



VERBATIM TEXT

KEYNOTE ADDRESS AND OPENING SPEECH

**YAB DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM
PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA**

INTERNATIONAL FUTURE CONFERENCE 2026

**“Shaping the Future Through Knowledge, Innovation
and Civilisational Leadership”**

**28 SEPTEMBER 2026 | MONDAY | 9.30 AM
ISTAC-IIUM, KUALA LUMPUR**

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

Alhamdulillahirabbil 'alamin, wassolatu wassalamu 'ala rasulihil karim, wa 'ala alihi wa sahbihi ajma'in

Excellency Ambassador Aftab Ahmad Khokher and the OIC family, including Professor Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary;

Saudara Tan Sri Abdul Rashid Hussain;

Saudara Professor Emeritus Dato' Sri Dr. Osman Bakar;

Professor dan juga Yang Terutama, Duta-Duta Besar.

1. *Saya hargai ikhtiar Universiti Islam Antarabangsa bersama OIC dan rakan-rakan menyelenggarakan sidang yang akan menelaah permasalahan masa depan.*
2. *Tidak banyak Universiti semasa, apa lagi di negara Islam yang bicarakan apa yang disebutkan pengajian atau kajian atau disiplin untuk meneliti dan menelaah masa depan, yang diungkapkan sebagai future studies. Tapi saya fikir langkah yang diambil oleh IIU munasabah dan perlu kerana kita mendepani permasalahan perubahan yang begitu pantas.*

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

3. Of course, I am delighted to be here. Partly because we are dealing with an issue which is very critical, not well deliberated in Muslim countries or even research centres on what we term as future studies.
4. But before that, may I share sad news. This morning we learned the passing of Tun Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, and may Allah bless her soul. And I think appropriate for us to recite Al-Fatihah.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

5. The verb 'shaping' is instructive in the future because as the future cannot be treated as a foregone conclusion. And we are reminded that preordained destiny exists alongside human agency, responsibility and accountability. And this is why conversations about the future are conversations about responsibility.

6. And you may recall that in the MADANI framework, particularly in educational system, we talk about the struggling, aiming, attempting to grasp new knowledge what we call from the skies “menggapai yang di langit”. But we're also reminding our students, our researchers and teachers that reaching for the skies this new technology AI etc. etc. Must be grounded in our tradition, faith, culture and legacy.
7. So, talking about future studies, it's not necessarily a new discipline. If you grasp the understanding, the works which you referred to, Excellency, the legacy the *Turath* is a science, because great works of the past sometimes have been largely ignored because of our obsession about grasping the future.
8. And Mortimer Adler, which I made reference to Osman is familiar, the editor of the great works of the west, made this very pertinent remark decades ago that the fault line in Western societies is because of their obsession passion about technology and science and the people present and what they understanding the future, but erasing the thousand year legacy.

9. Malik Bin Nabi, the great Algerian thinker, philosopher reminded us the same point that the failure defining Muslim societies because their obsession about understanding, grasping, acquiring knowledge from the West and Western cultural tradition without any serious attempt towards what they term as indiginazation which covers their legacy, their *Turath*, their own Islamic history and culture and their own society.
10. So, I think there was crucial importance because when we task ourselves to understand and grasp what is technologically feasible but also Rashid, you mentioned was socially desirable because it cannot be increasingly blurred between the past, the *Turath* and the future.
11. How many universities seriously take future studies as a discipline? And this to me, to my mind, worrying. And in Malaysia, of course we are quite fast in trying to grasp, for example, artificial intelligence, but if you are concerned about the whole issue of, as I said, aiming for the skies and grounded in your legacy, your past, then we feel it was certainly more safe.

12. Some of us get really particularly excited when there's a lot of concerns expressed about the dangers to humanity of artificial intelligence. But if you are grounded and through *Turath* and Islamic tradition, you should not be particularly surprised because all new technology, sciences and the future studies, which is particularly important, critical for us, is seen differently from what the others see.
13. Issue of the implications, ramifications in terms of not only societal concerns, but culture, tradition, morality and the ethics. Now we sense a growing awareness among leaders in the South and Muslim scholars talking about relevance of the new technology, including artificial intelligence, to faith, morality and ethics. But it should not be just pious platitudes. There must be serious studies to ensure that we do not lose sight of this fundamental issue of having to grasp, acquire knowledge, which encompass in the scheme of future studies, but at the same time, understanding the future, grounded strongly to our *Turath*, our legacy and our past.

