

National Seminar on  
Promoting National Unity and Nation Building Through Business and  
Entrepreneurship  
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Opening Keynote Address

By

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Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Honourable Role Players

Ladies and Gentlemen.

A very good morning to all

1. Today, I stand before you to discuss a crucial aspect of our nation's progress - promoting national unity and nation-building through business collaboration in Malaysia. As we all know, Malaysia is a diverse and multicultural country, rich in traditions, languages, and ethnicities. This diversity is undoubtedly one of our greatest strengths, but it can also pose challenges when it comes to fostering unity and advancing the nation. However, through the power of collaboration in the business sector, we have a unique opportunity to bridge these divides and propel our nation forward.
2. First and foremost, it is important to recognize that our diversity is our strength. Our multiculturalism is not a hindrance but rather a source of inspiration and

innovation. It provides us with a mosaic of perspectives, talents, and ideas that can drive our nation to greater heights. When businesses embrace this diversity and make it an integral part of their operations, they become powerful engines for unity and nation-building.

3. One way to promote national unity through business collaboration is by creating opportunities for all Malaysians, regardless of their background, to participate in the economy. This means ensuring that there is equal access to education, training, and employment opportunities. By providing a level playing field, businesses can empower individuals to contribute their skills and talents to the nation's growth, regardless of their ethnicity or socioeconomic background.
4. Moreover, businesses can play a crucial role in fostering a sense of belonging and shared identity among Malaysians. They can do this by celebrating our cultural diversity and promoting intercultural understanding within their workplaces. Embracing diversity within the workforce not only promotes tolerance but also enhances creativity and innovation. When employees from various backgrounds collaborate and exchange ideas, they can develop solutions that cater to the diverse needs of our nation.
5. Another key aspect of promoting national unity through business collaboration is by encouraging corporate social responsibility initiatives that address the unique challenges faced by different communities in Malaysia. Businesses have a responsibility to give back to society and contribute to the betterment of our nation. By investing in education, healthcare, and community development programs, companies can make a significant impact on the lives of Malaysians and help bridge the socio-economic gaps that exist.
6. Furthermore, promoting collaboration between businesses from different regions and backgrounds can also boost our national economy. When businesses join forces across ethnic and regional lines, they can tap into new markets, share resources, and drive economic growth that benefits all Malaysians. This can lead to a more equitable distribution of wealth and opportunities throughout the nation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

7. It would be very remiss of me if I do not say this about the role of Parliament in promoting national unity. National unity is a major challenge in Malaysia, a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country. Whether they are elected or appointed members of the Malaysian Parliament, politicians play a significant role in promoting or undermining national unity.
8. On the one hand, politicians can use their platform to unite the people by emphasizing common goals and values. They can also work to address the root causes of division, such as poverty and inequality. For example, the current unity government, led by the Right Honourable Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, has pledged to focus on economic development and social welfare, with the aim of improving the lives of all Malaysians, regardless of their race or religion.
9. On the other hand, politicians can also use their platform to divide the people by appealing to their fears and prejudices. They can also engage in divisive rhetoric and policies, such as those that discriminate against certain groups of people. For many for the sake of political capital, they tend to stroke racial and religious tensions in order to stay in power.
10. Ultimately, the role of politicians in promoting national unity depends on their personal values and commitments. Those who are committed to unity will use their platform to build bridges between different groups of people. Those who are not committed to unity will use their platform to divide the people and further their own interests.
11. The current unity government has made some progress in promoting national unity. However, there is still much work to be done. Politicians need to continue to focus on economic development and social welfare, and they need to avoid divisive rhetoric and policies. Only then can Malaysia achieve true national unity.

12. Here are some specific things that politicians can do to promote national unity in Malaysia:
- a) Emphasize common goals and values. Politicians must remind themselves and the people of what unites them, such as their shared love of country, their commitment to democracy, and their desire for a better future.
  - b) Address the root causes of division. Politicians must work to address the root causes of division, such as poverty, inequality, and discrimination.
  - c) Build bridges between different groups of people. Politicians can organize events and activities that bring people from different backgrounds together. They must also speak out against divisive rhetoric and policies.
  - d) Promote tolerance and understanding. Politicians themselves must fully embrace the importance of tolerance and understanding before they teach their constituents about the importance of tolerance and understanding. They should also create a safe space for people to discuss their differences.
13. It is important to note that promoting national unity is not the responsibility of politicians alone. It is also the responsibility of all Malaysians to work together to build a more united country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

14. In my capacity as the Yang diPertua Dewan Negara or President of the Senate in the Malaysian Parliament, I believe that the law and senators play an important role in promoting national unity in Malaysia. They do this by:
- Enacting laws that protect the rights of all Malaysians, regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity.
  - Enforcing these laws fairly and impartially.
  - Promoting tolerance and understanding among different ethnic groups.
  - Encouraging inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation.
  - Working to resolve inter-ethnic conflicts peacefully.

15. The senators, in particular, have a unique role to play in promoting national unity. They are appointed by the King, and they represent the interests of all Malaysians, not just their own ethnic group. This gives them a valuable platform to speak out against discrimination and promote understanding and cooperation among different ethnic groups.
16. Here are some specific examples of how the law and senators have been used to promote national unity in Malaysia:
  - a) The Sedition Act of 1948 was enacted to criminalize seditious speech and publications. This law has been used to prosecute individuals who have made inflammatory or discriminatory statements that could incite violence or hatred.
  - b) The Rukun Negara, or National Principles, was adopted in 1970. The Rukun Negara outlines the fundamental principles that guide Malaysian society, including justice, equality, and unity. These principles are taught in schools and promoted by government agencies.
  - c) The National Unity Council (MUC) was established in 1991 to promote national unity. The MUC is made up of representatives from government, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. The MUC has developed a number of programs and initiatives to promote understanding and cooperation among different ethnic groups.
17. These are just a few examples of how the law and senators have been used to promote national unity in Malaysia. There are many other ways that these institutions can contribute to national unity, and it is important to continue to find new and innovative ways to build a more cohesive and harmonious society.
18. In addition to the role of the law and senators, there are many other ways to promote national unity in Malaysia. These include:
  - Education: Teaching children about the different cultures and religions in Malaysia can help to foster understanding and tolerance.

- Media: The media can play a positive role in promoting national unity by reporting on stories that highlight the diversity and unity of Malaysia.
- Community events: Community events that bring people from different ethnic groups together can help to build bridges and create a sense of shared identity.
- Individual actions: Everyone can play a role in promoting national unity by being tolerant, respectful, and understanding of others.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

19. In conclusion, promoting national unity and nation-building through business collaboration in Malaysia is not just a noble goal; it is a practical and achievable one. By harnessing the power of diversity, providing equal opportunities, celebrating our cultural richness, and investing in social responsibility, businesses can become powerful agents of change and progress in our nation. Let us work together to build a Malaysia where unity, inclusivity, and prosperity are the cornerstones of our shared future.

Thank you.