

# DIPLOMATIC VOICE

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE  
INSTITUTE OF DIPLOMACY AND FOREIGN  
RELATIONS, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
MALAYSIA

## Message by the Director General



***"I am delighted to present to you our first issue of the Diplomatic Voice."***

This quarterly publication is the Institute's latest effort to reach out to practitioners of diplomacy, as well as those who may have an interest in this area, and to create a platform for the sharing of information. It is also part of the Institute's effort to supplement the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs' outreach programme. This publication will be distributed locally and internationally, covering among others, Malaysian government ministries and agencies, foreign missions, training and research institutes, the various diplomatic institutes all over the world, as well as the Institute's Alumni members.

The Diplomatic Voice is divided into various sections. The Forum is allocated to cover a particular issue by

selected contributors, and I welcome comments on the issues covered. Profile of Prominent Person is self explanatory. The Diplomatic Voice will also showcase programmes and events that took place at the Institute, as well as activities done by serving diplomats and future diplomats on training at the Institute. Future issues will also include, among others, contributions from the Foreign Missions in Kuala Lumpur.

In this issue, Global Movement of the Moderates is the theme chosen to be covered in the Forum section. It is in line with the speech delivered by The Honourable Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Sri Mohd. Najib Tun Abdul Razak at the United Nations General Assembly on 27 September 2010. The Malaysian Foreign Minister is featured in the Profile page, giving his brief thoughts on Malaysia's diplomatic progress and his hopes for the future of Malaysia's diplomatic service. Others include contributions by two young diplomats on their group's experience scaling Mount Kinabalu, the highest mountain in Southeast Asia, and their work attachment programme at the Malaysian Mission in Jakarta.

On behalf of the Institute, I hope you will enjoy what the Diplomatic Voice brings to you in this issue and future issues. I also welcome comments and contributions from all readers. You can email to [bulletin@idfr.gov.my](mailto:bulletin@idfr.gov.my) and together, we can help IDFR and the Ministry reach out to the world.

Thank you.

**Ambassador Dato' Ku Jaafar  
Ku Shaari**

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## Dato' Sri Anifah Aman, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia



*Q. What is your general perception towards Malaysia's development in the diplomatic field?*

A. I am proud to say that we have been consistent in our foreign policy posture which has been based on a principled yet pragmatic approach. Under the leadership of Prime Minister YAB Dato' Sri Najib Tun Abdul Razak, Malaysia continues to advocate its principled views at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels to protect our sovereignty as well as to further our national interests.

As Malaysia grows and prospers, we have to dedicate more resources and expertise to effectively address a wider range of international challenges that include non-traditional issues such as transnational crime, terrorism, disaster management, human trafficking and climate change at the international fora. I believe as we continue to mature and move towards becoming a developed nation in 2020, Malaysia would play an even more meaningful role within the community of nations.

*Q. After two years serving as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, what can*

*you say about Malaysia's diplomatic progress and engagement in this region?*

A. Malaysia and our ASEAN colleagues recognise the importance of realising the ASEAN Community by 2015. The three correlated pillars of the ASEAN Community: security, economic and social-cultural pillars will further strengthen people-to-people relations as well as enhance the close cooperation that already exists among ASEAN Member States.

Hence, Malaysia has been working closely with its neighbours towards strengthening ASEAN. Being at the core of Malaysia's foreign policy, a strong and successful ASEAN is crucial for the development of Malaysia and the region as a whole.

It is encouraging to note that ASEAN has made tremendous progress in all three pillars and we are certainly on our way to realise the ASEAN Community aspiration by 2015. As Malaysia assumes the ASEAN Chairmanship in the same year, I am confident that we would be able to provide the necessary leadership and help take ASEAN to new heights.

*Q. Throughout your career as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, what was the biggest obstacle that you had to face and what was the precious moment experienced?*

A. The dynamic and fluid nature of international relations today makes it a challenge of its own. Issues faced in the field of diplomacy are becoming much more complex and require closer coordination and joint decisions among the international community. Malaysia has made valuable contributions in finding solutions to various issues of global concern and will continue to do so. Malaysia's voice of moderation continues to be heard and respected by both the developed and developing countries.

