

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY
THE HON. DATO' HAJI MOHAMMAD YUSOF APDAL
DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

IN CONJUNCTION WITH

**MALAYSIAN-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON EDUCATIONAL
EXCHANGE (MACEE)-FULBRIGHT MALAYSIA'S 60TH
ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE**

9TH FEBRUARY 2023 (THURSDAY)

8.00 A.M. – 2.00 P.M.

DEWAN ZA'BA, MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, PUTRAJAYA

[SALUTATION]

Bismillahirrahmannirrahim.

Assalamualaikum Warahmatulahi Wabarakatuh and a very good morning.

The Honorable Brian D. McFeeters

U.S. Ambassador to Malaysia,

YBhg. Dato' Dr. Haji Megat Sany bin Megat Ahmad Supian

Deputy Secretary-General (Policy),

Mr. Curtis Johnson

Executive Director of MACEE,

Vice Chancellors, Chief Executive Officers and Presidents of Malaysian
Higher Education Institutions (HEIs),

The officials from the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and the U.S. Embassy in Kuala Lumpur,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

[OPENING REMARKS]

1. First and foremost, I am very pleased to extend a heartfelt welcome to everyone to the Ministry of Higher Education, Putrajaya in conjunction with MACEE-Fulbright Malaysia's 60th Anniversary Conference.
2. Today's event is the inaugural convening in celebrating the 60th anniversary of MACEE and I must say that this comes at a crucial juncture as throughout the years we have witnessed the strong and outstanding bilateral relations between our two (2) countries in various fields of interest including higher education.
3. With that, on behalf of MOHE, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to MACEE for their dedication in organizing the Malaysian chapter of this occasion.

Your Excellency,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

[COLLABORATION BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND THE U.S. IN THE FIELD OF HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH MACEE]

4. While we acknowledge diplomatic and trade relations as one of the important tools in strengthening bilateral ties between countries, we must also **recognize the factor of people-to-people linkages that have developed through educational and cultural exchanges as one of the more vital means** that has helped in the **formation of a stronger, sustainable, and long-term bilateral relationship.**
5. Since its establishment in 1963, MACEE has certainly played a prominent role in overseeing the implementation of various educational programs and advocating exchanges between both countries via the U.S. Government's flagship program called the Fulbright.
6. Throughout the years, both our nations have benefited from these programs which has led to an **increased growth in bilateral collaboration among HEIs, international mobility, and knowledge exchanges.** I believe these initiatives are fundamental foundations for developing and sustaining social, economic, cultural and environmental progress.
7. In line with the theme of the conference today, **"Exploring Opportunities in Higher Education with Fulbright Malaysia and the United States"**, I hope that the representatives from Malaysian HEIs who are here today will take this opportunity to further expand

your networks and explore the prospects for strategic partnerships with the HEIs and relevant partners in the U.S.

8. The higher education system is indeed a major catalyst in generating knowledgeable, skilled, and competent human resources to fulfill the needs and vision of the nation. The Government of Malaysia has always perceived the higher education system as significant in nation building to produce intellectuals needed by the country.
9. This conference is indeed the right platform to help set the stage for all HEIs to deliberate on a whole host of topics of mutual interest: **(i) the need to enhance the people-to-people connectivity and capacity building; (ii) the need to recognize the importance of academicians, experts and their research into the understanding of major global concerns of sustainability such as climate change, food supply and public health; and (iii) in exploring the roles of universities in contributing to the social cohesion, respect and understanding between communities.**

Your Excellency,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

[MOVING FORWARD]

10. The way forward to ensure that the citizens of our countries will continuously reap the benefits from this partnership hinges on greater commitments amongst us.
11. To further intensify the achievements of this cooperation, I believe that **continuous commitment of both countries** is crucial in widening and deepening partnerships, enhancing and consolidating the process towards the development of the higher education system which will eventually increase our global visibility.
12. We have witnessed tremendous changes in the higher education scenario since the pandemic outbreak in 2020 and the 21st century has proved us that we can gain much from each other if we collaborate and improve networking and linkages in academia to help address challenges that afflict mankind.
13. Malaysia as a country that is pursuing the objective of becoming a hub for educational excellence must consider the internationalization process strategically and careful thought must be given by taking into account the impact of globalization which places high value on knowledge economy. We will have to **take advantage of the transfer of knowledge between countries and the demand for higher education through mobility of individuals seeking quality higher education**, and this partnership has helped in realizing that aspiration.

14. MOHE will continuously advocate and support the noble aspiration of both governments through MACEE which is **to strengthen the mutual understanding and promoting educational exchanges between both countries**, as we realized that **higher education plays a key role in the development of our societies** as well as in **the pursuit and advancement of knowledge**.

[CLOSING]

Your Excellency,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

15. I believe the discussions and interactions today will yield long-term benefits for the betterment of both our countries.
16. I wish to reiterate that Malaysia is committed towards strengthening our educational bilateral relations through MACEE. Only by working together we can ensure the new generations can face the future, with confidence and hope.
17. In this regard, MOHE is committed to continuously support any initiatives undertaken by MACEE to establish formal partnerships through the signing of Memorandum of Understanding/ Memorandum of Agreement with our Malaysian HEIs.
18. I now have the honor to officially open the MACEE@60 Conference in-conjunction with MACEE 60th Anniversary.

19. I wish you all a fruitful conference with new fresh ideas and the direction of greater cooperation between MACEE and higher learning institutions as well as a deepening of MOHE, the U.S. Government and MACEE's relations.

Thank you very much.