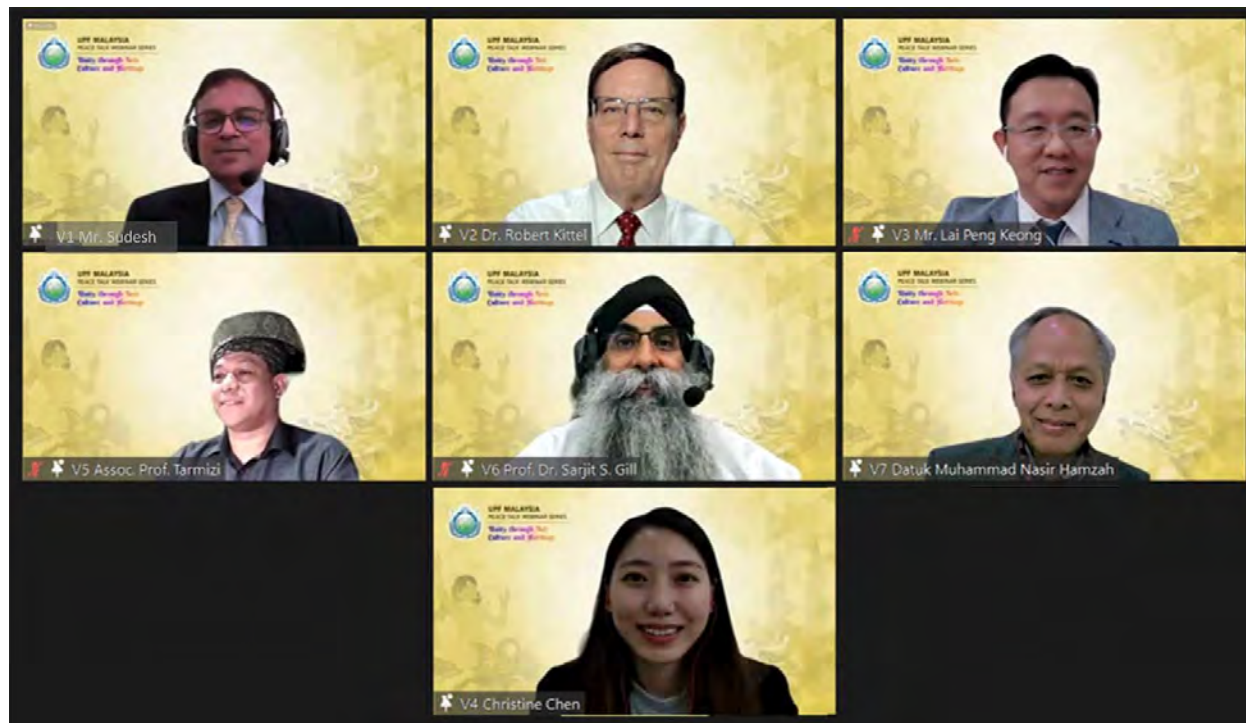


## Malaysia's third Peace Talk Webinar: Unity through Arts, Culture and Heritage

Lai Peng Keong  
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On 17 November 2021, UPF Malaysia President, Assistant Professor Sudesh Balasubramaniam hosted the third Peace Talk Webinar Series, themed 'Unity through Arts, Culture and Heritage' in collaboration with the National Academy of Arts, Culture and Heritage (ASWARA) Malaysia, Sinar Harian and the ASEAN Digital Art Society (ASEDAS).

This webinar was held in conjunction with the official launch of the International Association of Arts and Culture for Peace (IAACP) and the International Media Association for Peace (IMAP) Malaysia by special guest, Dr. Robert Kittel, Senior Adviser of UPF Asia Pacific. In his keynote remarks, he explained how both associations were founded with the purpose to address social issues such as individualism based on the principles of 'interdependence, mutual prosperity and universal values'.

Mr Lai Peng Keong, National Liaison Director of Malaysia in his special remarks, encouraged all leaders from the field of arts and culture to come forward to share their ideas to promote peace and unity among the people as a "Malaysian Family."

The webinar explored the role each played in fostering positive lifestyles and behaviours. The webinar featured a thought-provoking panel discussion between very distinguished and learned speakers and was moderated by Ms. Christine Chen. The speakers were renowned local digital artist, Assoc. Prof. Ahmad Tarmizi Azizan from Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, social anthropologist, Prof. Dr. Sarjit S. Gill from Universiti Putra Malaysia and Datuk Muhammad Nasir Hamzah, Deputy Chairman of Karangkrif Media Group.

Assoc. Prof. Tarmizi, also popularly known as "Atan AF", presented on the topic "Arts, culture and

heritage for unity". He explained the importance of the works of arts, not only for aesthetics, but as an expression of emotion, identity and a tool for communication which connect people together. As the founder of the ASEAN Digital Arts Society, Atan AF has created this platform as a movement to unite painters and artists across nations through the expression of digital art.

The second panelist, Prof. Dr. Sarjit S. Gill, gave an insightful sharing on the role of community leaders in promoting national unity policy through arts, culture and heritage. He highlighted that community leaders need to be proactive in engaging with the government and to empower the youth to participate in cultural activities. NGO leaders, cultural and religious institutions should actively promote dialogue for the appreciation and understanding of different cultures. Finally, he proposed the setting up of digital museums to preserve Malaysian culture and to build up Malaysian national identity.

Representing the media was Datuk Muhammad Nasir Hamzah, Deputy Chairman of Karangraf Media Group Malaysia. The media veteran began his presentation with the famous quote from Edward Bulwer-Lytton, "The pen is mightier than the sword" to emphasise the important role of media as an agent of social change. Datuk Nasir explained that the media must be free and independent in order to play a moderator's role in resolving conflicts between people as well as promoting arts and culture for a peaceful world.

The webinar attracted participation of more than 250 online live participants from 14 countries on Zoom and social media. Simultaneous translation was conducted in Bahasa Indonesia to cater to 40 invited students from universities in Indonesia. The programme also included a multicultural dance performance by ASWARA and a compilation of digital artworks by SENDI Studio and Gallery.