In addition to that, we have seen some violent conflicts and vast devastation caused by natural disasters in many different regions of the world. Malaysia has given its support in terms of humanitarian aid to some countries in dire need of assistance. Apart from that, the Ministry has played an integral role to ensure the safety of Malaysians abroad who are affected by calamities and conflicts, and if needed, evacuating them out of troubled areas as was done in Egypt and Libya.

These challenges or obstacles as you may call them have been an enriching experience for me. I have gained tremendously from working closely with my counterparts, world leaders and experts from all around the world on identifying possible solutions to international problems. Participating in a productive discourse and being part of the solution to issues of global concern have been a gratifying experience and a reward on its own.



*Q. How do you evaluate IDFR as an important arm of the Foreign Ministry?*

A. My personal evaluation of IDFR is it is a very important arm of the Ministry as the Institute trains our diplomats and other Malaysian government officers in the areas of diplomacy and international relations. IDFR helps train and groom our diplomats to be well equipped and more rounded, by imparting to them the necessary soft skills as well as some basics in foreign languages. IDFR also prepares our junior diplomats for their first posting by offering orientation courses to equip them with knowledge such as preparing for working and living abroad, financial management at Missions, promoting Malaysia as a tourism destination and fine dining.

IDFR also trains diplomats from other countries through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme, ASEAN-Republic of Korea Special Fund, Colombo Plan and the Commonwealth Secretariat. In the past, IDFR has accommodated training requests from other countries and has to date, specially trained groups of senior diplomats from Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine and Timor-Leste. This sharing of knowledge, expertise and experience with other countries has helped to elevate IDFR's status as a very important extension of the Ministry.

Another positive aspect of IDFR is the ongoing request for training and influx of participants from both local and international agencies and ministries. It is again a testament of the growing importance of IDFR.

*Q. Malaysia has been playing a leading role in ASEAN. How do you see*

*IDFR being utilised to fit into this picture?*

A. IDFR has been contributing in helping Malaysia to play a leading role in ASEAN by training diplomats from ASEAN countries, under the Forum for ASEAN Young Diplomats on International Affairs programme. Funded by the ASEAN-Republic of Korea Special Fund, the programme allows for networking and the sharing of knowledge between upcoming diplomats from various ASEAN countries. IDFR has also been organising the ASEAN Day Lecture, in conjunction with ASEAN Day celebrations, at the Institute, on behalf of the Ministry.

*Q. Can you elaborate your hope on the future of Malaysia's diplomatic service and IDFR in particular?*

A. Our diplomatic service has been doing a very good job of promoting our interests and defending our national interests abroad since the Ministry's inception in 1957. We have also produced some of the best diplomats: the late Tun Dr Ismail, Tan Sri Ahmad Kamil Jaafar and Tan Sri

Razali Ismail, just to name a few. It is my hope that we will continue to produce diplomats of such high calibre.

However, we must be wary that there is always a possibility that complacency can set in and in an instant, ruin what has taken years of experience and hard work to build. We must never let this happen and must be on our toes every step of the way. We must continue to give our best, and more, for King and country.

It is my fervent hope that IDFR will continue to improve its delivery service. It must always strive to be better than or at least at par with some of the world's leading diplomatic institutes. Then, we will be able to produce world class diplomats recognisable and respected wherever they go and whenever their names are mentioned.

*IDFR would like to express its appreciation to Dato' Sri Anifah Aman, the Foreign Minister, for agreeing to be featured in the Diplomatic Voice's inaugural issue*



*“The real issue is not between Muslims and non-Muslims but between the moderates and extremists of all religions, be it Islam, Christianity or Judaism. Across all religions we have inadvertently allowed the ugly voices of the periphery to drown out the many voices of reason and common sense. I therefore urge us to embark on building a ‘Global Movement of the Moderates’ from all faiths who are committed to work together to combat and marginalize extremists who have held the world hostage with their bigotry and bias.”*

Excerpt of Prime Minister Dato’ Sri Mohd. Najib Tun Abdul Razak’s speech at the UNGA on 27 September 2010

## A Global Movement of the Moderates Against the Threat of Religious Extremism

By Dato’ Dr. Mohd. Yusof Ahmad

Prime Minister Dato’ Sri Mohd. Najib Tun Abdul Razak, in his speech at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2010, had called for a ‘Global Movement of the Moderates’ comprising all faiths to combat the threat of religious extremism world-wide. The threat, if unchecked, would allow extremists to drown the voices of peace, freedom, moderation and reason in society with dire consequences to international peace and stability.

Since the tragic event of September 11, the calls to reason and dialogue, particularly between the West and Islam, have taken a back seat. Extremists on both sides of the divide have hijacked from the moderates in society the path to peace through dialogue and reconciliation. Violence, justified in the name of religion or freedom, is proffered as the only means to resolve inter-religious and cultural disputes between diverse societies. The silent acquiescence of the moderates to the bullying tactics of the extremists across region, class, culture and religious divide, has given religious extremists, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, a free hand to promote their hate agenda globally with impunity. Viewed against the current backdrop of heightened Islamophobia in the West, the state of affairs is unacceptable and dangerous.

To be sure, governments directly affected by the malaise have taken

measures, unilaterally and in concert, to defuse the threat. Success however, has been rather thin. Structural, tactical, contextual, funding, cultural and other constraints have impeded efforts to eliminate the scourge internationally. Low civil-society participation and general apathy among the moderates towards the problem are among other obstacles impeding effective implementation of these counter-measures at the ground level. Viewed against this context, Prime Minister Najib’s call for a global movement of the moderates to tackle the problem head-on is indeed timely and urgent.

Moderates everywhere, regardless of their colour, creed or faith, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists or Jews, must make a united stand against extremism in the greater interest of humanity and world peace. The extremists’ proclivity for violence to resolve cross-cultural conflicts under whatever guise must be openly condemned and rejected. The use of violence to settle disputes in civilized society must be criminalized.

Prime Minister Najib’s proposal in the sense of the coming together of like-minded individuals, groups, intellectuals, community leaders, professionals, corporate leaders, thinkers, educationists, politicians, laymen, civil society advocates, heads of family and opinion-makers across

borders and regions, in this respect, can make a difference. A strong, united and uncompromising support for open dialogue and negotiation by the moderates of all faiths across society and regions can isolate, marginalize and eventually eliminate the scourge from society.

Since September 11, numerous initiatives have been taken by Western and other governments to defuse the heightened tension between Islam and the West. Projects such as the Cordoba Initiative, the ASEM Inter-faith Dialogue, the Asia-Pacific Regional Inter-faith Dialogue, Spain’s ‘Alliance of Civilizations’ proposal and former Iranian President Khatami’s idea of ‘Dialogue Among Civilizations’, are aimed at enhancing the West’s understanding of Islam. Similar multilateral efforts under the OIC, or unilaterally by moderate Muslim states like Malaysia through concepts such as the former Prime Minister Badawi’s ‘Islam Hadhari’ are also designed to “educate” the West, disabuse Western misconception about Islam and terrorism and promote greater dialogue and understanding between Islam and other religions and cultures. These disparate initiatives, however, have yet to bear real results. A decade after 9/11, the West’s continued ignorance about Islam is only matched by the extremists’ increased hold on the minds of the young, the oppressed and the deprived in society. Whilst the mo-



derates in the Muslim and non-Muslim world remained helpless and ambivalent, the extremists in both societies have succeeded in attracting the young to their cause across communities and regions.

Malaysia's unique model of a functioning pluralistic society of diverse ethnic, religious and cultural citizenry living in peace, harmony and tolerance, as pointed out by Prime Minister Najib, offers an important lesson in this respect. The Malaysian peoples' shared commitment to tolerance and dialogue and open rejection of violence as a means of resolving inter-cultural conflict have successfully isolated fringe extremists from Malaysia's mainstream thinking. This feat is only possible with the active participation and commitment of all in the society, regardless of their religion or creed. Prime Minister Najib's proposal thus echoed the hope for a similar coming together of the 'moderates of the world' to forge a similar solid front against the threat of extremism in the international community. Given the trans-regional nature of the scourge, the success of the project however, is entirely dependent on the support and commitment of all the moderate sectors of the international community towards the proposal.

Additionally, a number of other variables should also be addressed by both sides of the divide if a sustainable solution to the problem is to be achieved. First, there needs to be genuine sincerity on the part of the West to act on the root causes of long standing injustices against the Muslim community internationally. 'Quick-fix' solutions aimed at merely treating symptoms rather than exam-

ining the real root causes of conflicts between diverse societies will not work. Muslims on their part must similarly be open to new thinking and be more tolerant of religious and cultural pluralism. Second, narrow and historically jaundiced perspectives of each other must be traded for inclusiveness in the approach towards community building whether at the national or international levels. Here, Prime Minister Najib's 'One Malaysia' concept is most instructive. The model seeks to forge greater unity and strengthen national harmony in Malaysia through increased dialogue among Malaysia's diverse multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural community. Third, a more concerted and unified strategy need to be adopted to translate Prime Minister Najib's proposal into reality. For instance, all existing disparate initiatives could be galvanized and integrated into a broad-based multi-lateral mechanism to translate their common vision into reality. A special task force comprising moderates from across nations could be established to flesh out the details, strategy and action plans for the implementation of the proposal in the near term. Fourth, violence must be criminalized and extremism in whatever form rejected. The practice of selective justice and double standards by the West must stop. Respect for the dignity and sensitivities of other cultural and religious norms must be observed in action



not just in words. Bigotry merely invites reciprocal reaction and helps perpetuate the cycle of hate, mistrust and intolerance between and among cultures. Fifth, and more importantly, the family unit and the school systems in both Muslim and non-Muslim societies must play a more active role in inculcating the habits of dialogue, tolerance, cultural pluralism, respect for diversity and in promoting multi-religious harmony across societies and regions.

The challenges are indeed daunting. But if accompanied by the right commitment, shared values and political will, the problem of extremism is not insurmountable. The journey of a thousand miles, after all, begins with the first step. Prime Minister Najib's call for the 'Global Movement of the Moderates' is a step in the right direction. It deserves the commitment and support of the moderates of all faiths to succeed.

*Dato' Dr. Mohd. Yusof Ahmad is the Director of the Institute of ASEAN Studies and Global Affairs (INSPAG), Universiti Teknologi MARA*





Participants of the Diplomatic Training Course for International Participants (DTC) and Diploma in Diplomacy (DiD) Programme



H.E. Simon Featherstone, British High Commissioner to Malaysia, delivering a lecture: *Globalized Diplomacy – Diplomats of the 21st Century*



Newly appointed Malaysian Heads of Mission and their spouses with His Royal Highness and his consort, Tuanku Zara Salim and other Ministry of Foreign Affairs senior officials



The Director General launching a book entitled *Malaysia's Foreign Policy: The First Fifty Years – Alignment, Neutralism, Islamism* by Johan Saravananamuttu



The Sekolah Menengah Sains Muar Ghazal Musical Group entertaining the Royal Couple and other guests at the Black Tie Dinner



DTC international participants at Pelegong Homestay, Negeri Sembilan



Certificate Presentation Ceremony for participants of the Workshop on Public Diplomacy and Media Skills on 24 February 2011





Highness Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah, Raja Muda Perak Darul Ridzuan, officials during a Black Tie Dinner on 31 January 2011



Orientation Course for Heads of Mission and their Spouses



IDFR's monthly aerobics exercise sessions



Sir Peter Williams, Honorary Treasurer and Vice President of the Royal Society United Kingdom taking questions after his lecture entitled *New Frontiers on Science Diplomacy*, organised by the Academy of Sciences Malaysia



Madam Shahreen Kamaluddin giving the finer points on dressing to course participants



storming session by IDFR officials at Puncak Rimba, Janda Baik, 8 to 19 February 2011



Pre-Posting Orientation Course participants learning traditional Malay dances



## Black Tie Dinner with His Royal Highness Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah Ibni Sultan Azlan Shah, Raja Muda Perak Darul Ridzuan

By Georgina M. Zachariah

A Black Tie Dinner with His Royal Highness Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah Ibni Sultan Azlan Shah, Raja Muda Perak Darul Ridzuan as the guest of honour was organised at the Shangri-La Hotel, Kuala Lumpur on 31 January 2011. The dinner was held to honour the Ambassador-designates who had completed the 'Orientation Course for Heads of Mission and their Spouses', which was held at the Institute from 25 to 31 January 2011.

The presence of Her Royal Highness Tuanku Zara Salim, Raja Puan Besar Perak Darul Ridzuan added grandeur to the evening's event. Also present at the Black Tie Dinner were The Honourable Dato' Sri Anifah Aman, Foreign Minister of Malaysia, The Honourable Senator A. Kohilan Pillay, Deputy Foreign Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Ku Jaafar Ku Shaari, Director General of IDFR, foreign dignitaries, senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia and members of the media.

The Director General of IDFR, in his welcoming speech, took the opportunity to congratulate the future Ambassadors on their recent appointment and encouraged them to practise being "Hands-On, Hearts-On and Minds-On" in their duties as Malaysia's representatives abroad.

In his public address entitled "The Emergence of China and India as Global Powers and its Impact on International Diplomacy in the Asia Pacific Region", His Royal Highness Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah stated that our nation's most important task at present is prospecting for greater economic opportunities, without focusing merely on China and India. The two great empires, once fallen by history's wayside, are now on the rise with China projected towards becoming

the world's largest economy by 2030 and India, the world's third largest economy by 2050, should current trends continue.

However, His Royal Highness Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah highlighted that China and India will continue to trail significantly behind the present developed economies because size and quantity alone cannot be the determinant of economic prowess or national power, for quality is equally as important.

In suggesting the way forward, His Royal Highness Raja Dr. Nazrin mentioned the need to work hard at expanding the space for cooperative security and correspondingly reducing the space for conflictual approaches to security-building, and that *"Indeed the whole spectrum of creative diplomacy will be required to reduce suspicion, build trust and clarify issues that will help pave the path towards more cooperative ways to manage international issues"*. His Royal Highness Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah concluded the lecture by wishing the future Ambassadors all the best in discharging their duties in what promises to be an exciting future.

Guests at the dinner were treated to a musical medley by students of Sekolah Menengah Sains Muar, Johor, which included a selection of golden oldies as well as more recent numbers.

Throughout the 'Orientation Course for Heads of Mission and their Spouses', the newly appointed Ambassadors attended lectures conducted by senior officials from the



Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including by the Secretary General and the three Deputy Secretary Generals of the Ministry on topics such as Sharing of Experience with an Ambassador; The Conduct of Diplomacy-Expectation of Leadership; Multilateral and Economic Issues; as well as Management of Administration, Finance, Security and Service Matters at Mission Overseas. Topics that were catered specifically for the spouses of the Ambassador-designates were The Role of Spouses and Reception and Official Entertaining by Heads of Mission. These sessions were very ably and skillfully conducted by individuals possessing years of experience in their role as an Ambassador and as a spouse of an Ambassador, respectively.

The highlight of the five-day course was the Defending National Interests (DNI) simulation exercise, whereby the Ambassador-designates were given 20 minutes each to make a presentation on a particular issue in front of a panel comprising senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign



Affairs. The participants were also required to answer difficult questions from the floor and they were evaluated based on their knowledge of the topic, arguments and analysis presented, confidence as well as communication skills. Each presentation was immediately followed by a general evaluation by the panel of evaluators. Among the challenging topics that were discussed included Internal Security Act; Human Trafficking in Malaysia; Racial Integration in Malaysia; One Nation, Two Laws; and Freedom of Association and Press.

