

**REMARKS BY
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF ASEAN, DR SURIN PITSUWAN,
AT THE 3RD BEST OF ASEAN PERFORMING ARTS
GEDUNG KESENIAN JAKARTA, 30 APRIL 2009**

Excellencies,

Pak Wardiyatmo, Secretary-General, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Indonesia,

Pak Agung Mulyana, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs, Indonesia,

Mr Chan Yeng Kit, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information, Communications and Arts, Singapore,

Permanent Representatives to ASEAN,

Ambassadors of the ASEAN countries to Indonesia

Dialogue Partner Ambassadors to ASEAN,

Ambassadors to Indonesia,

Members of Diplomatic Corps,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is indeed a great privilege for the ASEAN Secretariat to co-host this very important event to showcase ASEAN's diverse cultural heritage. We began with the Republic of Indonesia early last year, then the Kingdom of Thailand, and now the Republic of Singapore. We hope that before the year ends, we will have two or three more ASEAN Member States participating in this series of the Best of ASEAN Performing Arts. It is important that the peoples of ASEAN, the 600 million of us, appreciate, understand and value the cultural diversities that we have among us.

South East Asia is a region that is probably the most diverse of any region in the world. We have all high civilisations and all great religions represented in the region and we have lived in harmony, peace and in accommodation through the ages. In fact, if you think of it, South East Asia and ASEAN is a living proof of the fact that there is no such thing as the clash of civilisations. South East Asia and ASEAN have been displaying not

a clash of civilisations but the accommodation of great cultures. We are proud of that heritage and tonight, the Republic of Singapore is presenting to us its best.

The world out there is full of challenges, threats and worries. In the last few days at the Secretariat and here in the region, we have been grappling with the challenge of Swine Influenza just like any other region in the world. But tonight, we are going to put all these worries aside and focus on the attractions that Singapore has to offer. We will enjoy these performances together and we will appreciate the diversity of ASEAN as represented by the Republic of Singapore with all its diversity and with all the progress and efficiency that Singapore has been able to achieve through its own resources and differences in its own diverse population. Singapore itself is a symbol of harmony, cooperation and accommodation of all the cultures in ASEAN.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome you all; let us enjoy this great evening of the *Singapore Showcase: Cultural Crossings*.

Thank you very much.

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