

**REMARKS BY
MR. CHAN YENG KIT, PERMANENT SECRETARY,
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND ARTS,
SINGAPORE
AT THE 3RD BEST OF ASEAN PERFORMING ARTS
GEDUNG KESENIAN JAKARTA, 30 APRIL 2009**

Your Excellency, the Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dr Surin Pitsuwan,

*Your Excellency, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Culture and
Tourism, Indonesia, Drs. Wardiyatmo,*

Permanent Representatives to ASEAN,

Ambassadors of ASEAN Member States,

Dialogue Partner Ambassadors to ASEAN ,

Ambassadors to Indonesia ,

Distinguished Guests,

1. When ASEAN Secretary-General, Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, first proposed the Best of ASEAN Performing Arts at the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Arts and Culture meeting in January last year, I was delighted.
2. I believe, as Seneca¹ did, that “the soil, however rich it may be, cannot be productive without cultivation, so that mind without culture can never produce good fruit.” Culture enables nations and citizens of different

¹ Seneca, Lucius Annaeus (4 BC - 65 AD) is a Roman statesman, philosopher and dramatist, as well as the tutor and advisor of Emperor Nero. The above quote is one of Seneca's reflections on the importance of culture and can be found in *A Dictionary of Quotations from Various Authors in Ancient and Modern Languages* by Hugh Moore.

nations to engage each other as peers, more effectively than in the fields of politics or economics.

3. More importantly, I believe that cultural exchanges through platforms such as the Best of ASEAN Performing Arts, are indispensable to laying the foundation for greater cooperation and collaboration amongst ASEAN Member States.
4. ASEAN Member States are neighbours with a long history of exchange and cooperation with each other. Through the ongoing Best of ASEAN Performing Arts, I believe we can strengthen our cultural dialogue and facilitate even greater sharing and understanding of each other's arts and culture.
5. Tonight is Singapore's turn to organise the Best of ASEAN Performing Arts. We have titled tonight's performance "Singapore Showcase: Cultural Crossings". We wish to share with you, some of our cross-cultural offerings in the arts, cultural and culinary spheres. We hope you will find them interesting.
6. We also hope that the Singapore Showcase as well as past and future Best of ASEAN Performing Arts performances will succeed in building a "cultural bridge" that connects all ASEAN Member States and facilitates the smooth "crossing-over" of each other's culture – so that the citizens of ASEAN Member States can enjoy the rich diversity of arts and cultures from ASEAN. And it is my personal belief that regular cultural exchanges such as these will eventually lead to greater mutual understanding and respect amongst the citizens of ASEAN, and in doing so, take us one step closer towards realizing an ASEAN Community.
7. In conclusion, I would like to commend the Singapore International Foundation and the ASEAN Secretariat, as well as thank my colleagues from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of

Information, Communications and the Arts, for their efforts in organising this evening's Singapore Showcase.

8. I would also like to thank all of you for taking time off your busy schedules to partake in this evening's showcase at the Gedung Kesenian Jakarta. Finally, I would like to join Dr. Surin in inviting all of you to enjoy the third series in the Best of ASEAN Performing Arts entitled "Singapore Showcase: Cultural Crossings".

Thank you.

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