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**THIRD ASEM UNIVERSITY – BUSINESS FORUM 2012**  
***“DRIVING INNOVATION”***  
**PUTRA WORLD TRADE CENTRE (PWTC), KUALA LUMPUR**  
**5 – 6 NOVEMBER 2012**

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Distinguished participants and honoured guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening and Salam Satu Malaysia

First of all, kindly allow me to express my heartfelt gratitude for the opportunity to speak at this Third ASEM University-Business Forum 2012.

It's my pleasure to warmly welcome all of you to Kuala Lumpur and to this forum, where key stakeholders, from education and industry sectors from Asia and European Countries are gathered here in Kuala Lumpur. With us

today, we have over 50 participants from 27 European Countries and 19 Asia countries to discuss and deliberate on various issues of significance to university-business cooperation under the central theme, “Driving Innovation”.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Academic-industry partnerships have attracted global attention in recent years as societies around the world today demand accountability from higher educational institutions for investments in education: they expect to see how higher education would help the community to gain both economically and socially. In this context, there is a profound need for nations to work towards ensuring that the higher education remains relevant. Thus, it is timely that this event, that brings together important representatives of member countries and the best minds from academia to share their ideas, to be held.

Today, Universities and the industry are rapidly coming closer to each other to create synergies. Both organisations have recognised the need for an effective cooperation to better reflect the current state and needs of industry in the educational curriculum. Knowledge production and knowledge application, however, depend on networking, multidisciplinary

approaches and interaction with practical problems which will strengthen the competitiveness of both universities and industry. University-business cooperation becomes more and more important in a globalized world for improving the employability of students and graduates. Hence, during the Berlin meeting, the ASEM Ministers had agreed to establish a bi-regional forum involving stakeholders from the education and economic sector to strengthen the dialogue and cooperation between education and industry at local, national and international level.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Engagement is vital in ensuring that tertiary education could meet its multiple responsibilities- creating a culture of learning, directing research and teaching to sustainable development and strengthening links with social & (*industry*) partners. In realizing these, Universities have to engage with communities in order to establish mutually beneficial relationships. By applying universities' expertise to address challenges faced by the communities, universities could, in return, enrich their curriculum, make relevant research and contribute by volunteering to serve communities. I have also taken note of the ASEM placement programme proposal and welcome the establishment of a pilot programme for academia-business

mobility of qualified students between Asia and Europe to be partly funded by public resources and the industry. The Vulcanus placement programme of the EU with Japan and the global placement schemes such as the International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE) and the Association of the International Exchange of Students in Economics and Commerce (AIESEC) for students in areas of management, technology, education, and development are examples of good practice in this area.

There are also other forms of cooperation, such as the transnational education where European companies provide funds for chairs, scholarships, lecture halls and laboratories and research. Examples of such collaborations are Universiti Putra Malaysia's (UPM) joint research with Rolls Royce and European Aeronautics Defense and Space Company (EADS) through Aeronautics Malaysia Innovation Centre program, as well as other EADS collaboration with the National University of Singapore (NUS).

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With relevance to the said matters, our discussion in this Forum today will revolve around three key areas; the **Accreditation/Recognition**, the **Graduate Employability based Curriculum**, and the **Knowledge and Technology Sharing**.

**Ladies and Gentlemen, the first key area that will be pushed forward today is**

**Accreditation/Recognition: How we could foster a Creative Society through an Innovative Education System**

Currently the challenge of a country is to provide opportunities for every individual to enhance their capabilities. In order to foster creative and innovative human capital of country, an education system which is flexible, adaptive and innovative to the learning behavior and capabilities is needed. Through the establishment of an innovative education system, it will foster a learning outcome that strengthens the diversity of capabilities of the society. It is hoped that in return, it would foster a society that can spur high productivity and job creation. Discussions so far in ASEM conferences clearly demonstrate that quality assurance issues are very high on the

political and institutional agenda in Asia and Europe. Good quality of institutions and study program creates trust between higher education institutions and enhances mobility between the two regions. For instance, in order to achieve internationalization of universities, Japan has continuingly carried out a project named “Project for Establishing University Network for Internationalization (G30)” since 2009. With this project, Japan supports universities that promote internationalization by taking actions, such as expansion of degree-granting programs in which classes are taught in English, employment of international faculties and staffs, and high quality Japanese language courses.

Ladies and Gentlemen, our second key area today will discuss on the

**Graduate Employability based Curriculum: Human Capital Development for Innovation based Economy**

An innovation based economy is one that relies almost entirely on the creativity and innovative abilities of its people. Thus, aside creating a knowledgeable society, the human capital development agenda of a country should also include elements that contribute towards the

development of a creative society. This should include all levels of professions. The challenge, within this context, is to produce the right human capital with the right talents and numbers that can produce the right innovation at the right time. Therefore, Academia – Industry Relations have been considered to be an important conduit for the transfer of knowledge from academia to industry and vice versa. Industries can contribute in the form of the curriculum development, special equipment and training experts to universities while on the other hand, training providers, such as the universities can customize the curriculum and produce students with the right attributes and professionalism, knowledge skills and competencies in the required subject areas.

As we know, a mismatch of graduates would contribute to the unnecessary loss of financial resources as well as experience. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that all parties are aware of this in order to minimize its direct or indirect effects on the economic performance of the nation. To ensure employability special study programs' graduates (such as arts and music), complementary courses have been integrated into study programs (e.g. business management for self-employed artists).

Institutions of some countries offer special degree programs on entrepreneurship, post-university courses in management education and joint university-business for students and graduates. To quote a few examples, in Germany and Portugal active participation of non-academic members in the governance structure of higher education institutions is permitted out of the sheer awareness of the need to provide students with practical experience within their coursework.

On the other hand, the Irish Government has also set up a Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) for promoting entrepreneurial education. Playing its part, the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia followed suit by establishing an Entrepreneurship Unit to plan, implement and monitor relevant programs/activities amongst higher education students.

Ladies and Gentlemen, having talked about the first and second key areas, our discussion today will be further advanced with the inclusion of the third key area,

**Knowledge and Technology Sharing: University as an enabler towards strategic university-industry partnership (vendors, SMI/SME)**

Honored guest,

Around the world today, globalization, demographic transformation and rapid technological developments have posed new challenges to societies and knowledge-based economies in all parts of the world. As universities are recognized as a nation's economic and intellectual engines contributing to local and regional growth, the universities are then expected to play a key role in creating a sustainable economy by providing skilled workforce, innovation and knowledge exchange to the wider society, as well as developing new ideas, products and services from research, and raising the education level of citizens.

Distinguished guests,

There are a lot for us to discuss and to share. Hence, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a fruitful two days Forum. In conclusion,

ladies and gentlemen, I humbly request for your cooperation in ensuring the success of this Forum. I sincerely hope this Forum will provide a good platform for everyone to discuss strategies, exchange ideas, and develop new perspectives.

I once more would like to thank and extend my appreciation to the main Secretariat at the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia and ASEM Education Secretariat for their success in effectively coordinating the Third ASEM University-Business Forum 2012 in Kuala Lumpur.

To all participants and guests, wishing all of you a good time and to our foreign guests, wishing all of you a wonderful stay in Malaysia.

Thank you very much.