



VERBATIM TEXT

OFFICIATING ADDRESS

BY

THE PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA

YAB DATO' SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM

OPENING DINNER

INTERNATIONAL YOUNG FUTURE LEADERS SUMMIT

(iFUTURE) 2026

***Theme: "Redefining Future Leaders Through Value-Based
Leadership"***

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DEWAN MERDEKA, WORLD TRADE CENTRE

KUALA LUMPUR

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh dan Salam Sejahtera

Nahmaduhu wanusolli ala rasoolihil karim

Wa'ala alihi wasahbihi ajmain

Yang Berhormat Senator Dato' Seri Diraja Dr. Zambry bin Abd Kadir,

Menteri Pendidikan Tinggi;

Yang Berhormat Tuan Adam Adli bin Abd Halim,

Timbalan Menteri Pendidikan Tinggi;

Ketua Setiusaha;

Naib Canselor;

Rakan-rakan, dan yang utama anak-anak yang dikasihi sekalian.

1. *Alhamdulillah, kita bersama sekali lagi menjayakan rencana yang dipelopori oleh Saudara Zambry dan rakan-rakan di KPT yang membanggakan kerana diberi ruang*

untuk mengenal dan lebih daripada itu untuk memahami konteks apa yang dilakukan oleh Malaysia, tetapi juga untuk ada ruang, ada pertemuan, persefahaman di antara satu sama lain, rakan-rakan anak-anak muda dari negara yang rencam dan pelbagai.

2. *Dan saya kira, manfaatkan. Ini luar biasa kesempatan chsemangat Lita'arafu dalam Islam. Perbezaan itu tidak semestinya melemahkan tetapi memperkuat melalui kefahaman. Rakan-rakan kita yang lain bahasa, budaya, agama, dan juga sistem politik negara yang berbeza.*
3. *Jadi, saya anjurkan, selain daripada menyokong langkah yang bermakna ini supaya anak-anak berikan tumpuan dengan pimpinan dan bimbingan profesor dan pengajar untuk memanfaatkan sepenuhnya ruang ini. Percayalah generasi saya dan saya percaya juga generasi selepas itu tidak punyai kesempatan ini, dan kesempatan ini kita terbuka luas, rugi kalau kita tidak manfaatkan.*
4. Respected professors, teachers, and my children's and students here gathered from all over the world. I think this initiative deserves support, because it gives you a platform to engage meaningfully, not only to tell your side of the story but to learn. When we talk about reason discourse and

engagement, it's requires some humility to acknowledge that we are here to learn and share our experience, not only to teach or display our arrogance.

5. We are fortunate that Malaysia relative is a peaceful country part of great ASEAN network, we are also fortunate in the times of great challenges, calamity throughout the world from climate change, to racial and religious strife, problem of the Straits of Hormuz, we still are able to secure the peace and using that to propel the economic upwards.
6. What is the meaning of economic advancement? I've said this and tried to articulate the best of my ability the meaning of economic success and progress. That's why with the theme, as the Minister rightfully said, is actually to like aim and reach for the skies. We are talking about new frontiers of knowledge, new technology, artificial intelligence, and quantum computing. We are talking about digitalization. These are new areas, new frontiers of knowledge that we must acquire. If we lose sight of its importance, we will be lagging behind.
7. In these post-normal times, the faster you assimilate and acquire knowledge, the more assured will be your success. But it's a major challenge. It means grappling with the basic

requirements, with the need to expand the resources to ensure that most of us benefit. There's no point in having an elitist structure. Education must be implemented with the desire to ensure everyone has a place and has the right. That's why I take a very strong stance against those who promote racism and religious bigotry in this country. There's no reason whatsoever for an independent country, be it Malaysia or anywhere else, not to promote education and opportunities for all. We cannot succeed if we start denying and fragmenting our societies. We must unite together, show respect, and do whatever is necessary.

