



ENRICHING CULTURE, ARTS AND HERITAGE

23

I. INTRODUCTION

23.01 During the Eighth Plan period, the development of culture and the arts was promoted to enhance national identity while strengthening national unity, harmony and integration. Various aspects of culture and the arts were developed to offer a myriad of products and services that supported the growth of the tourism industry. In this regard, concerted efforts to preserve the nation's cultural heritage, dissemination of cultural information and the development of culture and the arts were also undertaken.

23.02 In the Ninth Plan, the development of culture, arts and heritage will be given greater emphasis. This is in line with the National Mission of developing human capital who are not only knowledge-driven and economically competitive, but also imbued with a progressive outlook and good values, including positive cultural values. Culture, arts and heritage-related industries, especially crafts, will also be promoted as a source of economic growth. The appreciation of culture, arts and heritage will be enhanced as part of a larger nation-building agenda, in helping to build awareness of a common history and heritage, as well as of a shared future and destiny for all Malaysians. The Government will also seek to develop a healthy domestic culture and arts scene as this will help raise the people's quality of life. The active participation of the private sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the people in culture, arts and heritage related activities and programmes will be encouraged, while the upgrading of cultural resources and infrastructure will be intensified.

II. PROGRESS, 2001-2005

23.03 During the Eighth Plan period, various culture, arts and heritage related programmes were implemented to raise the interest of society in arts and culture as well as the preservation of the nation's heritage. The Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage was set up in 2004 to consolidate policy and programmes that further promote Malaysia's culture, arts and heritage as well as to formulate new strategies to make the arts more accessible to the masses.

Arts and Culture

Awareness and Appreciation of Arts and Culture

23.04 In line with efforts to create a culturally-rich society, various programmes were undertaken to increase appreciation of culture and the arts among Malaysians at all levels. In this regard, arts and culture related activities were carried out at the national, state, district and village levels. During the Plan period, four new cultural centres were established in Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Perlis and Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, bringing the total number of such centres to seven. These centres provided avenues to promote artistic and cultural activities as well as to conduct training and capacity-building programmes to nurture talents in the performing arts.

23.05 In an effort to create appreciation and love for culture among the younger generation, various cultural programmes and activities, such as cultural clubs continued to be organised in primary and secondary schools. During the Plan period, an additional 220 *Kumpulan Tunas Budaya* involving 10,203 students, and 77 *Kelab Kesenian Sekolah* involving 2,800 students, were set up in primary and secondary schools, respectively. Assistance in the form of training, advisory services as well as costumes and equipment was also provided. Students involved in these activities were given the opportunity to perform at official functions at the state and district levels as part of the effort to spread the awareness and appreciation of culture and the arts among more Malaysians.

Capacity Building and Training

23.06 To further promote the development of the creative and performing arts as well as to provide an avenue to nurture creative talents, the *Akademi Seni Kebangsaan* (ASK) continued to offer courses at certificate and diploma levels in theatre, creative writing, dance and music as well as cinematography. During the Plan period, a total of 485 students enrolled at the ASK while 157 graduated in various disciplines. In addition, existing courses and programmes in the performing and fine arts conducted in other institutions of higher education were expanded to include new areas such as computer graphic modeling, digital video arts as well as marketing and management. These provided more opportunities for students to develop their talents.

Performing Arts

23.07 To support the tourism industry and to provide opportunities for Malaysians to deepen their appreciation of arts and culture, efforts continued to be undertaken by the Government and the private sector to develop world-class entertainment infrastructure to showcase stage shows of international standard. The *Istana*

Budaya, equipped with modern facilities, continued to be an important venue for the staging of performing arts and various cultural shows. During the Plan period, 96 performances were staged at *Istana Budaya* which included musicals, concerts and dances attracting an audience of over 403,400. The private sector also contributed to the diversity and variety in the performing arts with the setting up of the Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre in 2005.

