

Mr CHEONG Loon Lai

Consul General, Consulate General of Malaysia in Hong Kong

Mr. TSANG Tak-sing, Secretary for Home Affairs, your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Ministry of Information, Communications and Culture of Malaysia, allow me to firstly congratulate the Home Affairs Bureau of Hong Kong SAR for this excellent initiative in organising this Asia Cultural Co-operation Forum (ACCF). To the organisers of ACCF I wish also to express my warm gratitude for the invitation to Malaysia to be part of it. We sincerely hope that the forum will lead to more positive progress with regard to the cultural cooperation and the promotion of culture, arts and creative industries.

Ladies and Gentlemen, for those of you who have visited Malaysia, you will agree that Malaysia is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual and a multi-racial society. It is made up of the main races in Asia, namely, the Malays (52%), Chinese (30%), Indians (8%) and other indigenous groups.

The art and culture of Malaysia have been meeting and mixing since the very beginning of its history that dates back to the 14th century. Our colonial past started with the Portuguese, Dutch, and British have provided lots of colours to the Malaysian arts and culture today. By living side by side among the diverse ethnic groups, the country today is blessed with a very rich and unique cultural heritage. The cultural mosaic created by the many different cultures in Malaysia has certainly influenced the norms and values of the Malaysian today. At the national level, Malaysia believes that the promotion and the preservation of arts and culture have significantly contributed to the strengthening of national unity. In other words, Malaysia is of the view that arts and culture are effective tools for unity. Arts and culture are tools for unity, would therefore be our essence for today's themes, which is Arts in Living, Living in Arts. In that context, Malaysia recently announced the 1Malaysia concept. Conceived by the Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak, 1Malaysia rides on the noble principles and wisdom of nation building. It calls on the people of Malaysia to turn diversity into a force of unity. One way of achieving that is through the appreciation of the diverse arts and culture heritage. As an extension to that, more awareness campaign on the importance of arts and culture heritage in the daily life will be initiated in the country, as well as the nurturing of the arts and cultural industry within the country. In this

regard, Malaysia places importance to this arts and cultural heritage. Malaysia subscribes to the continuation of regional and international collaboration towards expanding and diversifying the many areas of cooperation in the fields of arts.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Malaysia shares the view with its neighbours and other countries on the need to foster closer partnership between governments as well as to promote private sector initiative in the cultural and creative industries. Malaysia stands ready to work hand in hand with other countries in the promotion and preservation of arts and culture for the greater benefit of mankind.

Lastly, Malaysia will be heartened to see the increase of cultural exchange programs within the region and the international community in order to keep each other abreast on our respective arts and culture heritage. Malaysia therefore provides the assurance that it will continue to participate in the promotion of arts and culture cooperation. With that, I would like to wish this forum great success and may we have lots of interesting discussions. Thank you very much.