

SPEECH BY GUEST OF HONOR 5TH GRADUATES' CHOICE AWARD PRESENTATION GALA

YB Dato' Haji Mohammad Yusof bin Apdal
Deputy Minister of Higher Education Malaysia

Salutations

1. Mr. Ben Ho
Chief Executive Officer
Talentbank
2. University Vice Chancellors
3. University Representatives
4. Lecturers
5. Members of the media;
6. Ladies and gentlemen.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Before I begin, I would like to thank *Talentbank* for having me here. I was made aware that this was not the first time *Talentbank* has organized this event and when I found out more about what *Talentbank* has done and currently doing, to improve Malaysia's graduate employability landscape, I could not say no to this invitation. Particularly, when this effort is in line with *National Strategic Plan on Graduate Employability* which had launch by the Ministry in 2021.

For the Ministry, building an ecosystem that ensures our graduates receive the best education as much as possible and subsequently to achieve fully employed as one of the main objective. In fact, the Ministry will always stand ready to lend a support to any initiative that help our youth and graduates find their rightful careers. I am delighted with the efforts carried by *Talenbank* that serve a common purpose. These initiative could help the Ministry to achieve the target of 85% graduate employability rate by the year 2025.

The responsibility of improving our graduates' employability rate does not solely lie on the Government and the Ministry. The private sector also has a big role to play in this process. Therefore, it is important for us to recognize the important role by *Talentbank* in improving graduate employability in Malaysia. We must also realize that improving education

and employability is not a simple task. It is a journey that requires careful planning to know how to change course. Thus, Government and private sector must work together hand in hand to achieve the target. Being the bridge between top employers and graduates, *Talentbank* could become the conduit through which universities and the industry can form a win-win partnership.

Today, the job market and demanded skills in the workforce are constantly evolving. As the world moves towards digital workforce where technology is seen as a threat to human capital, we sometimes forgotten the fact that at the end of the day, companies will always need human talents. Without the right talents, one cannot leverage the technology at our disposal. According to a study by McKinsey, superior talent can be up to eight times more productive.

Unfortunately, talent is not easy to come by. Great talent is scarce. The competition to attract and retain talents is becoming increasingly fierce. Companies should be more strategic in hunting a good talent. This is why I applaud *Talentbank* for starting this journey to recognize the importance of employer branding. It does not only reward the companies that go above and beyond to build a brand amongst university graduates but more importantly it also provides a fair and robust measurement which graduates could start research on their preferred employers and careers.

A company is only as good as its people and a good talent is always want to be associated with leading brands. As the war for talent continues to heat up, employer branding can be the silver bullet to attract top candidates. A strong employer brand increases the chances of recruiting the right talents significantly. It is my hope that more companies will take up the challenge to make themselves more appealing to our graduates by incorporating the right employer branding policies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Before I end, let me take this opportunity to congratulate all the organizations that will be receiving the awards tonight. I hope the good work that you have done will continue. I also would like to congratulate *Talentbank* again for all the work you have done to help our Malaysian graduates. Education and nurturing the right talents are indeed the keys to a better future for Malaysia and I hope we can work together on this journey going forward. Like Malcolm X said – *Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.*

Thank you again for having me here. I wish you all the best and have a lovely evening.

Length: ~7-8 minutes (120-130 words per minute)