14. So, the conversations about artificial intelligence, digital transformation, imaging technologies, and here we include energy transition must not be confined to the language of algorithms, computing power and economic competitiveness.
15. Again, I reiterate, we need the language of ethics, the lens of philosophy, Osman will give you that, and the grounding of history. In other words, the advancement of technology must be in lockstep with the humanities, morality and theology, and should read the Choudhary Sada of shaping the future.
16. Of course, in all these sessions, particularly in the presence of colleague from OIC, we cannot ignore this new science, technology, AI, and ignore the suffering and humiliation of our brethren in humanity, enduring in Gaza and the West Bank.
17. From the United Nations General Assembly to thousands of other sessions, we talk about the genocide, incessant killings of the innocent in cold blood, aided by autonomous technologies.

18. So again, we are facing this challenge and I believe discussions should not ignore the excesses technology, including AI, in the dehumanization of man. Again, not necessarily a new subject, but it might be seen in the new context.
19. So, we're talking today with ISTAC and IIUM, both Islamic intellectual tradition and *Turath*, which is not limited to the accumulation of information, but about how knowledge can be responsibly applied, for what? For the betterment of society and humanity.
20. This was exemplified by great scholars of old. Now, I'm reminded, because we had a series of meetings, discussions with scholars recently about *Turath*, and I realized that the penchant and the crave for new technology and science, which is imminent, critical and I fully understand and appreciate that I want our AI faculty and digitalization, new technology... we need to.

21. And now, as you know, Malaysia has been a very important destination for investments, in terms of new technology, in terms of semiconductor and AI and data centers. Probably one of few Muslim countries that are able to attract so much. But we still have to deal with the issue of legacy, *Turath* and tradition. Otherwise, we will lose our identity and devoid of morality and ethics.
22. But again, this is not necessarily new because this was exemplified in the great scholars of all who appreciated how questions of philosophy, mathematics and medicine were never to be treated as distinct from questions of purpose.
23. Now, the great responsibility, I can just share this up to people like Osman and the rest to think and deliberate we should governments and institutions must give the necessity support.
24. You see the problems of societies; the narrative out there is completely sometimes cut off from the fundamental challenge of our community. The issue of knowledge, the issue we are discussing today new technology and tradition. The issue of societal concerns, problems of inequity.

25. We have to deliberate I think next week, early October have to present a budget and people expectations high. The resources are limited. So, you see, I'm a bit exhausted today having to grapple the issue of my colleagues are pushing about future studies and to *Turath*.
26. And then you have high expectations and limited resources and where the society Muslim public is not considering this as a major challenge because the battle out there is still race car, race divisions and survival of one community as opposed to the other.
27. To my mind, the real battle is here. You show knowledge, you show new technology and future. And may Allah bless our efforts and I have great hopes in this university and now the Centre of Future Studies has been just recently established to be able to deliberate more seriously these issues.
28. So, the task before us is not simply to build up more, invent faster or compete harder. It is to decide what kind of progress is worth pursuing and having the courage to shape our institutions, including investments and ambitions around that choice. That's future studies the challenge.

29. For Malaysia technological advancement must never be or become detached from the society it is meant to serve. We should pursue capability with confidence, but never at the expense of judgment, dignity or a clear sense of who we are becoming in the process.
30. So of course, I'm heartened that this discourse takes center stage at the International Future Conference 2026. May I thank IIUM and OIC, COMSTEC, UCSI University, and my convening this event for giving all the support necessary. May these deliberations the discourse also translates into some of our activities in these institutions, because future studies discuss about the future must not be confined and elates the score. The society large our student academic community and society our must be fully involved and engaged.
31. *Jadi sekali lagi saya ucap terima kasih dan doakan supaya persidangan ini mencapai kejayaan yang diharapkan.*

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.