8. My dear children, you know why I keep on harping on this issue? I'm an impatient man. We have to struggle to make sure that this country succeeds, and for all our countries. Countries cannot succeed if you start compartmentalizing people, to show discord and distrust, and fragment communities. This country, blessed by Allah Subhanahu Wata'ala, we have the resources, but there are certain conditions we must meet. We must be united. We must have this clear vision that we have the capacity to defend the right of every single person. Yes, we have the framework and constitutional guarantees. Yes, Islam is the religion of the Federation. Yes, we have to ensure the rights and privileges of the Malays and the Bumiputera. Yes, the

Malay language is the lingua franca and the official language. And with these constitutional guarantees, it's not a zero-sum game, nor if it used to deny any single person.

9. My children, you imagine, after all that you have seen, I'm not saying that I suffered immensely in my life, but you've seen, after all that, being abused, tortured to near death, imprisoned, abused and insulted, denied my basic rights, denied my contact with my wife and children and immediate family, how do you comprehend, after all those, I come to this position, and not be committed to defend the right and freedom and success of every single Malaysian in this country. The Malays, the Chinese, the Indians, the Ibans, the Kadazans, they are all my children, and they deserve to be given the right and protection.
10. This is what we mean by the issue of conscience. Conscience is the dictate of the heart. Conscience is not mere pious platitudes or rhetorical political propaganda. Conscience is the habits of the heart. And it's not confined to the Muslim viewpoint or the Chinese or the Indians, even in the West. You know, when Alexis de Tocqueville referred to the issue of Democracy in America, he popularized the phrase 'habits of the heart'. The heart must ensure that you want freedom, you want justice, you want fairness, and for

all men and women, the heart must dictate. If the heart dictates prejudice, hatred, then you are a sick person. You may have your PhDs and professorial positions, but you are quite sick because you don't use your knowledge dictated by the conscience in your heart.

11. So what I'm appealing to you in the first issue, on the first point, is yes, use the opportunity, get everybody united, respect every single person's right, and assimilate knowledge as much as possible. Go to these new frontiers, "menggapai di langit," but it must be dictated by the heart. You must be grounded to your faith, your tradition, your culture, and understanding what is right, what is just. Okay? Don't be too serious, alright? This is not a *kuliyyah*. Am I okay? Is it sounds too serious or too boring? No.
12. Here you are talking about human progress, understanding, and conviction. In my position, where else do I appeal? I appeal to the young. I'm not necessarily reneging the importance of our elders, but once we do kiss the hands of our parents, show affection and respect to our teachers and our professors, we must also recognize their contribution, but also the flaws in the system. The younger generation must strive to go beyond that. That's precisely the reason, whilst I support such programs, I always have this question:

why do you talk about future leaders? What makes you think that the young are not leaders in their own right now? To me, the question is quite fundamental. While I was a student activist, I was a youth leader, even those days, I was always cynical when the elders and my leaders at that time say, 'You leaders of the future'. What do you mean leaders of the future? In some ways, you have to lead now. Lead what? The thinking of the masses, the conscience of the majority. What are students for? Who do you represent? You represent the future? No, you represent the present and the future. You must represent the conscience of the present. The present society cannot condone corruption, cannot condone exploitation, cannot condone and accept injustice. That is the conscience of the present, and the youth must champion this cause with all the strength and conviction.

13. That's again the reason why I've encouraged strongly, Saudara Zambry, Adam, and the ministry to immediately act against any provision in the Universities and University Colleges Act that can be perceived or deemed to be seen, to be curbing freedom and activities of students. So *insya-Allah*, now, of course, university leaders are all here, Vice-Chancellors, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, no one will be prosecuted just because of their ideas and their criticism,

including if the student leader chooses to criticize the Prime Minister. That is not a crime. You have to defend your position, but it's not a crime to criticize the policies of this government. That is what I mean by amending or scrapping those provisions which can be perceived and be abused.