Visual Arts

23.08 To inculcate interest in the visual arts, various exhibitions, seminars, workshops, competitions and art activities were held during the Plan period. A total of 142 exhibitions were organised during the Plan period, attracting over 866,500 visitors. Each exhibition highlighted a different approach and theme, showcasing the creativity and talent of local and international artists. The *Balai Seni Lukis Negara* (BSLN) continued to collect, conserve and exhibit works of art as well as promote awareness and appreciation among all levels of society. In addition, the BSLN also initiated *Laman Seni Kuala Lumpur*, a popular monthly art market that was visited by an average of 2,000 people a month.

National Unity

23.09 Recognising that an appreciation of and respect for the culture of the various ethnic groups in Malaysia is an important part of forging a unique Malaysian identity, the cultural and religious festivals of the major ethnic groups in Malaysia continued to be celebrated at the national level. In this regard, the Government organised Malaysian Open Houses to celebrate festivals such as *Hari Raya Aidilfitri*, the Chinese New Year, Deepavali, Christmas, *Gawai* and *Tadau Kaamatan*. These celebrations reflected the spirit of national unity and harmony in multi-cultural Malaysia.

Heritage

23.10 To strengthen and inculcate an appreciation of culture and heritage among Malaysians, efforts were made to conserve and preserve cultural products such as heritage sites, monuments and artifacts, particularly those which have historical importance. In this regard, 63 monuments and 25 historical sites were preserved, conserved and upgraded for the benefit of the nation as well as to serve as tourist attractions. This included the *Rumah Merdeka* in Alor Star, Kedah, the original home of the first Prime Minister, which was restored as part of the *Memorial Tunku Abdul Rahman*.

23.11 Besides maintaining existing museums, new museums and archives were also set up to highlight Malaysia's achievements as well as to serve as centres to preserve and document the country's history. To showcase Malaysia's

achievement in the automotive industry, the National Automobile Museum was set up at the Kompleks Sepang International Circuit. The Museum was opened to the public in 2004 and attracted over 34,500 visitors. The establishment of the Kedah/Perlis National Archives and the Sabah National Archives in 2003 and 2005, respectively, facilitated the collection, acquisition and preservation of national records for research purposes. In addition, the Islamic Arts Museum contributed towards the promotion of local and foreign Islamic art and artifacts. Other measures to create awareness and appreciation of Malaysia's rich heritage included the dissemination of information and the implementation of various programmes and activities such as talks, seminars and workshops.

III. PROSPECTS, 2006-2010

23.12 The Ninth Plan period will give greater emphasis towards enhancing the role of culture and arts in the lives of all Malaysians as well as to promote cultural and arts related industries. This is due to the active involvement of all groups in cultural and arts activities which will contribute towards the total development of the individual, strengthen national unity and enhance the quality of life of Malaysians. In this regard, more concerted efforts will be undertaken with the participation of the private sector to create greater awareness and appreciation of Malaysia's rich cultural heritage. Hence, the strategic thrusts for the Ninth Plan period will be as follows:

- ❑ *inculcating positive cultural values among Malaysians;*
- ❑ *enhancing the appreciation of culture, arts and heritage among Malaysians at all levels;*
- ❑ *conserving and preserving tangible and intangible heritage;*
- ❑ *developing the craft industry and promoting craft products for the world market;*
- ❑ *developing the creative cultural industry; and*
- ❑ *strengthening capacity building programmes to ensure continuous and sustainable development of culture, arts and heritage.*

Inculcating Positive Cultural Values

23.13 The continued emphasis on developing positive cultural values among Malaysians and creating a Bangsa Malaysia is of great importance especially in light of Malaysia's multi-ethnic society and the need to maintain national unity and harmony in the course of pursuing development goals. In this regard, a series of courtesy and integrity campaigns that seek to enhance positive social

and cultural values and attitudes will be undertaken. The campaigns and other related programmes will emphasise the need for Malaysians to practise tolerance, mutual respect and other positive values necessary to maintain national unity, social harmony and cohesion.

