

Ambassador's Speech
Launching of Sanggar Budaya Indonesia
(Indonesian Cultural Centre)

Principles, Teachers and Students,
Parents,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is truly a pleasure to welcome all of you here this afternoon for the launching of the Indonesian Cultural Centre at the Indonesian School in Singapore. I would also like to express my appreciation for your participation in this event.

The Indonesian School was established in 1969 with two main purposes. The first is to cater for the educational needs of Indonesians residing in Singapore, whilst the second is to promote Indonesia's culture and heritage, and in doing so, foster better relations between students at the Indonesian school and other local and foreign schools in Singapore.

Indonesia, as I'm sure you are all aware, is home to a rich and diverse culture and heritage. With more than 300 different ethnic groups, Indonesia is indeed a unique melting pot of cultures and traditions. Geographically speaking, although Indonesia and Singapore are relatively close, I believe that not all Singaporeans have sufficient information concerning Indonesia.

At the Embassy we believe in the benefits of soft diplomacy through cultural exchanges to better improve relationships between countries on a people-to-people basis.

It is for these reasons that the Indonesian Embassy is establishing the Indonesian Cultural Centre or 'Sanggar Budaya Indonesia' at the Indonesian School, to reach out and to give everyone an opportunity to learn and experience the culture for themselves. And with this in mind, the Indonesian Cultural Centre is open to Singaporeans and foreigners alike.

I invite all of you here this afternoon to take part in the various activities available at the centre, including dance, music and language. And with membership to the centre and the classes free of charge, none of us have an excuse not to participate.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In this opportunity, I would like to encourage the Indonesian community, the professionals and academics to give their support to the school and centre, so that there will be more access and opportunities for the school to develop itself, in terms of better quality education supported by decent facilities. We can work together to make it a truly successful educational institution and at the same time, create a medium to forge stronger bonds and friendships between Indonesians and Singaporeans, as well as others.

I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to all the guests for attending today, and the artists for their participation and hard work in making this event possible. I hope you will all enjoy the performances this afternoon and that we will see you at the Cultural Centre, soon.

Thank you.