



## SPEECH

**YB DATO' YB DATO' HJ. MOHAMMAD YUSOF BIN APDAL**  
Deputy Minister Of Higher Education

*In Conjunction With*

**9th Asia Pacific Futures Network  
Conference (APFN9)**

**Launch of The ICESCO-IIUM Chair  
in Sustainable Engineering And  
APFN Awards Ceremony**

18 September 2023 (Monday)

Dewan Kampo, Pusat Belia Antarabangsa  
Kuala Lumpur

Distinguished guests, respected speakers, educators and participants around the globe, ladies and gentlemen.

Assalamu'alaikum                      warahmatullah  
wabarakatuh and a very good morning.

**(SALUTATION)**

1. Thank you for joining us today as we gather to delve into a topic of immense importance – the future. It is an honour for me to stand before you, to address the **9th Asia Pacific Futures Network Conference, APFN9**, hosted in our country for the first time.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

2. Navigating the future of work requires adaptability, continuous learning, and a proactive approach as the world is amid fundamental shifts. By reimagining the future, we can drive the change we want to see. We cannot change the past, but everything we do now change the future.

3. The UNESCO Chair in Futures Studies: Anticipation for Sustainability and Wellbeing and the IIUM-ICESCO Chair in Sustainable Engineering being hosted by IIUM reiterates the ministry's support for the importance of future literacy as a key area of competency for all.
  
4. Therefore, among the outputs envision by IIUM 2040 are to produce holistic graduates, nurtures educators, and students as producers of knowledge and global agents of change. At the same time aiming universities becomes financially and politically autonomous by becoming a publicly endowed university.

5. Besides moving towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), I also would like to commend the University for promoting spirituality in the sense of having an inner drive for excellence and balance to encourage a moderate community by having paramount balance of justice, and goodness. This aligned with the Malaysia MADANI call for sustainability and well-being which is “Sejahtera” as the local concept of sustainability is also integrated into IIUM curricula through the “Sejahtera Academic Framework”.
6. Currently, IIUM has mainstreamed sustainability through the Usrah in Action course which is over 200 community engagement projects joined

by over 3000 students every semester addressing social, economic, and environmental issues in the community with creative, long-term solutions.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

7. The combination of the whole institution and community transformation is foundational to support the aspiration for greater national and regional sustainability.

Ministry of Higher Education has also mandated IIUM to spearhead the national committee project to propose an alternative university appraisal framework that bridges the gap between academia, government, industry, and society.

8. Under this framework, **five domains** have been developed which consists **Knowledge Integration / Transdisciplinarity; Community Transformation and Leadership; Institutional Collaboration; Sustainable Entrepreneurship; and Responsible Research and Innovation.**
  
9. This conference is a convergence of brilliant minds – researchers, practitioners, and policymakers where all united by a common goal: to chart a course toward futures that are not only innovative but sustainable.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

10. The challenges we face are vast and interwoven – from environmental degradation to socio-economic inequality, from technological disruptions to global health crisis. Hence, unified response that harnesses the collective power and knowledge of all sectors are very important. As we know, this conference would discuss the future based on several thematic area.
  
11. **Firstly**, the principle of “Bridging the gaps among academia, industry, and society for sustainable futures” underlines the significance of breaking down silos that often hinder progress.



Universities and research institutions are fountains of knowledge, where ideas are nurtured, and innovations are born. Industry brings practical and market insights, enabling the transformation of groundbreaking concepts into real-world solutions. Government, with its regulatory framework and resources, can create an environment conducive to innovation. Society, the heart of our collective endeavour, provides the context, needs and aspirations that give our efforts purpose.

12. **Secondly**, highlighting “Civilizations, Technologies, and the Futures of Societies,” beckons us to explore how our societies navigate the ever-evolving landscape of technology while

preserving our unique cultural identities. Technology, undoubtedly, has brought remarkable advancements that have shaped our lives. However, the unchecked and indiscriminate adoption of technology can also disrupt social structures and cultural heritage. By fostering collaboration among academia, industry, government, and society, we can ensure that technological progress aligns with the values and aspirations of our civilizations.

13. The “Co-creation of peaceful, wellbeing, and inclusive societies” is the **third** focal point, inviting us to reimagine the fundamentals of our societies. The

demands for peace, well-being, and inclusivity are universal aspirations. Yet, achieving them requires deliberate efforts that transcend geographical, political, and social barriers. Through collective cooperation, we can nurture a sense of shared responsibility that propels us towards societies where every individual is empowered, every voice is heard, and every life is valued.

14. Similarly, imagining the various possible future scenarios based on the **fourth** theme, "Primordial and Artificial Intelligence," bridges the gap between the wisdom of ages and the technological prowess of the present. Primordial intelligence encompasses

the ancestral wisdom that has guided civilizations for centuries. Artificial intelligence, on the other hand, represents the cutting-edge technology that has the potential to reshape industries and societies. Combination of these two forms intelligence we can create innovative solutions that are not only technologically advanced but also deeply rooted in the values that have stood the test of time.

15. In the pursuit of these ambitious goals, the synergy between academia, industry, government, and society becomes paramount. Let us consider the example of sustainable development. Through partnerships, researchers can develop eco-friendly

technologies, industries can adopt sustainable practices, governments can enact policies that encourage responsible resource management, and societies can embrace conscious consumerism. Together, these efforts can lead us toward a future where prosperity and environmental stewardship coexist.

16. This conference, beyond being a platform of discourse, is a call to action. It encourages networking, collaboration, and exchange among stakeholders at the university, industry, governmental, and societal levels. The linkages between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers will catalyze the growth of

futures literacy and foresight in Asia Pacific.

17. I am proud to share that the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (MOHE) is the **strategic partner** for the conference as a symbol of commendation and support for futures thinking and foresight towards sustainability and well-being, as promoted by the host the International Islamic University Malaysia, the custodian of UNESCO's Chair in Futures Studies for Sustainability and Wellbeing, and the IIUM-ICESCO Chair in Sustainable Engineering.

18. We appreciate the partnering organization from the Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT), the Change Initiative, Tamkang University's Department of Education and Futures Design and Center for Futures Intelligence and Research (CFAR), Metafuture, the Pacific Community, and the International Youth Centre. We stand united in our commitment to this endeavour.
  
19. In closing, let us remember that the future is not a distant abstraction but the culmination of our actions today. As we deliberate, discuss, and share insights during APFN9, let us be motivated by

the responsibility we bear toward generations to come.

20. The past is not always a good guide to the future. Futures strategic thinking and foresight could help us to understand trends and emerging issues and align visions for a desired future.
21. Let us strive for innovative solutions, inclusive societies, and sustainable progress. Together, we can shape a future that embodies the values and aspirations of our diverse nations.
22. May this conference be a steppingstone towards the positive future we envision.

**Thank you.**