

MAJLIS PERASMIAN PERSIDANGAN ANTARABANGSA PERMATA 2016

By : YAB. DATO' SRI MOHD NAJIB BIN TUN HAJI ABDUL RAZAK, PERDANA  
MENTERI MALAYSIA

Venue : Dewan Merdeka, PWTC

Date : 31/05/2016

---

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and a very good morning.

**His Excellency Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom,**

President of the Republic of Maldives and

**Her Excellency Madam Fatimath Ibrahim,**

Her Royal Highness the Queen of the Kingdom of Swaziland,

Her Excellencies First Ladies from the Islamic Republic of Gambia, the Republic of Guinea, the Republic of Zambia and Belize,

Representatives of the First Lady of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Ghana and the Republic of Nigeria, and Deputy Minister of Culture, Turkmenistan

**Her Royal Highness Raja Nor Mahani Raja Shahar Shah,**

The Raja Puan Besar of Perak,

Honourable Ministers,

Wife of the Chief Secretary to the Government,

Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers,

Deputy Ministers, Members of Parliament and Wives,

Members of BAKTI,

Excellencies High Commissioners, Ambassadors and Wives,

Distinguished Delegates and Speakers,

Component Parties of Barisan Nasional - Women's Wing,

Honoured Guests,

Members of the Media,

Ladies and gentlemen.

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is my pleasure to be here today to open Permata's International Conference. The theme, "Children Beyond Tomorrow", brings into focus the need for us to think deeply about how we are bringing up the children of today to ensure their success in the future they will grow into.
2. It is more urgent than ever that we do so, for we live in times of accelerating change. Within our own lives, scientific advances have modernized industries, mechanizing and automating the production of goods and services, and revolutionizing communication.
3. These rapid changes have led to new jobs, as well as the decline and decimation of old trades and professions. New social and economic orders have mostly led to rising prosperity, but disruption has also been painful to many. Change is not always easy.
4. Inequalities persist, and progress has not been even, especially for women, the poor and those disadvantaged because of their age, disability or ethnicity. Disparities between rural and urban areas remain our concern.
5. At the same time, more recently, the worldwide efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals succeeded in halving extreme global poverty. They made inroads against hunger, enabled more girls to attend school than ever before, and contributed to the protection of our environment.

6. But there is much more to be done. We do not want our children to grow up in a world of increasing inequality of wages and wealth, and in which almost one billion still suffer from abject poverty and hunger.
7. The future we want for them must be a different future, a better future and must be predicated on a world of sufficient resources, and whose health is not threatened by harmful human activities. We need to harness knowledge and innovation to sustain the bright horizon we desire for them.

Ladies and gentlemen,

8. Permata has always recognized that children are our national treasures. Their nurture is our primary responsibility, and education is key to their progress.
9. Beginning with quality early childhood education and care, Permata has through its various initiatives identified the different talents in children - especially those from rural areas and low income urban families, as well as those with special needs - and provided them with opportunities to realize their potential.
10. As we know, talent is evenly spread throughout Malaysia. But opportunity is not.
11. The Government has fully supported this programme, because we believe that everyone should get a fair start from childhood and have the ability to rise meritocratically according to their talents. The children are the future of this country and, indeed, of the global community.

12. The efforts by Permata have been internationally recognized. May I take the opportunity to congratulate the Permata programme, its Patron my wife Datin Sri Rosmah, and all the Permata team for winning the Children Welfare Award at the Global Good Governance Awards in Istanbul recently.

13. Permata was chosen in a global poll, and the award recognizes the substantial contribution Permata has made to the educational, psychological, intellectual and physical growth of children.

14. Professor Humayon Dar, executive chairman of the organizers, Cambridge IF Analytica, was fulsome in his praise. He said, and I quote:

“There are few examples of this kind of success, and I must congratulate the Malaysian Government and Permata for taking up this important issue. We would like other countries to look at the success stories of Permata and emulate this model. I think this is a good service to humanity, coming from Malaysia to showcase how talent can be nurtured from an early age.”

