

WELCOMING ADDRESS
BY DATO' KU JAAFAR KU SHAARI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF IDFR
ON PUBLIC LECTURE BY SIR PETER WILLIAMS,
HONORARY TREASURER AND VICE PRESIDENT, THE ROYAL SOCIETY
UNITED KINGDOM
ON "NEW FRONTIERS ON SCIENCE DIPLOMACY"

Time : 9.30am – 12.00pm
Date : 29 March 2011 (Tuesday)
Venue: Auditorium, IDFR

Y. Bhg. Professor emeritus Dato' Dr. Zakri Abdul Halim
Science Advisor to the Prime Minister of Malaysia

Y. Bhg Tan Sri Datuk Dr Ahmad Tajuddin Ali
President of the Academy of Sciences Malaysia

Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen.

Bismillahirrahmanir rahim,
Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh
and a very good morning

It gives me great pleasure to welcome our distinguished speaker Sir Peter Williams, Vice President of the Royal Society United Kingdom, Y. Bhg. Professor Emeritus Dato' Dr. Zakri Abdul Halim, Science Advisor to the Prime Minister, Y. Bhg Tan Sri Datuk Dr Ahmad Tajuddin Ali, President of the Academy of Sciences Malaysia, and all who are present today at the Institute of Diplomacy And Foreign Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia.

The choice of IDFR for Sir Peter Williams to deliver his talk on "The New Frontiers on Science Diplomacy" today manifests recognition to IDFR as a training arm for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs specialising in diplomacy and international relations.

I am indeed grateful that the Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM) and the Malaysian Industry-Government Group For High Industry (MIGHT) have decided to co-organize this event with us. It is an honour to have the distinguished Sir Peter Williams as our eminent speaker to share his expertise and knowledge on the topic that is of interest to many at the present time.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies And Gentlemen

I believe that science diplomacy is not a new subject in the context of diplomacy. Many nations both developed and developing have collaborated to address common problems that are related to science and technology.

Science diplomacy is practiced when the application of science and technology is taken into consideration into diplomacy-making decision to bolster bilateral cooperation and multilateral relationships as well as to build bridges between countries.

The need to cooperate among nations is even more pressing now given a multitude of issues especially caused by natural disaster such as earthquake, tsunami, flood and other environmental related problems.

Other issues include the question of depleting hydrocarbon energy and manmade disaster such as nuclear tragedy.

In this regard, his Royal Highness Raja Nazrin Shah Raja Muda of Perak, at a dinner with the future Heads Of Malaysian Foreign Missions back in January 2011, had stated that:

“peace diplomacy, engagement diplomacy, economic diplomacy, public diplomacy, ping pong diplomacy, panda diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, sports diplomacy. Indeed the whole spectrum of creative diplomacy will be required to reduce suspicion, build trust and clarify issues that will help pave the path towards more cooperative ways to manage international issues”.

In short, creative diplomacy, which could also envisage science diplomacy, has a role to play as an international and interdisciplinary tool in fostering smart partnership between countries.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies And Gentlemen

In 1983, Malaysia had initiated the “question of Antarctica” at the United Nations and proposed that Antarctica be regarded as “common heritage of mankind”. Since then, “the question of Antarctica” has been taken up by the United Nations and has become an agenda at the general assembly.

Malaysia’s science diplomacy can be seen from one of strident opposition to the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS) to one of engagement with the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties (ATCPS). Malaysia had succeeded in making the question of Antarctica more transparent and accountable to international community.

Malaysia was also at the forefront in science diplomacy at the United Nations Committee on Environment and Development (UNCED) during the premiership of Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad.

Malaysia played a prominent role calling on the international community particularly developed countries to share the responsibilities in the conservation of the environment by all nations.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies And Gentlemen

Recently, South-East Asian countries have further agreed to strengthen regional cooperation with the aim to form a single economic community by 2015.

ASEAN through the Krabi Initiative has endorsed six priority programmes for intra-regional cooperation on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) namely:

- i. Early Warning Systems for disaster management (led by Indonesia);
- ii. Biofuels (Malaysia);
- iii. Application and development of open source systems (Indonesia);
- iv. Functional food (Thailand);
- v. Climate change (Philippines and Vietnam); and
- vi. Health (Singapore).

Again we can see here the reflection of science diplomacy from the ASEAN perspective.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies And Gentlemen,

As a diplomat, the talk on diplomacy has always evoked my emotion, yet for now, I leave the subject of science diplomacy to the expert.

Once again, Excellencies distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, at IDFR, we open our doors wide to this sharing of knowledge. I look forward for future cooperation of this nature with ASM and might as well as other institutions.

On that note, I thank you.

Wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh