



WELCOMING REMARKS BY

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INSTITUTE OF DIPLOMACY AND FOREIGN RELATIONS (IDFR)

AT THE

GRADUATION CEREMONY OF

DIPLOMA IN DIPLOMACY (DID) 2020

HILTON HOTEL, KL SENTRAL

THURSDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2020

3:30 PM

Yang Berhormat Dato' Kamarudin Jaffar,
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia;

Yang Berbahagia Dato' Sri Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Yaakob,
Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

Tan Sri-Tan Sri, Dato'-Dato';

Graduating Class of Diploma in Diplomacy (DiD) 2020;

Parents and Family Members;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, salam sejahtera and good afternoon.

1. It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to this Graduation Ceremony to honour the twenty-two (22) graduates of the 2020 Diploma in Diplomacy (DiD) programme. Many of you have made great efforts to join us today amidst the scourage of COVID19 pandemic that is facing us. For this, on behalf of IDFR, I would like to register our deep appreciation for your presence.

2. I must also thank our Honourable Deputy Foreign Minister, Dato' Kamaruddin Jaafar, for sacrificing time of his busy schedule to be with us this afternoon. Indeed, your presence is very meaningful to us, Sir, and I am sure that most of the DiD participants are looking forward to listening to your advice in a short while.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

3. We are here today to celebrate the twenty two (22) graduates of IDFR's Diploma in Diplomacy (DiD) 2020 programme. This is indeed a proud moment for the graduating members of the class of 2020. They have exemplified great determination and resilience throughout this difficult year to finish the programme. Throughout that time also, they have progressed as a team and matured as individual diplomats. For these reasons, they have all the right to be proud of their achievements.

4. But they did not make it alone. Behind them, there are devoted spouses, parents, family members and significant others who have contributed to the success of DID class of 2020. There are also speakers, lecturers and trainers who were committed to imparting their knowledge and wisdom to ensure that the participants are successful. To all the aforementioned people, I would like to commend and thank all of you for bringing the graduating participants to the finishing line.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

5. 2020 will be remembered as the most challenging year for IDFR in organising the DiD programme. We started the programme in February of the year when the novel coronavirus was just about to unleash its fury. Six weeks into the programme, just when the participants were warming up to the course, the Movement Control Order (MC) was enforced and IDFR had to cease all its physical classroom sessions.

6. After four weeks, however, we resorted to virtual learning by having training and teaching through various video conferencing platforms. I have to admit that this was not easy, both to the participants and the lecturers. Nevertheless, we knew that we had to adapt to the new normal and I am proud to say that IDFR was one of the first public training institutes to adopt the video conferencing in its training.

7. By July 2020, DiD participants resumed their physical classroom sessions at IDFR. The new challenge was to adhere strictly to the SOP as safety of our participants are of paramount importance to us. At the same time, because of the prevailing situation, the course had to suffer frequent revisions of schedule. Some of the programmes, including the much-anticipated mission attachment, had to be cancelled and the whole course itself had to be extended by two months. However, IDFR put forth its best effort to prepare alternative programmes in lieu of the cancelled ones, and I can assure all of you that no compromise was made on the overall quality of the programmes.

8. Indeed, IDFR, as the training arm of Wisma Putra, is committed to providing quality practical training to groom and mould our junior Foreign Officers to be highly competent diplomats. We constantly review, re-assess and recalibrate our programmes to match the demands of the current foreign service dynamics.

9. At this juncture, I would like to thank all IDFR staff, who have contributed directly or indirectly for the success of the DiD programme. They have worked diligently since the commencement of this course right until this very moment. Their hard work is highly valued and appreciated.

To the graduating members of DiD 2020,

10. This is a significant point in the history of your career progression. I hope all of you will excel in your professional career as full-fledged diplomats. On behalf of all staff at IDFR, I would like to felicitate you on your success and I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

Thank you. Wabillahi taufik wal hidayah. Assalamualaikum warahmatullah.

***Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations,
Kuala Lumpur
1 October 2020***