For that I would like to commend officers and staff of IDFR especially colleagues at the

Competency Enhancement Centre (CEC) led by its Director Encik Zakaria Nasir, guest lecturers, former colleagues of Wisma Putra and all those who have contributed towards making the DiD 2017 programme a success. They went the extra miles to impart their wisdom and experience to these young officers. A true group of professionals and labours of passion. Let's give them a round of applause.

11. At the same time, I personally believe that family plays an integral part in the development of an individual. I am very pleased we have with us this morning many proud parents and family members. Your presence here this morning not only reflects pride, but also an unwavering support for your loved one who have chosen this noble career of putting national interest above all. Having been in this line for more than three (3) decades, I can attest that family support is an important driver to become a successful diplomat.

12. Congratulations once again to all DiD graduating participants on your achievement. I thank you for your ardent support and cooperation throughout your stint here. Clearly you have displayed a strong courage to improve yourselves during and off training to become a thorough bred Malaysian diplomat and I am proud of you.

13. I must apologise for all the shortcomings including the logistics deficit you have to endure for the past 6 months. I look forward to a fruitful discussion with the Director of National Budget when I meet him this afternoon.

14. My dear colleagues of DiD 2017, you are very much aware that graduation marks the closing of one journey and the beginning of another chapter. As you prepare

to embark on a new journey of your career, I would like you to ponder upon this inspiring words from former President Obama.

“Don’t just get involved. Fight for your seat at the table. Better still, fight for a seat at the head of the table”.

15. Finally, I would like to offer my sincere appreciation to all those involved for putting in place this event together including the live band D’Semenggos.

Thank you.