

**COUNCILLOR ALAN RUDGE'S SPEECH FOR GURDAS MAAN'S VIP
DINNER - 8TH APRIL 2009**

1. Thank you for the kind introduction.
2. I am delighted to welcome Gurdas Maan and his wife, Manjeet Maan, to Birmingham. Though we are honouring Gurdas this evening, I should like to remind you that Manjeet herself is a well known Indian artist, having co-authored a number of well known songs with Gurdas.
3. Manjeet is also an accomplished producer and director of Indian feature films, she has already produced WARIS SHA and DES HOYA PARDES and later this year, a film entitled SUKHMI which has been produced and directed by Manjeet Mann will be released
4. This I think you will agree demonstrates that Manjeet is also very accomplished in her own right as well as being a backbone and support in the success of Gurdas' career.
5. This is important because sometimes we forget that behind our successes others play a valuable role in making that success happen, in particular our partners, family and friends. In the case of Gurdas, it is Manjeet, therefore it would be fitting to congratulate her in the usual way (clapping).
6. I would also like to congratulate UK BOX OFFICE, Ashok and Jag Suman for bringing Gurdas. Maan to Birmingham, where I am Gurdas Maan's host.
7. I delighted that a number of my colleagues and friends are here this evening to share with me this dinner in honour of Gurdas Maan.
8. Gurdas Maan's standing in the Indian film and entertainment industry is an important bridge between and across cultures. Gurdas Maan's visit brings to my city something close to my heart, community cohesion.
9. For me community cohesion is important because it enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to this is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another. Therefore it is important to build community cohesion as it encourages better relationships between people from different backgrounds, between ethnic groups, between generations, and between those of faith and non-faith.
10. I believe this is important not only for the city of Birmingham, but for the world, because peace and harmonious relationships are vital to the stability and prosperity of all our communities and nations.

11. Gurdas Maan's visit marks the beginning of a partnership with me on behalf of Birmingham City Council where I lead on community cohesion and undertake a great deal of work to build relationships and understanding between and across all communities in Birmingham.
12. Since taking up the Equalities portfolio four years ago, engaging with communities and leading cohesion has been and continues to be of highest priority for me.
13. We live in a city of great diversity, where all our communities live in peace and harmony. I want to work with communities to strengthen the relationships that underpin this cohesiveness through art, music, and song. Gurdas Maan's visit is a further significant step in achieving and consolidating this. Birmingham is a global city and international artists, such as Gurdas Maan gives a wide cultural dimension to all the work I am doing.
14. Gurdas Maan is a prolific artist who has received national and international awards, produced over 27 albums and written more than 200 songs for world-famous music labels. As an actor he has received India's highest acting honours for his roles in Punjabi and Bollywood films. His message resonates through all cultures and communities; he has brought the poetry of song to millions throughout the world
15. His message appeals across all generations, in particular to young people. Young people have an important part to play in shaping the future of Birmingham, and contributing to global peace. Therefore it is important we give them every opportunity to explore, be creative, use their imagination, and learn from those like Gurdas Maan.
16. Film, art, and music are at the heart of culture and can make a valuable contribution to community cohesion. They provide a universal language through which we can view the world from different perspectives. They can inspire and touch those feelings in us which can bring out the best in what makes us human. It is for this reason I believe engaging with artists from all communities and of all ages are important for us, to use this medium to promote new learning, new experiences, new ways of looking at the world, that building positive relationships based on common values and traditions which secures a future of peace and prosperity, in our communities, in our city Birmingham; and our country Britain.
17. It is an honour for me to receive Gurdas Maan in Birmingham. May his visit be pleasurable and successful.

Councillor Alan Rudge.
Cabinet Member for Equalities and Human Resources.