Enhancing the Appreciation of Culture, Arts and Heritage

23.14 To develop a greater appreciation of culture, arts and heritage among Malaysians at all levels, access to culture and arts activities will be increased, while the active participation of all communities in these activities will be encouraged. In this regard, the *Program Merakyatkan Seni dan Budaya* or Arts for All programme, which is aimed at bringing the arts back into the community and to make the arts a part of daily life, will be implemented. The activities under the Arts for All programme include performances such as traditional and modern dances, drama and music as well as arts and crafts related activities, and will involve communities in both urban and rural areas.

23.15 Programmes that educate and advocate the importance and value of culture, arts and heritage appreciation among youths will be given more emphasis during the Ninth Plan period. Towards this end, concerted measures will be undertaken by the respective agencies to increase the number of those trained in various cultural and arts related fields. These individuals will then be deployed to various schools under the *Tunas Budaya* programme to provide training in the arts to students. *Tunas Budaya* activities are envisaged to help instill an appreciation of culture and the arts and to provide basic knowledge and skills of various art forms to students. The programme provides the link between the arts community and the education sector which supports the professional development of arts educators and arts education providers. In addition, a similar programme will be extended to cover public sector employees and youths to improve their access to the arts. Strategic partnerships between the various state governments, local authorities, arts and community based organisations together with the private sector will be established to ensure effective implementation of this programme.

23.16 To enhance cultural and arts appreciation, particularly at the grass root level, various out-reach programmes such as the *Laman Seni Kuala Lumpur* will be intensified and extended to all states. To deepen awareness and appreciation of the arts as well as to enhance the visibility of visual and performing arts, various interactive programmes involving the participation of youths, the community and the private sector will be implemented. In line with approved policy, measures will be undertaken to realise Kuala Lumpur's position as the hub of cultural and artistic activities in the Ninth Plan period.

23.17 Besides being a source of entertainment and cultural enrichment for individuals, the performing arts is also a vehicle for the preservation and transmission of culture. In this regard, the role of *Istana Budaya* will be strengthened as a centre of excellence for the staging of high quality performing arts. Continuous efforts will be undertaken to attract more foreign productions to make *Istana Budaya* as the venue of choice for the staging of shows, which will contribute towards the realisation of Kuala Lumpur as a regional cultural hub. In making the arts more accessible to the public and raising awareness of the availability of the state-of-the-art facilities at *Istana Budaya*, aggressive promotional activities will be carried out targeting local and foreign productions. This effort will be in tandem with measures to create a cultural belt within and around *Istana Budaya*.

Conserving and Preserving Heritage Products

23.18 The National Heritage Act 2005, enforced in March 2006 will allow for a more coordinated and integrated approach towards the conservation and preservation of national heritage products, both tangible and intangible. The Act will include enforcement measures to ensure that conservation and archeological practices comply with world standards. The implementation of this Act will also facilitate the identification and designation of buildings, monuments and sites with historical importance to be gazetted as historical zones.

23.19 The National Archives will continue to preserve and manage the nation's archival collection as part of the national heritage. During the Plan period, it will focus on becoming the nation's resource and research centre in providing curatorial consultancy services. Towards this end, the National Archives will diversify and enhance the quality of its collection and services as well as expand its expertise in various related fields. Leveraging on new technologies and advancements in information and communications technology, the second phase of the electronic record keeping and digital preservation of government documents of historical value will be undertaken. In addition, the Audio and Visual Documentation Centre will be established as a record keeping centre.

23.20 As part of efforts to inculcate greater awareness of and appreciation for Malaysia's rich cultural heritage, the Textile Museum will be established in 2006. The Museum will help to disseminate knowledge and information as well as promote research on *tenunan*, *songket* and *batik*, and will feature textiles from all states which will provide a good source of information for students, researchers, academicians and craft entrepreneurs.

Developing the Craft Industry and Promoting Crafts for the World Market

23.21 During the Ninth Plan, continuous efforts to develop and improve the quality of Malaysian crafts will be undertaken. This will include research and

development on new ways to enhance craftsmanship, as well as developing new designs and technology. Extensive efforts to promote Malaysian crafts in traditional and new markets will also be undertaken in collaboration with the private sector. Innovative and creative ways to market and brand Malaysian crafts will be explored.