14. You know why? Because the essence of education is to inculcate learning, to inculcate what is termed as critical thinking. Can I suggest therefore, that you don't make mistakes? No. I believe students, like elders too, they make mistakes. Students do make mistakes. It's our duty as teachers, as parents, to advise and correct them. But similarly, so are the leaders. Leaders sometimes commit blunders. Look at history, recent history of our country. Look at the various scandals, billions lost, billions lost! And that money was supposed to be spent on the students, on our schools, on our universities, not to be stolen by those corrupt people!
15. Yeah, I mean it. Why talk about progress? Why talk about change? Why talk about future? The future means action to correct the excesses. I mean, what is wrong with us? How do we accept to move society upwards when you condone this? You see, my recent budget referred to the Minister, yes, we have increased. I am proud to say that Malaysia is

one of the few countries that puts education and allocation for education as number one in our budget. Why? I want my children to succeed. I want my children to get better facilities and get to be able to secure whatever is necessary to succeed. And the requirements are just mind-boggling, so much. I mean, I have to remind the KSU, we have hundreds of ministries and agencies. I can't be spending only on education. But having said that, education is still number one.

16. You know what's number two? Health. Then only come the other ministries including Defence. But we are again fortunate because in this region, we don't have difficult neighbors. We don't have Israel as our neighbor. So we are, *alhamdulillah*, fortunate. But again, we have to make sure that money is well spent. Again, may I come back to the earlier point and reiterate this. Why is it, how come suddenly you can spend so much on education, health, for gig workers, for young graduates, and increase the salary. In these four years, almost four years, since I became, I was appointed as Prime Minister, we have increased minimum basic salary three times. And this is a world record, to increase the minimum salary three times in four years.

17. You know again? Because I care for these people but how, how is it that we are able to do that? Because we start with governance, with good governance. Stop these leakages and ensure that contracts are done transparently. You know what I've announced on Friday? Something which is quite unique and rare. What? I happen to be the Minister of Finance, I said from next year, every single contract, building schools or hospitals or universities or roads, must be fully transparent. Who wins the contract, what's the amount, which company gets the contract, what's the cost, what's the progress and why this company won against other competitors.
18. That is going to be very transparent, everybody can read and see. Now if I'm able to do so, I would expand. We have a school in Tumpat, say, a new secondary school. We want to make sure that people of Tumpat would know precisely what's the cost of that school what's the cost of the land, who the contractor is, what's the progress of the project. Let the people of Tumpat then see for themselves if the school is being built by responsible contractors or not. This is going to be the new Malaysia I'm talking about and hopefully *insya-Allah* we can control, because mind you believe me, it's not a political statement, it's a statement coming from my own conviction.

19. We cannot continue wasting billions and talking about Islam, Malay dominance, future Malaysia, humanity, and the world. It's sheer hypocrisy! That is why, for you, present and future leaders, I am suggesting that you must be part and parcel of this new agenda to revive this spirit and work hard, excel in your studies and at the same time be dictated by your own conscience to do what is right and protect your family, your society, and your nation from corruption, excesses, and abuse of power.
20. The problem in Malaysia is not racial or religious. It's the crooks who use race and religion to hide their own excesses. You choose to squander billions into your family account and when this is exposed, you talk about Malay survival and Islam. You young leaders, present and future, must take stock of this view, our problem is our own weaknesses. We must strive and struggle to do what is best for our family, our society, and our country.
21. And I support the initiative by the Ministry of Higher Education to give this avenue. Make full use of the next few days, learn as much, see for yourself, and give us suggestions if you see there are flaws. We are here to listen why not some of the groups put some suggestions? Now you have gone two days in a row, seeing, talking to people,

and you realize that Anwar or some people call me PMX, we think we're doing okay, but can you improve on this? We see that you talk about cleanliness, but so much garbage hidden. You talk about whatever, digitalization, we see this weakness in this department. I stand guided, and I believe my colleagues in the Ministry of Higher Education share this view. If you have any suggestions, please share with us so that we can work together to help one another.

22. For you, foreign students, students from overseas, let me say this: We are fortunate, we are blessed because foreign students, you feel comfortable here. We want you to feel that Malaysia is also your home, your second home. Send my *Salam* and respect to your parents and your family members, to say that Anwar is proud of you and your participation here.
23. *Semoga Allah SWT merestui usaha kita. Dan saya percaya insya-Allah dengan niat yang baik dan ikhlas, anak-anak boleh tingkatkan usaha supaya dapat menjadi manusia yang berguna, menjadi pembela, pembantu ibu bapa dan keluarga, masyarakat, dan negara masing-masing.*

Terima kasih. Wassalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.