



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

**Address by Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO
on the occasion of Hari UNESCO Malaysia**

Kuala Lumpur, 24 May 2015

Honourable Mr Tan Sri Muhyiddin Mohd Yassin, Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia
and Minister of Education,

Honourable Dato'Seri Haji Idris Jusoh

Honourable Datuk Hajah Azizah Datuk Seri Panglima Mohd Dun

Honourable Datuk Mary Yap Kaim Ching

Honourable Tan Sri Dr Madinah Mohamad

Honourable Dato' Seri Ir Dr Zaini Ujang

Excellencies, Ambassadors, High Commissioners,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to be here, in Kuala Lumpur, to celebrate *Hari UNESCO Malaysia*.

I see this as a powerful symbol of Malaysia's commitment to UNESCO, to the
values and objectives we share.

It is a special pleasure to celebrate this day with so many young people, so many
youth groups and artists.

The voices, energy and ideas of young people have never been as important as
they are today, in a world transforming, getting younger every day.

I have just come from Incheon, Republic of Korea, where the most significant conference on education for the last 15 years has concluded – and I wish to say the need to support young women and men was *the* guiding principle of this conference, and it will continue to direct us as we move forward.

Hari UNESCO Malaysia has special significance in this year when we mark the Organization's 70th anniversary.

This is a moment to celebrate achievements and to renew our engagement with the aspiration for peace that lies at the heart of UNESCO's Constitution.

On this day, I wish to thank the Government and people of Malaysia for their support to UNESCO, in promoting cooperation through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information.

In a world changing quickly, there are no stronger pillars for human dignity, for resilience, for cooperation.

This year, *Hari UNESCO Malaysia* celebrates the theme of '*togetherness*', and this idea stands at the heart of UNESCO's mission, to strengthen humanity as a single community.

I see this reflected in Malaysia's *Vision 2020*, where the economy, society and culture progress in harmony.

This is embodied in Malaysia's leadership of the *Association of Southeast Asian Nations* in this landmark year for the creation of the *ASEAN Community*, tightening links between more than 650 million people.

I see this expressed in the partnership between Malaysia and UNESCO, through the *Malaysia-UNESCO Cooperation Programme*, as well as the *International Centre for South-South Cooperation on Science, Technology and Innovation*, a leading UNESCO Category 2 Centre, and the *Regional Humid Tropics Hydrology and Water Resources Centre*.

Malaysia's commitment is reflected in the 3rd meeting of the *Scientific Advisory Board of the United Nations Secretary-General*, which opens tomorrow, at the invitation of the Prime Minister, for which I am deeply grateful.

All these achievements testify also to a belief in the power of education for tackling poverty and building inclusive prosperity.

This is reflected in the cooperation that led to the ground-breaking *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025*, as well as the *Higher Education Blueprint 2015-2025*, launched last month.

Our partnership builds also on the commitment to safeguard and share Malaysia's stunning cultural heritage and diversity.

This includes the World Heritage sites of the Gunung Mulu and the Kinabalu Parks, the historic cities of Melaka and George Town, and the archaeological heritage of the Lenggong Valley.

It includes also intangible heritage, represented, for instance, by the *Mak Yong Theatre* -- UNESCO was delighted to experience the wealth of Malaysia's heritage and diversity during the exhibition and performance held at headquarters last month.

Our cooperation has deep foundations.

This involves four inscriptions on the *UNESCO Memory of the World Register* – the *Batu Bersurat Terengganu*, the *Correspondence of the late Sultan of Kedah 1882-1943*, the *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, and the *Sejarah Melayu* (The Malay Annals).

It includes two Biosphere Reserves – *Tasik Chini* and *Crocker Range*.

Reaching into society, it brings together some 68 Associated Schools.

In this turning point year, when States are crafting a new global sustainable development agenda, we need leadership like Malaysia's more than ever before, to take forward the vision we share.

This is a vision of lasting peace, based on human rights and dignity, on global solidarity and citizenship.

In this spirit, I welcome the opening of the *YesPeace Network/Malaysia*, led by the *UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development* and taken forward by a very dynamic group of young Malaysian women and men.

With this in mind, let me end with the words of the Malaysian poet, Usman Awang, which I believe express the message of *Hari UNESCO Malaysia*:

Play the song of peace on the breath of the soul

sing it to the ears of the newborn,

ring it to the peak of the tower...

Thank you.