Note: The full address by His Royal Highness Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah may be obtained from [www.idfr.gov.my](http://www.idfr.gov.my) under Speeches



## Work Visit to Jakarta, Indonesia

By Amir Farid Abu Hasan

In line with IDFR's aspiration in developing diplomats who are well trained and versatile, 24 participants of the Diploma in Diplomacy (DiD) programme, including myself, went to Jakarta, Indonesia for an attachment programme at our Mission there. This week-long programme, which took place from 6 to 12 February 2011, also included visits to various government and regional organisations crucial to the work of a Foreign Service officer.

During the visit to the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and after going through the briefings and discussions from the Indonesians' stand point, it is safe to say that despite the differences that appear between the two nations, the fundamental aspect of resolving issues is similar whereby dialogue and peace are always in mind whenever negotiations take place. To further understand the functions and

core values of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we were taken to the Centre for Education and Training or locally known as PUSDIKLAT. It was indeed a beneficial experience to meet our Indonesian counterparts. Views and opinions were exchanged between both sides and we also participated in a forum pertaining to tourism in ASEAN.

We also had the opportunity to visit the ASEAN Secretariat, home of Southeast Asia's regional grouping. There, we were privileged to have met Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, the ASEAN Secretary General. Among other things, Dr. Surin spoke to us about the aspiration for ASEAN member states to achieve the ASEAN Community of 2015. As we listened to him speak, I could not help but notice his articulateness in delivering his thoughts; one that only a polished diplomat could manifest after

years of experience in the field of diplomacy. He also gave us some advice, and one that stuck most to me was the fact that as diplomats, we should always remember our purpose; that we should strive to the best of our abilities in the name of nation building, and in some cases, regional building.





Lady Luck was also smiling upon us during our visit to the ASEAN Secretariat as we were able to observe a meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives held once every fortnight. It was indeed an interesting experience to see diplomats from ASEAN member states gathered to discuss the future and direction of ASEAN. It was also a proud moment for us as Malaysians to see our Permanent Representative to ASEAN, Ambassador Datuk Hsu King Bee in action during the meeting. Her charisma and knowledge in negotiation can be admired and should be emulated.

After three days of visiting the various organisations, we embarked on a three-day attachment at the Malaysian Embassy. The Embassy in Jakarta is the biggest Malaysian Mission abroad in terms of manpower, and most government agencies related to foreign relations are represented there. We were briefed on the roles and responsibilities of each department and were exposed to the entire work facet of the Embassy; from consular services to immigration to religious purview to student affairs to matters of national

security. Officers from the respective departments gave us an in-depth brief of their mission statement. As I listened and pondered upon their briefs, I could not help but wonder the magnitude of it all. Every Mission plays an important role in ensuring that our nation's interests are looked after. Besides ensuring that the relations between both nations are maintained, the needs and welfare of our citizens must also be taken care of, especially in times of need. The task that is bestowed upon the staff of the Embassy is imperative and the ability to be versatile is much needed to be able to adapt to these kinds of situation.

What made our attachment programme even more unique was being involved with 'Ops Pyramid', a national exercise to evacuate more than 11,000 Malaysian students from Egypt due to the political chaos there. It was definitely an experience not to be missed. Before going to the Sukarno-Hatta Airport to receive the 115 students who came through Jakarta en route to Kuala Lumpur, we were briefed on what to expect. As most of us were first-timers in such a situation, nervousness embroiled us.

The time spent with them at the airport allowed us to hear the untold stories of their experience being in the midst of the Egyptian crisis. It was our duty to console and ensure them that the government is looking after their welfare. After spending a whole day at the airport, all of them were on the next flight back to Malaysia.

The time spent with the students was a once in a lifetime learning experience, a peek at the management and coordination of international situation/crisis at Missions abroad. It was indeed an unforgettable experience.

This work visit has given us an exposure, albeit a small one, to what it takes to be a successful diplomat. Nevertheless, it was an eye opener for us to experience life working in and out of a Mission abroad.



## We Came, We Saw and We Conquered Mount Kinabalu

By Mohamed Ariff Ali

This year's Diploma in Diplomacy (DiD) 2/2010 participants were tasked to scale Southeast Asia's highest and most majestic summit, Mount Kinabalu, located in Sabah. We were looking forward to the trip and the excitement and anticipation of the adventure ahead were obvious on our faces for weeks. Later, we found out (the hard way) that climbing Mount Kinabalu was probably one of the toughest things we had done in our lives.

