

**Opening Keynote Address by
YB Senator Dato Ir. Donald Lim Siang Chai
Deputy Minister of Finance I**

**CFO Summit 2011
"CFOs in the Transformational Age: Managing Risks and Rewards"
The Royale Chulan Kuala Lumpur
24 May 2011, 9am**

YBhg Dato' Dr Michael Yeoh, Chief Executive Officer of ASLI

Ms Helen Brand, Chief Executive of ACCA Global

Distinguished Guests & Summit Participants , Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning, and Salam 1Malaysia!

I am delighted to be here today at the CFO Summit 2011 to speak on the theme of "CFOs in the Transformational Age: Managing Risks and Rewards." Many thanks to the organisers ASLI and ACCA Malaysia for inviting me, and congratulations on successfully organising this timely event.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The only certain thing about business today is its uncertainty. Malaysia is no exception to this rule. In fact, business in Malaysia is in a state of flux as the country is committed to its own individual vision for transformation.

Over the past two years, Malaysia has embarked on a fundamentally new economic model in order to compete in a high-octane world, where global competition for markets, talent and capital is intensifying. The acronyms of ETP (the Economic Transformation Programme), and NEM (New Economic Model) frequently crop up in conversation and the media. It has also become very familiar, especially to those professionals working in the business world, such as all of you here today.

Ladies and gentlemen,

A vibrant and robust business services sector will be beneficial as it is a high value-add sector. It generates significant multiplier effects in the economy and raises overall productivity across the economy. Specialised business services are highly differentiated, providing a range of high-value skills and services which allows companies within the industry to charge premium fees. This should subsequently translate into higher wages, commensurate with Malaysia's ambitions of moving into the category of a higher-income nation.

The growth of business services will be powered by a suite of different entry point projects (EPPs) and business opportunities. One of the business opportunities identified within the business services sector relates to is the accounting sector. The growth of the accounting sector has traditionally been linked to the size of the overall economy, and vice-versa.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since accountants and CFOs are integral members of the business services sector, our success in this key area hinges on improving the performance and caliber of these financial professionals. That is why we are here today – for the purpose of continuing professional development among Malaysia's senior and aspiring CFOs.

Ladies and gentlemen,

While the transformation process is complex and requires much effort, there are tremendous opportunities to reap rewards.

One of these opportunities lies in capitalising on emerging technologies and understanding changing behavior driven by these technologies. To fully leverage on IT, CFOs must fully consider the risks and rewards of the new and emerging technologies, and how these will support the future success of their organisations in this globalised world.

Ladies and gentlemen,

While our aspirations are noble, the business services sector in Malaysia faces a number of stumbling blocks too. Shortage of talent is a major detriment, one which is being addressed through such initiatives as the Talent Corporation. As the business services sector is knowledge-intensive, access to high quality talent is fundamental to our success.

Malaysia grapples with multiple challenges in building and retaining a skilled workforce within the country to support the growth of business services, including in finance and accounting. For example, Malaysia has a shallow pool of just 83,000 finance and accounting professionals compared with 2.3 million in India, and the shortage is exacerbated by low levels of employability.

It is estimated that just 25 percent of Malaysia's finance and accounting professionals are of sufficient quality to work for a multinational company, compared with 30 percent in the Philippines and 40 percent in the Czech Republic.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The government is now working on bridging this divide. Events such as today's CFO Summit will go a long way towards nurturing the quality of talent. I hope that more agencies will step forward to emulate the efforts of ACCA Malaysia and ASLI. I also hope that more of our accounting and finance professionals will take advantage of such events to up their skills and knowledge.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Malaysian government is heavily invested in the country's transformation process. However, the public sector must work hand-in-hand with the private sector if the NEM and ETP are to come to fruition.

On behalf of the government, I urge everyone here today to support the evolution of the business services sector, which in turn will help build up the calibre and quality of the nation as it strives to join the high-income club.

On that note, ladies and gentleman I take great pleasure in declaring the CFO Summit 2011 open. Thank you and I wish all of you a fruitful day of learning!