



KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN TINGGI

**SPEECH BY
THE HONOURABLE
DATO' SERI MOHAMED KHALED BIN NORDIN
MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**THE HONORARY DOCTORATE
CONFERMENT CEREMONY
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA (UTM)**

**27th FEBRUARY 2023
PUTRAJAYA MARRIOT HOTEL**

1. Alhamdulillah, praise be to Allah S.W.T., for with His grace and blessing, we are able to gather here today to witness yet another highly significant and historical ceremony.
2. It is with great pleasure and honor that we are to acknowledge an exceptional individual for his excellent achievements and contributions to the management of Hajj and Umrah as well as Saudi Arabia's public health services.
3. In this special ceremony, we have the privilege of conferring the Honorary Doctor of Management to His Excellency (H.E) Dr. Taufiq Fawzan Muhammed Al-Rabiah, the Minister of Hajj and Umrah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. Over the last 3 years, the world has faced significant challenges, and the ongoing pandemic has affected us all in different ways. Whether as individuals, organizational leaders or government officials, we have all been impacted to varying degrees.
5. Particularly for Muslims all over the world, the pandemic has halted the journey to perform the Hajj or Umrah.
6. Hajj season took place in manners none of us have ever imagined.
7. While we in Malaysia were faced with the challenge to explain to the general public that they won't be able to perform umrah or hajj like before, I believe the challenge faced by the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, especially the Hajj and Umrah Ministry, was simply greater.
8. **And I believe His Excellency Dr. Taufiq played a critical role during these times.**
9. Nevertheless, alhamdulillah, by His grace and mercy, we managed to sail through the trying time.

10. And, as Hajj and umrah have now resumed to the pre COVID condition, I believe, this means a busy year ahead for His Excellency Dr. Taufiq.

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. Along with millions other Malaysians, I can firmly testify that the management of the hajj and umrah by the Saudi Government, is smooth, structured and safe.

12. We Malaysians really appreciate all the good works and dedication demonstrated by the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, in ensuring such a huge and complicated process is seamless and efficient.

13. The meticulous planning and execution of this enormous undertaking are a testament of the Saudi's government unwavering commitment to providing a safe and comfortable journey for millions of Muslims from all over the world.

14. This also manifests the leadership shown by His Excellency Dr. Taufiq and his team at the ministry.

15. Therefore, it is only proper that, on behalf of the Malaysian Government, and in my capacity as the Minister of Higher Education, I would like to express our highest appreciation and gratitude to Your Excellency for all your hard works, perseverance and leadership in ensuring the Hajj and umrah journeys, full of comfort and ease.

Your excellency, Ladies and gentlemen,

16. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has always been an important partner to Malaysia.

17. This is also the case for our higher education sector. While there are meaningful collaboration between the two countries in place, we are indeed committed to strengthening and bringing the existing works to a higher level.

18. And if I may share, Malaysia has developed a strong global brand thus far and is emerging as an international education hub that offers

internationally recognized and affordable education, good quality of life and rich cultural experiences. We welcome everyone from all over the world to come and study here.

19. And I take this opportunity to officially welcome graduate students and researchers from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Malaysia, and do their research as well as pursue their tertiary education here.
20. I believe that UTM, as an academic and research institution, will also play its role in bringing Malaysia and Saudi Arabia's diplomatic ties to a greater height, through strategic collaboration between UTM and Saudi universities, industries, and ministries.
21. UTM, being a well-established university of technology, has many science, technology, and engineering specialists.
22. I strongly believe that with the expertise they have, coupled with the vast experience from Saudi Arabia, the management of Hajj and Umrah could be elevated, making it an example of the technological and innovative frontiers established by Muslim nations.
23. Furthermore, the Chairman of Malaysia's Tabung Haji, Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Azman bin Hj. Mokhtar is also the Chairman of the UTM Board of Directors.
24. This clearly poses many opportunities for a synergistic relationship between UTM, Tabung Haji and the Saudi government, particularly the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah of Saudi Arabia.

Ladies and gentlemen,

25. Before I end my speech, on behalf of the Government of Malaysia and Ministry of Higher Education, **I would like to again congratulate His Excellency Dr. Taufiq Fawzan Muhammed Al-Rabiah, the Minister of Hajj and Umrah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), for the conferment of HONORARY DOCTOR OF MANAGEMENT from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.**
26. Thank you. Asalamualaikum wrh wbt.