Developing the Creative Cultural Industry

23.22 Malaysia has vast cultural and creative resources in the fields of performing arts, visual and fine arts, Islamic calligraphy and *Jawi* writing, film, arts education, literary works and craft which can be further developed and exploited. During the Ninth Plan period, the economic potential of the creative cultural industry will be further developed through close collaboration between the public and private sectors. To facilitate the development of the creative industry and to ensure its contribution to the economy, the Government will continue to provide a conducive environment as well as supportive infrastructure. Industries will be encouraged to utilise various facilities at the state level such as state cultural centres and galleries to promote their activities. In addition, the Government will also provide business premises to entrepreneurs to promote their crafts and products.

23.23 The promotion and marketing of Malaysian arts, culture and heritage products will be intensified at both domestic and international levels through various marketing campaigns and the organisation of prestigious international events. These events such as the KL Festival, Malaysian Film Festival and National Craft Day will continue to be organised to make Kuala Lumpur a cultural hub.

Strengthening Capacity Building Programmes

23.24 In line with the aspiration to create excellence among professionals in the fields of performing arts and heritage, the ASK will be upgraded into *Akademi Seni Budaya dan Warisan*. The scope of the Academy will be expanded to include degree courses in heritage studies covering museumology, archeological and archival science. In addition, the academy will also intensify skills training to produce professionals with the capacity to assist in the production of high quality performances in areas such as stage and theatre management, lighting and sound design, props and set design as well as effective marketing. To further promote and develop the local film industry, *Perbadanan Kemajuan Filem Nasional Malaysia* (FINAS) will focus on capacity building activities to develop highly skilled human capital in film-related fields.

23.25 Capacity building programmes will continue to be conducted at the National Craft Institute as well as through various entrepreneur development

programmes to contribute to the development of technologically skilled artisans to meet future challenges. A special programme, the Heritage Craft Apprenticeship Scheme, will be implemented during the Plan period to provide skill training as well as to preserve traditional arts and crafts including indigenous crafts.

IV. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND ALLOCATION

23.26 The Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage will continue to be the lead agency in implementing programmes and projects related to culture, arts and the preservation of national heritage. These efforts will be complemented by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Entrepreneur and Cooperative Development and the Ministry of Information as well as the state governments.

23.27 During the Ninth Plan, an allocation of RM442.4 million will be provided for culture, arts and heritage programmes, as shown in *Table 23-1*. Of this total, 63 per cent will be used for the preservation and conservation of cultural heritage and 37 per cent will be for the implementation of various arts and culture programmes at the state and district levels.

TABLE 23-1

**DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURE AND ALLOCATION FOR CULTURE,
ARTS AND HERITAGE, 2001-2010**
(RM million)

<i>Programme</i>	<i>8MP Expenditure</i>	<i>9MP Allocation</i>
Culture and Arts		
Cultural Centres	69.9	55.9
<i>Balai Seni Lukis Negara</i>	1.0	22.0
<i>Akademi Seni Kebangsaan</i>	39.7	20.0
FINAS	7.1	3.0
Craft	67.0	63.5
Heritage		
Museum	79.0	65.0
Archives	105.1	113.0
Historical Heritage Preservation	85.2	100.0
Total	454.0	442.4

Source: Economic Planning Unit

V. CONCLUSION

23.28 During the Eighth Plan period, the implementation of culture, arts and heritage programmes contributed towards the strengthening of national unity as well as promoting the tourism industry in the country. During the Ninth Plan period, recognising that culture and heritage are the intertwining anchors of civilisation and an important aspect of developing well-balanced Malaysians imbued with good values and progressive outlook, focus will be given towards enhancing the role of culture, arts and heritage in the daily life of Malaysians. To facilitate this, strategic collaboration between the public and private sectors as well as civil society will be strengthened. Recognising the potential of culture, arts and heritage related industries as sources of economic growth, efforts to promote the craft and creative cultural industries will also be intensified.