

SPEECH BY
MDM RAHAYU BUANG,
VICE-CHAIR, MALAY HERITAGE FOUNDATION
DURING THE
INAUGURAL LAUNCH OF ***SEMBANG ILMU PLUS(+)***
AT
CHAMBER, THE ARTS HOUSE
ON 18 JUNE 2022

Mr. Edwin Tong
Minister for Culture, Community and Youth and 2nd
Minister for Law

Dr. Norshahril Saat
Chairman, The Malay Heritage Foundation and my
fellow Board Members,

Mr. Lim Hock Chuan
Head of Programmes, Temasek Foundation

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

INTRODUCTION

A very good morning to everyone for taking the time
to spend your Saturday morning with us. Special thanks

to Minister Edwin Tong, Minister for MCCY, and Second Minister for Law for setting aside your time to be with us for the launch of Sembang Ilmu Plus(+).

ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING OUR YOUTH

2 In the various work that we do to promote and safeguard our shared heritage, it is important to include the views and perspectives of our youth in the conversations. After all, they are our future stalwarts and the agents for social change and progress.

1 With this in mind, the Malay Heritage Foundation started the youth-led Sembang Ilmu (roughly translated to mean “Let’s Chill & Chat!” in English) Seminar series in March 2020, in collaboration with the Malay Studies Society, NUS. Sembang Ilmu is a discursive platform to

facilitate discourse and the sharing of knowledge and wisdom pertaining to our Malay cultural performances, beliefs, social practices, norms, rituals and social rules. Undeterred by the outbreak of the Covid19 pandemic, circuit breaker and heightened alerts, the youths continued with the seminars, pivoting them onto online platforms. Between March 2020 and September 2021, more than 120 Malay youths have been involved, and this year, Sembang Ilmu is now on the third run with two (2) sessions already conducted in March and May.

3 We are encouraged by our youth collaborators' positive feedback and enthusiasm. We live in a multi-cultural society, and such discourses would be enriched further, if we could bring together youths from diverse backgrounds to have conversations and foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of our individual and

shared cultural heritage. And thus, the idea of **Sembang Ilmu Plus** was born. The Malay Heritage Foundation hopes that this new initiative can reach out to more youths and we can strengthen our multi-cultural social fabric even further. Two (2) of the most innovative, engaging and meaningful project ideas that come up from Sembang Ilmu Plus(+) will be selected, and seed funding will be provided for the groups to turn their ideas into reality. We would like to say a big thank you to Temasek Foundation for believing in our vision and generously supporting this 2-year pilot project.

STRENGTHENING SYNERGY AND PARTNERSHIPS

4 As the African proverb says, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” We want to go far and deep in preserving and growing our shared

heritage. Hence, cultural promotion and preservation work cannot be done alone. True to the 'gotong-royong spirit,' we are also grateful to our community partners who have extended the much-needed helping hands and rallied their volunteers, students and youths in their network to help us in today's event. They included community organisations such as 4PM (or the Malay Youth Literary Association) and Peoples' Association; educational institutions such as Catholic Junior College, ITE Colleges Central, East and West, LaSalle College of the Arts, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Nanyang Technological University, Raffles Institution, Singapore Management University and the Singapore University of Technology and Design. Although this is probably the first time we have worked together, we certainly hope this will not be the last. It should be a start to something bigger.

5 I would also like to extend our thanks to the incredible line-up of speakers - Dr. Marc Nair, Dr. Noramin Farid, Dr. Wong Chee Meng, and our very own first Tunas Warisan award recipient, Ms. Shaza Ishak. Coming from diverse artistic and cultural backgrounds, all of them had readily agreed to come on board to share their knowledge and insights. We hope this morning will be an intellectually stimulating and enriching experience for our participants today. I am equally excited to hear their ideas and perspectives.

CONCLUSION

7 Thank you, everyone, for your support of our programme. I look forward to a robust and fruitful discussion.