

## 5TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INTEGRITY

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16 SEPTEMBER 2010



## Pictures

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A roundtable with representatives from six different religions spoke during the event

**Kuala Lumpur, 16 September 2010** - Multiculturalism and national unity were the themes on Malaysia Day, Thursday, 16 Sept. during the 5th Annual National Conference on Integrity. Hosted at UCSI University's Dewan Tan Sri Ahmad Razali (DeTSAR), more than 300 people attended the event entitled "We R Malaysia: Truth Matters: Integration with Integrity."

The event was organised by UCSI University's Faculty of Economics and Policy Science along with the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies, the Malaysian Institute of Development and Asian Studies, the Oriental Hearts and Mind Study Institute, BangsaMalaysia@yahoo.com, the UKM Institute of Ethnic Studies, the Malaysian Association of Facilitators and the Extraordinary People Impacting Community. The day-long conference contained a number of speakers, panellists and discussion groups focused on racial and religious issues regarding national identity in Malaysia.

YB Senator Dato Seri Idris Jala gave the first keynote speech on "Celebrating Diversity in Malaysia" and spoke about achieving national unity by embracing diversity within Malaysia. Dato Idris said diversity was not limited to just race and religion, but also includes differences in age, gender, education and whether one comes from a rural or urban environment. He said the differences were not problems to be solved but rather, polarities to be managed through mutual acceptance.

"We need to not only tolerate our diversity but need to move towards accepting our diversity and celebrating it," he said. "Blessed with so many different ethnic groups and tribes, we need to find a way to embrace each other."

UCSI University Chancellor Tan Sri Datuk Seri Panglima Dr. Abdul Rahman Arshad spoke during a discussion group on education and urged towards the formation of one common Malaysian education system. He said Malaysia, as opposed to other countries, has a forced plural society that was created with the races intentionally separated. He said the new education system should have a common curriculum based on the principles of tolerance and understanding between the different ethnic groups where students could learn their own languages as well as those different from their ethnic groups.

"Let's not make diversity a factor to divide, let's make it a factor to unite," he said.

The event also included keynote speeches from attorney Datuk Azzat Kamaludin and retired Justice Datuk Seri Sri Ram Gopal on "National Integration with Constitutional Integrity." Discussion groups focusing on education, politics and religion also contained a number of prominent speakers including YB Hannah Yeoh, former Malaysian Bar Council President Dato' Ambiga Sreenevasan and Dato' Noor Rezan Bapoo.

Those who attended the event found it very informative.

Amir Derayatifar, a UCSI A-Level student from Iran, said he came, because he is interested in politics and wanted to know more about Malaysia.

"It was good, because they talked about religion and its role in politics," he said. "I realise the world faces the same issues everywhere."

Lindy Sia, a kindergarten teacher who lives in Kuala Lumpur, said she came because national unity is important to her and is something she tries to instil in her own pupils. She said the conference helped her learn a positive way of spreading multiculturalism.

"Everyone is different, but the differences unite us, we see the beauty in the differences everyone has," she said. "After being here today, I feel like I'm on the right track to a better future, a better Malaysia."

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*Last updated: 22 Sep 2010*