

**By : DATUK SERI SYED HAMID ALBAR**  
**Venue : PUTRAJAYA**  
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**Title : IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE LAUNCHING OF CLIENTS' DAY OF  
THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS MALAYSIA**

Y.B. Dato' Joseph Salang

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Y.B. Dato' Zainal Abidin Osman

Parliamentary Secretary

YBhg. Tan Sri Ahmad Fuzi Abdul Razak

Secretary General

Excellencies

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum wbt. and a very good morning

Let me begin by welcoming you to Wisma Putra's Clients' Day. The centre of our event today is our clients. I hope that we could exchange views and interact with you on how Wisma Putra could better provide quality services to you. I feel the best way to achieve this is to organise a client day. I was frequently asked this question – what does an officer in Wisma Putra do? I think this simple question is very pertinent as it says a lot that not many people know what is the real role and function of Wisma Putra.

I suppose most of the information that they get is from the media. This however should not be construed as Wisma Putra has no work. To me and I believe all of you would agree that Wisma Putra is not like other Ministries/agencies such as the Ministry of Home Affairs, Public Service Department or MITI in terms of providing services to their clients. The challenge would be on us to improve better awareness of ourselves among our clients. I also heard remarks from my officers and staff that their friends say – why are you working long hours, you are in the government! I hope this is a positive impression. Anyhow, I hope you would leave today's event with enhanced knowledge of our role and functions.

Excellencies/Ladies and Gentlemen,

I said earlier that Wisma Putra is unique in terms of our clients. We are unique because unlike most other Ministries, Wisma Putra does not generally deal directly with the public. An exception of course would be the Consular Division. I would touch briefly on this later.

We are also unique as our clients are not only in Malaysia but also abroad. The Ministry's role, functions and work programmes are duplicated by our diplomatic missions abroad.

Generally Wisma Putra is charged with the responsibility to promote and protect our national interests. My officers and staff are marketers in selling "Malaysia". The product is the country itself – its people, jungles, beaches, policies and laws. The task of Wisma Putra is to assist the Government in formulating foreign policies that would complement the product. What happen domestically whether we like it or not would be exported to the world. People from across the seven seas will read and watch on what is going on in Malaysia. In this regard, undoubtedly one of our main clients is our foreign freinds. Our challenge is to give the right picture about Malaysia in a timely manner. Similarly, we are responsible to our fellow citizens to correct the misperception and wrong impression about Malaysia.

In protecting Malaysia's interests, Wisma Putra is also charged with the responsibilities to protect the interests of fellow Malaysians, individual or corporate bodies. Individual could be students, normal tourists and business people. Other consular activities among others are renewal of passport, authentication of certificates and birth registration as well as registration of fellow Malaysians. This last aspect is seldom paid attention to by fellow Malaysians when they are abroad. I would encourage our citizens to register themselves with our Embassies and High Commissions when they are abroad so that we could provide the necessary assistance in time of emergency.

As you are all aware, consular activities are the only area where we have counter service. This is the first line of our work where fellow Malaysians generally meet our officers and staff. This is where we are being directly gauged by our citizens. I have always requested my officers and staff to interact with our clients professionally. I hope you would give us feedback on how best we could improve our service in this area.

Excellencies/Ladies and Gentlemen,

While it is true that in the early years of Wisma Putra's existence, we dealt with fewer issues, we have evolved progressively as an organization and now deal with a wider range of issues – both tangible and intangible. By formulating and diligently applying appropriate, far sighted foreign policies, Wisma Putra has played a crucial role in putting Malaysia on the world map where we are now acknowledged as one of

the leading nations in the region. To address the ever expanding range of challenges and foreign policy concerns, the Ministry has naturally experienced an organic growth in size and expertise. We now have dedicated divisions to conduct transactions that broadly cover bilateral, regional, multilateral and strategic issues. To manage these diverse but synergistic divisions, the General Management Department of Wisma Putra has also by necessity expanded to include such specialization areas such as Human Resource Development, Information and Communication Technology. Also in tandem with the maturity of the Malaysian media and the advent of the Information Age, Wisma Putra has enhanced its relationship with the media to a level where there is mutually beneficial exchange of information.

Our Protocol Division, I'm certain, is already known to those of you in the foreign diplomatic community as it has over the years strived to serve your needs during your stay as a guest of our country. Excellencies, the Division is in fact, the front contact point between the Ministry and yourselves as our clients. At this juncture, I take this opportunity to bring you a spot of good news. From today, you will be issued new identity cards. These cards are easier to carry, more durable and contain more useful information. I do hope you will visit the Protocol booth at our Clients' Day exposition to process your new cards, learn more about how we can serve you better and to give us your feedback.

Excellencies/Ladies and Gentlemen,

An organization must continue to reform itself to keep pace with time. This is also true for Wisma Putra. We must continue to better ourselves so that we could improve our services. We have set up seven booths to communicate our vision, mission and action plans to our clients. The folders distributed to you contain a brief profile on Wisma Putra for your additional information. I would encourage you to browse through the material and interact with our officers at the booths.

I am also pleased to inform that we plan to organize future Clients' Days to continuously communicate with you - our clients. We do hope that you will find this initiative useful and will support our efforts by spreading the word to your colleagues to visit future Clients' Days. On that note, I take great pleasure in launching the inaugural Clients' Day for Wisma Putra.

Thank you once again for your presence today.

Wabillahi Taufik Walhidayah Wasalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.