15. Well done Permata!

16. Returning to the theme, science and technology will play a huge role in the changes our children will face. Already we are witnessing greater and greater transformations in almost all sectors.

17. Genetic manipulation of human, animal and plant cells may radically improve human health and performance, with knock-on effects for the economy, society, and the environment.

18. Convergence technology is giving rise to advanced applications in fields such as energy, medicine, information storage and computing, which may benefit national productivity and quality of life.
19. The nature of conflicts is evolving and mutating fast, and new technology can enhance national defence and security as and when we have to deal with these challenges.
20. Technology can also have a significant impact on food security, and mitigation efforts in climate change and green energy. Indeed, this may be our best hope to preserve the natural environment.
21. Ongoing transformations in manufacturing and services will change the nature of jobs and the locations of economic activity. There could even be a new industrial revolution in the coming decades.
22. How we use new ideas, new knowledge and new technology will determine whether innovation is at the service of humankind or works to its detriment.
23. As they grow up, our children will be the ones who will confront the results of innovation and put them to the test in the real world. We want them to be able to exercise good judgment, to choose well and to choose wisely, and to use them responsibly, while rejecting what is harmful or not worthwhile.
24. The twenty-first century will be our children's century. We hope that history will come to judge it as a beacon of peace, prosperity, and evolution to a higher level of compassion and accomplishment; rather than a time of misery and endless conflict.
25. So what we do today is critically important for achieving the best results for our children beyond tomorrow. And the preparation of today's children not

only involves education and training, but also leadership, to encourage them to develop transforming visions for, and stewardship of, the world they will inherit.

26. What role should Government play in all this?

27. Here in Malaysia, the Government is supporting children beyond tomorrow by establishing blueprints for science, technology and innovation. To coordinate and fund multidisciplinary research and development priority areas, as well as anticipating scenarios for the future.

28. The Government has also launched blueprints for education and higher education, which make clear that science, technology, engineering and mathematics - or STEM - must be integrated with the humanities, social sciences and entrepreneurship in an interdisciplinary manner.

29. These efforts should produce a future workforce that can generate and apply new knowledge and technologies. At the same time, our education system must inculcate in them fundamental values such as moral responsibility, the advantages of diversity, and mutual respect for human dignity.

Ladies and gentlemen,

30. The Government will play its part. But parents, families, the community, media, and civil society such as Permata, all have important roles in encouraging children to think about real world issues and prepare for the future.

31. Families in particular, as the basic building block of society, must impart traditional values that check economic, social and ideological trends. All too often these trends can promote individualism, freedom without responsibility, selfishness and greed.

32. Children must learn that self-control is better than rules and regulations. The media has a duty to increase high-quality coverage of science, technology and social issues, so that children are well informed and can develop a proper understanding about the ethical issues related to innovation and progress.

Ladies and gentlemen,

33. To give our children the best chance of succeeding and coping with the future, we must ensure that they have equal access to opportunities to develop their talents. In line with Permata's philosophy that "every child is precious" and that "no child should be left behind", we want them to be able to fully participate in the innovation process with competence, self-discipline, resilience and care for others. They can only do it if they are confident.

34. We must equip them with the skills to make good choices, so that the consequences of their choices are in humanity's best interests, and therefore in theirs.

35. This conference will no doubt play a part in developing these issues, and once again I congratulate Permata for organising it.

36. With *Bismillahirrahmanirahim*, it gives me great pleasure to declare the Permata International Conference open.

Wabillahi Taufiq Walhidayah Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.  
Thank you.

**Copyright of the Prime Minister's Office portal**

Source:

[http://www.pmo.gov.my/home.php?menu=speech&page=1676&news\\_id=796&speech\\_cat=2](http://www.pmo.gov.my/home.php?menu=speech&page=1676&news_id=796&speech_cat=2)