

Penyampai : DATO SERI DR. SITI HASMAH BT HJ MOHD ALI
Tajuk : LAUNCH OF FORUM FRANCAIS
Lokasi : MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY, CYBERJAYA
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Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude for being invited to this auspicious launch of the French language portal aptly called Forum Francais. This portal would certainly add colour to the learning and teaching of the French language in Malaysia.

2. In my many years of travelling and mingling with international communities, I have greatly taken note the importance of acquiring languages. By even acquiring a few important sentences, it would make a great difference between one's relations and communication with another person. It gives the personal touch to bridging between individuals and even communities. In fact, I have begun to acquire other languages intensively starting with Japanese and currently, I am learning French in MMU. I am also proud to say that I am brave enough to sit for the DELF Examination just to gauge my level of proficiency.

3. One might say looking at the present socio-political climate, especially with our borders opening up because of globalisation, to know two languages maybe insufficient and adding the third or the fourth is highly desirable. If Malaysians are to acquire more languages, this would be a great asset to the country as we position ourselves onto the world stage. Malaysians are able to penetrate and contribute further in any sector for example in business, in the arts, in science and technology by playing an international role on behalf of Malaysia.

4. In my opinion, life is like living in a big house with many doors that opens to vast information in each room. If you are anilingual, you can only open certain doors, however, with two or more languages, you are able to open more doors to greater knowledge. And through these doors, you are able to experience thrice as many books and ideas, business opportunities, science and technological knowledge, thrice as much cultural experience like music, food, literature, and philosophy. This means that you are way ahead of the others because you can see three viewpoints and think at three different levels. It is complicated but it is interesting.

5. Learning a language is a great adventure - and a demanding one - for which one must be well prepared. Not only does a language consist of vocabulary, grammar and grammatical usage, but inherent in it, one also finds certain responses, thinking patterns and, of course, the culture from which it springs. Language learning is not an empty shell, as you would also indirectly learn another culture.

6. There are many reasons why one should learn French. I made that decision about two years ago, as I wanted to communicate successfully with my other counterparts around the world and not only depend on a translator. Besides English, French is the only other language that is used in all five continents. French is spoken, or is a major cultural heritage, in 44 countries, which together make up a quarter of the world's nation. French is also one of the official languages and the work language for the international organisations and events such as the United Nations, International Red Cross and the Olympic Games. I also believe that learning French is a stepping-stone to be able to acquire other Romance languages more easily such as Italian, Spanish and Portuguese. I have to admit that learning the language has added new dimension to my social life, travels, encounters and professional life.

7. Permit me to also say a few words in French : (I truly believe that a central part of globalisation is that you have to know several languages. French, like English, has a rich culture that is constantly changing due to input from the different groups and communities in which it is spoken. Learning French is an enjoyable way of appreciating and benefiting from another rich culture. I would like to congratulate those who are acquiring this language, as you become increasing confident about your potential and your role. Since the language is alive, there will never be a time to stop learning it in order to embrace its entire splendour. So, I would say do continuously improve your level of proficiency.) 8. I am happy to note of the extensive effort of Centre for Modern Languages and Communications (CMLC) of MMU and also the French Embassy in Malaysia in joining forces to develop such a portal. Such effort from a local university and the Embassy is heartening to note, as the joint effort shall propagate much more communication and

relationship building between countries. I am glad to know that the French language in MMU and in Malaysia has taken momentum. Therefore, it is hoped that this portal is able to complement virtually the learning and teaching of French language in Malaysia.

9. Thus, I would now like to officially launch the Forum Francais.

Merci beaucoup.