

**1Malaysia Concept Unique, Helps To Foster Togetherness: Envoy
Bernama
March 19, 2013
By Nabilah Saleh**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 19 (Bernama) -- Shukor Sabitov, Uzbekistan's ambassador to Malaysia, has described the 1Malaysia concept as a unique vision which portrays Malaysia's diverse people, religions, and cultures.

He said the concept, which promotes unity among Malaysians, has succeeded in fostering togetherness among Malaysians, especially the younger generation.

"When I meet people of different races everywhere and ask them which race they belong to, they simply answer, 'I'm a Malaysian'," he said.

"This shows that the 1Malaysia concept is acceptable and is an all-inclusive idea that embraces the nation's diverse communities," the 49-year-old ambassador told Bernama recently.

Sabitov noted that the accomplishments of Malaysian youths in regional and international sports competitions last year also show how successful the concept is.

He pointed out that the concept, mooted three years ago by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, is also a good example for other countries, including Uzbekistan, to study and adopt.

"Uzbekistan is also a country with a number of ethnic groups. With more than 130 nationalities living in the country, the 1Malaysia idea is indeed a good example for us to emulate in order to pursue harmonious interracial relationships and religious tolerance," he said.

On bilateral ties, Sabitov said they will continue to expand, noting that since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992, the two countries have also cooperated within regional and international frameworks such as the United Nations, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

On another note, the ambassador said Uzbekistan is keen on attracting tourists from all over the world, including Malaysia, and the embassy in Malaysia is doing its part by having a series of road shows to promote the country, not only in Malaysia but also in Singapore and Thailand.

The road shows are aimed at creating awareness of the country, where travel agencies from Uzbekistan offer flight and accommodation packages, and at the same time, seek cooperation with local travel agencies, he said.

"Hopefully, more Asians will come, especially Malaysian Muslims, as Uzbekistan has a number of places pertaining to the Islamic civilisation and many other historical places in main cities such as Samarkand and Bukhara," he said.

Last year, 2,035 Malaysians visited Uzbekistan and around 11,000 Uzbeks visited Malaysia for leisure and business purposes, he said, adding that 600 Uzbeks are also studying here.

The ambassador also touched on the Navruz, a national holiday celebrated on March 21

every year, which has become one of "the brightest and most momentous feasts in the life of Uzbeks lately."

He said that the new day that symbolised the beginning of a calendar year is celebrated in every town and village in Uzbekistan. The embassy will hold a reception on Friday to commemorate the day.

Some other countries which celebrate Navrus are Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2013 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v7/newsindex.php?id=935586>