The trip began with an unorthodox hike down from the first checkpoint, Timpohon Gate. Despite the gruelling six-kilometre hike which resulted in aches and bruises, and also being caught off-guard in torrential rain, all of us managed to make it to our first check point, Laban Rata.

We proceeded to push for the summit at two a.m in the dark, cold, damp night. After seemingly endless flights of stairs and clambering up the rocky trail, we emerged onto a small rocky plateau that marked the end of the tree-line and the beginning of the open rock face. The white rope that accompanies all climbers to Low's Peak begins here with a very steep climb up some treacherous terrain. We had to literally pull ourselves up parts of the rock face.

About two hours after leaving Laban Rata, we reached the Sayat-Sayat checkpoint, where our permits and registration were checked. This is the last point that climbers can refill their water bottles. Looking up the

mountain from Sayat-Sayat was quite an eerie sight. The outline of the mountain loomed before us and the trail was marked by little dots of light, indicating climbers making their way to the summit. With our headlights on, we proceeded with the climb. It became quite frustrating then, as each time we crossed another ridge and thinking that we must be nearing the top, another long uphill section presented itself. However, it was pointless to turn back at this juncture and we simply put one foot in front of the other for the rest of the climb. It also helped that we were receiving words of encouragement like "You can do it!" and "Almost there" from each other and other hikers.

The digital analog on my hand showed six a.m, and the sun began to rise. The view as I scaled closer to the peak was incredible. To the west, I could see St. John's Peak; to the east, the Donkey's Ears; and to the south, South Peak. This made for an incredible 360° view. Simply put, the experience of seeing the sun rise at over 4000 metres defies description. Naturally, it was crowded at the peak

as climbers were queuing for once-in-a-lifetime photo opportunities.

For most of us in the group, scaling Mount Kinabalu would be one of the most satisfying things we could do and the experience is one that we would treasure for life. I value this journey and have a new-found respect for those who attempt to scale Mount Kinabalu.

**"It was not merely the mountain that we conquered ....."**



## Upcoming Courses at IDFR\*

French Level VII	25 April-30 May 2011
Spanish Level IV	25 April-24 October 2011
French Level IV	25 April-22 November 2011
Spanish Level IA	26 April-20 October 2011
French Level I	26 April-24 November 2011
Spanish Level IB	27 April-19 October 2011
Workshop on International Negotiation for Senior Officers	3-5 May 2011
Effective Speaking Skills 1/2011	23-26 May 2011
Workshop on Introduction to Public International Law	23-26 May 2011
Crisis Management for International Participants (MTCP)	30 May-10 June 2011
Effective Writing Skills 1/2011	13-17 June 2011
Mid Career Course for Diplomats	13-24 June 2011
Training of Trainers	27 June- 8 July 2011
Arabic Level I	27 June-21 December 2011

\* Subject to changes



### Our Deepest Appreciation

IDFR would like to acknowledge contributions of books and magazines for our Library from our Missions in:

Abuja	Pekan Baru
Beijing	Sarajevo
Beirut	Seoul
Bucharest	Singapore
Dhaka	Stockholm
Guangzhou	Tashkent
Helsinki	Tokyo
Katmandu	Vancouver
New Delhi	Vientiane
New York	Zimbabwe



### Happy Birthday

Best wishes to our staff celebrating their birthdays in April, May and June

**April**

Azrul, Fadhilah, Farra, Ida, Najmah, Raimi, Romaiza, Solahah and Wan Mohd. Azrul

**May**

Abdul Rashid, Agustin, Ahmad Firdaus, Ahmad Yani, Che Nurulhuda, Fareeza, Guna, Izura, Kamariah, Laily, Mohd. Farid, Muhd. Azri, Nik Latifah, Suriya and Zaiza

**June**

Dzuita, Dzurin, Isaac, Mohd. Azlan, Mohd. Saiful, Nadhirah, Norhana and Nor Azura

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