

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY
YABHG. DATIN PADUKA SERI ROSMAH MANSOR,
WIFE OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA
AT 15TH MALAYSIAN EDUCATION SUMMIT 2011
ON THE TOPIC, "NURTURING THE YOUNG MINDS –
BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR LIFE LONG LEARNING"
AT SUNWAY RESORT HOTEL & SPA
ON TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 2011, AT 11.45 AM

Bismillahirrahmanirahim

YBhg. Tan Sri Dato' Dr. Jeffrey Cheah

Chairman of Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI)

YBhg. Dato' Dr. Michael Yeoh

CEO / Director of Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI)

Members of the media

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, Salam Sejahtera and Salam 1Malaysia.

1. First and foremost, my heartiest congratulations to *Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute* (ASLI) for its consistency in organising the Malaysian Education Summit, now into its 15th edition with the theme "*Transformation in Motion: Driving Dynamic Improvement towards a World-Class Education System.*" I would like to thank ASLI for inviting me to share my thoughts, aspirations, and commitment on the subject, "Nurturing Young Minds – Building a Foundation for Lifelong Learning" this morning.

2. Let me begin by saying that learning throughout life is a concept that is universally accepted. We learn something new every day and often make use of the new information to solve problems or to adjust to the environment. Through learning, we change our perception and attitudes towards things and people, we understand ourselves better and modify our ways of doing things. For most of us change is a routine part of life. Change can be small, incremental, large and even transformational. Whatever the nature of the change we experience, learning is integral to the process. Since change occurs throughout our life span, effective lifelong learning is a critical companion skill for equipping us with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values for us to take control of our destinies in a rapidly changing world. It should fulfil and advance our personal aspirations and enhance our value to potential employers or to organizations in which we wish to serve.

Ladies and gentlemen,

3. Learning throughout life has taken on a new and even broader urgency today both in the developed and developing world. On the one hand, we need lifelong learning to keep

pace with the exponential growth of knowledge and explosive technological changes that are happening with lightening speed around us. This is to ensure that our economy remains competitive in the world marketplace - notably, with globalisation and the extremely aggressive and fast growth of information and communications technology. On the other hand, lifelong learning is also recognised as a key component in addressing and solving major global issues such as illiteracy, ill health, poverty alleviation, social cohesion and inclusion, sustainable development and empowerment of women. It is thus essential for building innovative and learning societies, often referred to as knowledge societies.

4. The rapid development of technology further highlights the need for continuous training and honing of new skills. The increasing rate of new discoveries and information enhances the need for innovative ways to cope with such an overwhelming amount of information. The growing interconnections of individuals, communities and societies across the globe, require us to reinterpret old ways of thinking and doing. In these new socio-political-economic contexts, voluntary and self-motivated lifelong learning in pursuit of knowledge have come to be more appreciated than ever before. This is very much in line with a Hadith of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. which exhorts us to seek knowledge even as far as China.

5. As an example, in a professional field such as Medicine, it is common knowledge that most of what a medical practitioner learned in medical school becomes obsolete by the time he or she graduates. Even patients, who now have wide access to medical information will know if a doctor is up to date. To keep his patients and, of course, as a matter of professional pride, medical practitioners must follow a personal plan of progressive learning and intellectual stimulation throughout their practicing careers. This will enable them to bring about changes that enhance the quality of their existing practice and promote career advancement.

6. It is important to note therefore, that the notion of learning “from womb to tomb” occurs in a wide variety of settings. It is not confined to school and other educational institutions. It also occurs in the home, at the workplace, and within the community. We learn from ordinary conversation, from reading books or from the media, both print and electronic. More structured programmes are offered at the workplace as well as in community-based and professional organisations. More and more now, the social media such as twitter and facebook are becoming sources of information and interactions in the learning process. In other words we are living in a sea of information. All the information in the world will not become useful unless we can recognise the specific relevance. An old Chinese proverb says *“Tell me and I forget. Show me and I remember. Involve me and I understand.”* The challenge lies in ensuring that people know *why, how, where* and *when* to look for *what* information and to use it with clarity in effecting meaningful change. That is the essence of lifelong learning.

7. In addition to the various opportunities that are available for updating one’s cognitive, social and creative skills, fundamental to lifelong learning is the capacity to learn, unlearn and relearn as well as the motivation to acquire new knowledge and competencies. For this to happen, basic literacy and numeracy skills are prerequisites. These must be complemented with skills in information technology, capabilities in information-seeking, reasoning and

