

TESTIMONY

My name is Mr. Shuib Dahaban. I felt honoured because my name has been listed as one of the referees for the events that Malaysia held during the first week of February in support of the World Interfaith Harmony Week 2013. I think I am a qualified referee because I was present when most of the events from 1st Feb to 8th Feb. 2013, took place. I was at the soft **launching** at a shopping mall in Subang Jaya, a satellite town about 10 Km from the Capital City of Kuala Lumpur on the first February. I witnessed the simple ceremony, listened to the speeches presented by the chairman of the organising committee and the Minister in the Prime Department the Hon. Tan Sri Koh Tsu Koon and the launching of the first event, **the Muhibah Expedition**. The expedition comprised of two bus loads of mainly youths of various religious backgrounds; one heading for Penang in the north of the peninsular and the other going to Johor, the southernmost state. They stopped halfway, stay with foster parents of different religious groups, participated in activities arranged (learning and experiencing the different racial, cultural and religious differences). Similar activities were also prepared for the youths when they reached their destinations in Penang and Johore. From the photos and the interviews, I could understand that the participants really enjoyed themselves besides appreciating the hospitality of their 'distant neighbours' who hosted them for 3 days and 2 nights' expedition. They also visited all houses of worships not necessarily their own.

I was also there at Brickfields, the location for the second event. The event took place on the morning and the afternoon of 2nd February. The first was a clean-up session participated mainly by the adherents of the various religions in the area. The event that followed was a **Muhibah or Harmony Walk** participated by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, the Most Hon. Dato' Seri Mohd. Najib bin Tun Abd. Razak. The occasion was indeed done in total harmony when the Prime Minister (**PM**) accompanied by adherents of various religions visited the Indian Methodist Church, the Taoist temple, the mosque (where PM also prayed asar), the Hindu temple and last but not least the Buddhist Vihara. There were not less than a thousand people who participated in the event and PM and leaders of religions together with their adherents seemed very happy enjoying the harmony walk mindful of the theme Love in God and Love in the neighbours. Hopefully the theme also transcended into their hearts and souls as well insyaAllah. The event ended after our PM addressed the crowd emphasising the importance of peace and harmony in a multiracial and multi religious country like Malaysia. He cited his strong support for WIHW and added that Malaysian should also adopt

the philosophy of Wasatiyyah as indicated in the Quran. The Malaysian he said should reject extremism, fanaticism and terrorism in all their undertakings but instead should resort to respect, understanding and appreciating the harmony that is in place through dialogues etc. He also spoke on justice by and to all to avoid indifferences and unpleasant repercussions. He then launched the WIHW Malaysia 2013 officially.

The next event that was organised in Kuala Lumpur was the **Muhibah Breakfast**. The venue was a Taoist temple in Taman Seputih, a place which is in the neighbourhood of Brickfields where Harmony Walk took place. Here about 300 hundred leaders and adherents of various religions participated. Since this event was done a few days before the Chinese New Year celebration, Muhibah Breakfast was cherished with presents of chinese oranges to all participants. That was an added bonus besides the extraordinary breakfast served.

I also witnessed and observed the other event at a secondary school in Kepung which is in the neighbourhood of Putrajaya, the newly created Capital city of Malaysia. The event **Muhibah in Schools** was officiated by the Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) who is also the country's Minister of Education. Here about 4000 secondary school children, teachers and education officers gathered to celebrate WIHW with a really harmonious blends of activities. The activities showpiece all the co-curricular activities that the children in a few schools within the vicinity engaged themselves in. There were renditions of music, bands, dances and songs of the various multiracial and multicultural people of Malaysia. There were also activities by the language, cultural and religious associations. The uniformed bodies like the scouts, girl-guides, red crescents, police cadets and the fire brigades also beautified the scene with their colourful outfits and uniforms. The DPM enjoyed the extravaganza tremendously since he was the man behind the introduction of the policy " One student to have one co-curricular activity". It was a harmonious gathering not only because there were music and songs but also because the students in their jubilation sang and dance to some patriotic songs together. The gathering ended when the DPM cum Education Minister officially launched WIHW 2013 to be observed by all schools in Malaysia.

There were a few more events being organised by a small state in the north and the biggest state in Malaysia, Sarawak. I was not there so I could not say much. But from the photographs they sent us, the events were officiated by the state's CEOs or their respective Chief Ministers. Participants were leaders

of the various faiths and their adherents and the occasions include a Muhibah dinner and visitations to the hospitals and houses of worships.

With all these events I think Malaysia is serious in her support of WIHW as agreed upon by UNGA after HRH Prince Ghazi detailed out the initiative mooted by His Highness King Abdullah ii of Jordan.

Thank you and May God bless all of us, insyaAllah.

Yours sincerely,

Shuib