



**MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

KEYNOTE ADDRESS:

**YB DATO' SERI MOHAMED KHALED NORDIN  
MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

FOR:

**GALA CELEBRATION DINNER FOR UNIVERSITY  
UPGRADE  
UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG MALAYSIA (UOWM)**

DATE | TIME:

**20<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2023 (MONDAY) | 7.30 PM**

VENUE:

**LE MERIDIEN HOTEL, PETALING JAYA, SELANGOR**

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It gives me great pleasure to join you this evening to celebrate the upgrade of the University of Wollongong Malaysia to a full university status.
2. It is indeed a great achievement especially after going thru a stringent and robust process.
3. For that, congratulations to the Management, staff and students of UOW Malaysia on this successful and historical accomplishment.

Ladies and gentlemen,

4. In our efforts to ensure that the mandate and expectation of our higher education sector is met, allow me to take this opportunity to share our focuses and aspiration at the ministry.
5. **Firstly, we must produce the best talents for the country.**
6. I wish to emphasise this duty and responsibility time and again. The ultimate goal of our higher education sector is to educate and produce the best talents for the nation.
7. However, I must reiterate that this responsibility shall not be confined to mere academic or intellectual rigors or competencies.
8. Instead, our focus is to ensure that our students and graduates are equally equipped with moral and ethical resilience.
9. We want to produce a generation of talents that will be able to withstand the 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges, while striving their level best to add values to society and country.
10. **Secondly, focus on strategic research and innovation.**
11. We are living in a world that is changing at a rapid pace fuelled by advances in the technological field.
12. Therefore, strategic and collaborative research and innovation endeavour is inevitable.

13. Both our public and private universities must critically assess the needs of our country and society at large, with the anticipation that they will be able to offer discerning perspective and possible solutions.
14. In this regards, it is my hope that University of Wollongong will amplify its research and innovation activities. Do collaborate with various partners especially those from the industry, locally and internationally.
15. We really need fresh ideas and new approaches to manage all the present challenges that we face, and university must be part of the equation.
16. **Thirdly, internationalisation of Malaysia's higher education sector.**
17. The policy direction of the Ministry of Higher Education has evolved over the years in keeping with the changing times.
18. We decided very early on that the emphasis should be a higher education ecosystem that is vibrant, dynamic, competitive and complementary, comprising public, private and foreign entities.
19. For that, we promoted liberalization of our higher education sector with the aim of making Malaysia a hub for international higher education in this region.
20. This includes, providing access to a variety of education options for domestic and international students.
21. One of the approaches taken by the ministry in this regard is to intensify our internationalisation agenda.
22. We would like to have more and more foreign institutions to come and open up their branches in Malaysia.
23. This will not only be a testament of our recognised excellence and quality, but will serve as a bridge that will further cement our relationship with many countries through knowledge diplomacy.
24. In the case of Wollongong University for instance. I note that UOW Malaysia is a joint venture partnership between Australian and Malaysian companies.

25. We have had friendly ties with Australia for a very long time. Many of our country's political, corporate and community leaders are educated in Australia.
26. It comes as no surprise that 25% of Malaysia's outbound students studied in Australia and Australia remains the 3<sup>rd</sup> most popular destination for overseas studies for Malaysians.
27. We have 3 Australian universities having campuses here, and UOW Malaysia is the 4<sup>th</sup> of them.
28. The opening of these various international campuses in Malaysia is in line with our preferred concept of internationalisation, which does not refer to only the number of foreign students in Malaysia.
29. But also the opening of foreign campus.
30. Above and beyond that, we also believe that strategic and collaborative engagement with various international partners, as well as vibrant mobility programs, should also define our internationalisation agenda.
31. Such emphasis opens up excellent opportunities for Malaysian and international students to do part of their studies in Malaysia.
32. By having multiple country educational experience, apart from the benefit of cost saving, such arrangement would offer valuable life changing opportunities and an enlarged networking arena.
33. Premised on this understanding, the ministry do hope that Wollongong University Malaysia will devise mobility programs that will attract not only the locals but Australian students to come to study in Malaysia.
34. We also welcome as many academics and researchers to come and do their post-doctoral program and research here.

Ladies and gentlemen,

35. It will always be the policy direction of my Ministry to ensure that the quality of higher education in this country is on par with international standards, if not better.

36. **This unwavering commitment underscores the importance of ensuring comprehensive excellence becomes the priority.**
37. It requires all of us to reimagine higher education beyond intellectual and academic construct. We must strategically develop an ecosystem that will prioritise humanity centric education approach.
38. We at the ministry realise that this is an uphill exercise. But together, I believe we can achieve the best for our higher education sector.

Ladies and gentlemen,

39. Before I end, I would like to invite University of Wollongong Malaysia and all foreign campuses in the country, for a more rigorous and strategic engagement with the ministry, especially in exploring initiatives and improvement that can be made to ensure the excellence of our higher education sector.
40. Let's us all work together for the betterment of higher education sector and also for the betterment this country.
41. Again, congratulations on this meaningful milestone.

Thank you for having me and the ministry. I wish you all a pleasant and enjoyable evening. *Terima kasih.*