

**REMARKS BY HE AMBASSADOR OF MALAYSIA
TO THE NETHERLANDS
RECEPTION OF THE 62ND NATIONAL DAY OF MALAYSIA**

**KASTEEL DE WITTENBURG
19 SEPTEMBER 2019**

Excellencies, Colleagues and Friends,

It is a great honour for me to welcome each and every one of you to this reception, on the occasion of our 62nd Independence Day celebration.

Thank you for your presence and we hope today's event would give you an opportunity to get to know a bit more about Malaysia and perhaps trigger a renewed interest about the country, in area of your interest.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Malaysia is relatively a young country, but within a short journey since achieving independence in 1957, I am proud to say that Malaysia has progressed well and has positioned itself to be one of the most thriving economies in the developing world. From a predominantly traditional agriculture and tin mining-based economy in the 60s, to a knowledge-based industries, cutting-edge technology and a digital economy, at the same time moving towards a matured democracy.

Economically, Malaysia is ranked:

- i) At 15th in ease of doing business, by the World Bank Doing Business 2019 Report;
- ii) As 22nd most competitive economy in the world, by the IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook 2018;
- iii) We are at number 5 as most attractive emerging market in the world, by Bloomberg 2018; and
- iv) As 24th most competitive economy in overall performance, by IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook, in the same year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a friendly and peace-loving country that is harmonious, multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural, Malaysia is determined to continue to uphold democracy, freedom, human rights and the rule of law, in its domestic and international conduct.

Malaysia values multilateralism and international cooperation that promote equitable justice and peace. We aspire to position ourselves as the voice of conscience for the South and the developing nations and to speak against injustices and oppression.

At the same time, we value our friends and partners dearly, and The Netherlands is one of our important friend and partner in Europe.

Historically, relations between our two nations goes back since the 17th century. However, today I am not going to overwhelm you with the whole stories of Malaysia–The Netherlands relations, but I can confidently say that relations are strong, warm and friendly. Our relations are multifaceted that covers wide strategic areas of common interest, be that at bilateral, regional or global level.

The Netherlands is our second largest trade partner in Europe after Germany and Malaysia's 14th largest export destination worldwide. Trade between the two countries is valued at almost EUR 7 billion last year and The Netherlands is the second largest source of FDI from the EU into Malaysia since 2018. We currently have more than 250 Dutch companies and businesses with operation or investment at various level and sectors in Malaysia.

More and more delegation at the official level are visiting The Netherlands since the last couple of years, to seek cooperation in various area of interest and in this respect, we are extremely thankful and grateful that our approach has been received with open arms by the Dutch.

We hope to see more exchanges of visits especially among the high officials of both sides in the future, to further promote cooperation in areas of our mutual interest.

On people to people contact, we are happy to note that people-to-people contact are equally encouraging. Malaysia has been receiving a steady flow of tourist from The Netherlands since the last ten years or so. Last year's arrival stands at 82,000. The number of Malaysian students pursuing higher education and Malaysian vacationing in this country are also showing a steady increase over the years.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we look forward to further strengthening relations between our two countries in the years to come, may I take this opportunity to extend our sincere greetings and well wishes to His Majesty the King, Her Majesty the Queen, the Royal Family and the people of The Netherlands.

Once again, thank you for your kind presence today and hope you enjoy the rest of the evening.

And last but not least, I wish to sincerely thank Kasteel De Wittenburg, Diplomatic Club Wasenaar, Ladies Association of the Malaysian Embassy (PERWAKILAN) and all staff members of the Embassy for their valuable cooperation and contribution.

Terima kasih, Dankuwel, and Thank you.