

# ASLI-PCORE FORUM 2013

## Unity & Multiculturalism : Building A Future Together

Thursday, 29 August 2013 . Institut Integriti Malaysia (IIM), Kuala Lumpur

For too long, the notions of “tolerance”, “accommodation” and “racial integration” have been used to gloss over overt differences in customs and traditions (dress and attire, song and dance, rites and rituals) of the various communities. Much time and money have been spent organising social events such as festivals, open houses, stage and outdoor performances in the hope of bringing together the Malaysian people. Sadly, national integration has not occurred at a meaningful level as, more and more, the Malaysian citizenry are driven apart by their race-based political affiliations.

A sense of despondency is enveloping the second half-century of Malaysia’s development as the cracks begin to show in interethnic relations. Racial polarisation is a reality. With political developments becoming more volatile, there is a real danger that the cracks will widen, creating chasms in the nation’s bid to become a harmonious, multicultural society.

Paradoxically, the unifying quest for modern freedoms such as freedom of speech and citizen rights has unleashed a free-flow of cyber communication on news portal, blogs, social network spaces which has created much disagreement and discord. Rapid electronic communication has made information readily accessible with the result that Malaysians, especially the young, are participating in the public discourse and are able to comment on anything and everything on the blogs, Facebook and Twitter to the extent that misconceptions and misinterpretations are presented and believed as the truth. Information is no longer evaluated or filtered to assess its credibility and that of the writers. This has created a national discourse shaped to a large extent by a negative perception of political developments and informed by the confrontational and combative political rhetoric.

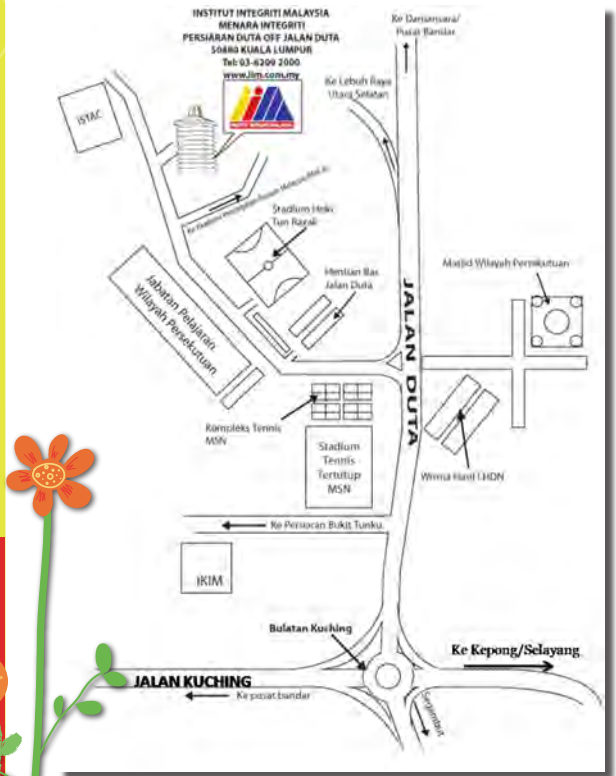
It is the forum’s hope that by bringing together people from diverse backgrounds and affiliations to address the most important aspects of unity and multiculturalism, we will be able to arrive at a consensus on how Malaysians can chart their future together in the best possible ways.

The forum will explore the need for Malaysians to define for themselves a new, fresh approach to multiculturalism viz how to manage our plural society in ways that will bring about unity and a deeper understanding of one another’s racio-ethnic, socio-cultural and religious differences.



Mural by Funkor Child Art Center, Islamabad to commemorate National Children’s Day, 2005

**INSTITUT INTEGRITI MALAYSIA**  
MENARA INTEGRITI, PERSIARAN DUTA,  
50480 KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA



### Aims & Objectives

The forum aims to define the national discourse by:

- Constructing a fresh approach to unity and multiculturalism which focuses on the positive notions of co-existence, conciliation, compromise and collaboration
- Galvanising the voices of moderation to speak openly and honestly on the current issues of public concern
- Bringing together diverse groups to engage one another and communicate in a balanced and rational manner
- Renewing efforts to build a future together for a united Malaysia

**RSVP by 24 August 2013**  
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08:00 am ~ 08:30 am Arrival of Participants & Registration

08:45 am ~ 09:00 am Arrival of Guest of Honour

09:00 am ~ 09:15 am **WELCOMING ADDRESS**

Datin Halimah Mohd Said, *President, Association of Voices of Peace, Conscience and Reason (PCORE)*  
Tan Sri Dato' Dr. Michael Yeoh, *Chief Executive Officer/Director, Asian Strategy & Leadership Institute (ASLI)*

09:20 am ~ 09:40 am **ROYAL ADDRESS**

HRH Raja Zarith Sofiah Binti Almarhum Sultan Idris Shah

09:40 am ~ 10:00 am Morning Refreshments

10:00 am ~ 10:20 am

**Plenary 1 : Empathy and Citizenship in a Multi-Ethnic Society**

**Dr. Chandra Muzaffar**

*Chairman,  
Yayasan 1Malaysia*

10:25 am ~ 11:25 am

**Panel Discussion 1 : Economic Equity and Social Justice**

Panellists:

**Mr Steven CM Wong**

*Senior Director,  
Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS)*

**Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah**

*Former Deputy Minister,  
Ministry of Higher Education*

**Tan Sri Sheriff Kassim**

*Chairman,  
Plus Malaysia Berhad*

**Datuk Dr. Denison Jayasooria**

*Principal Research Fellow,  
Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA), UKM*

Moderator:

**Ms Ng Yeen Seen**

*Senior Vice President,  
Asian Strategy & Leadership Institute (ASLI)*

11:30 am ~ 11:50 am

**Plenary 2 : Co-existing, Collaborating, Compromising for a Multicultural Future**

**Tan Sri Tony Fernandes**

*Group Chief Executive,  
Air Asia*

11:55 am ~ 01:00 pm

**Panel Discussion 2 : Education as a Leveller or Divider?**

Panellists:

**Associate Professor Dr. Syed Farid Alatas**

*Head, Department of Malay Studies,  
National University of Singapore (NUS)*

**Mr Wan Saiful Wan Jan**

*Chief Executive,  
Institute of Democracy & Economic Affairs (IDEAS)*

**YB P. Kamalanathan**

*Deputy Minister of Education II,  
Ministry of Education (MOE)*

**YB Khalid Samad**

*Member of Parliament,  
Shah Alam*

Moderator:

**Datin Noor Azimah Abd Rahim**

*President,  
Parent Action Group for Education (PAGE)*

01:00 pm ~ 02:00 pm

**Networking Lunch**

02:00 pm ~ 03:00 pm

**Round Table Discussion**

**Managing Interethnic Issues for National Unity:  
Religion & Culture / Education / Economics / Politics**

03:05 pm ~ 03:40 pm

**Round Table Reports**

Moderator:

**Dr. Asma Abdullah**

*Executive Committee,  
Association of Voices of Peace, Conscience and Reason (PCORE)*

03:45 pm ~ 04:10 pm

**Students' Presentation**

04:15 pm ~ 04:30 pm

**Summary of Proceedings**

**Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam**

*Director,  
Asian Strategy & Leadership Institute (ASLI)*

04:35 pm ~ 05:15 pm

**CLOSING KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

05:15 pm ~ 5:45 pm

**Afternoon Refreshments**

