

BRIEFING NOTE FOR THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Welcoming Remarks

Malaysia Innovates Summit 2022

2 August 2022

(Note to KW: Salutation for Prime Minister – YAB Dato' Sri Ismail Sabri bin Yaakob; Salutation for Economy Minister – YB Dato' Sri Mustapa; Salutation for EPU Director General – YB Datuk Seri Saiful Anuar)

The Honorable YAB Dato' Sri Ismail Sabri bin Yaakob, Prime Minister of Malaysia,
(note to KW: Name pronunciation – YAB Da-toh Sree Ismail Sab-ree bin Ya-kob)

The Honourable YB Dato' Sri Mustapa, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy),
(note to KW: Name pronunciation – YB Da-toh Sree Mus-tapa)

YB Datuk Seri Saiful Anuar, Director General, Economic Planning Unit (EPU), Prime Minister's Department,
(note to KW: YB Da-toke Sir-ee Psy-full Aa-nu-ar)

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Introduction

Selamat pagi and salam sejahtera (note to KW: se-la-mat pa-gi; sa-lam se-jah-ter-aa). It is a pleasure to be here in Malaysia and on behalf of UNDP, I welcome you to the Malaysia Innovates Summit 2022 jointly organized by UNDP Malaysia and the Economic Planning Unit.

Over the last two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has morphed from a health crisis to an economic and social crisis. Now, as the pandemic abates, we are faced with a worsening economic fallout through inflation and a humanitarian crisis through food shortages and conflict.

There is now a greater need to do more with the resources that we currently have, a need that can be met through innovation. This is an opportunity for governments and the international community to re-think the way we address poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation.

UNDP and innovation

In UNDP, we see innovation as a fundamental enabler to maximise and accelerate the structural transformation needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Innovation has been an integral part of UNDP's strategy in recent times and has contributed to several development achievements. In 2021, we helped 82 countries to adopt over 580 digital solutions for e-commerce, e-governance, and others. Our efforts in digitalisation improved the delivery of US\$1.4 billion in social protection to over 27 million people.

Over the past decade, the UNDP have embarked on a journey to support governments worldwide with their national priorities by shaping their local innovation ecosystem through innovation. Together with our partners, UNDP established one of the world's largest and fastest learning networks focused on development challenges—with 91 Accelerator Lab supporting 115 countries—to test, share, and learn

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the latest approaches and concepts that will improve the way we undertake development interventions.

Innovation in Malaysia

As an upper middle-income country, Malaysia is teeming with talent and innovative solutions to overcome local and global challenges, as told in the stories in the inaugural Malaysia Innovates Report 2022 that will be launched today.

According to the Global Innovation Index published by the World Intellectual Property Organization, Malaysia ranks 36th among the 132 economies featured in the GII 2021 and ranks 8th among the 17 economies in Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Oceania.¹ Malaysia is now directing its innovation focus towards alternative energies and sustainability, artificial intelligence and digital technologies, biotechnology and human health, manufacturing, and mobility.

Leveraging innovation as a source of growth, however, can be challenging due to the lack of incentives and drivers in the wider ecosystem. According to the 2019 National Survey of Research and Development in Malaysia, just over 9,000 patent applications were made in Malaysia between 2013 and 2022, a fraction of the 120,000 research publications Malaysia has produced in the same period, based on the WIPO data.² In this regard, the 12th Malaysia Plan outlined bold measures to overcome this bottleneck and improve the domestic innovation ecosystem.

A timely and important Summit

This Summit is timely, it is important to have conversations about policies and tangible action to overcome structural challenges at the nexus of ‘State, Science, and Society’. How can innovation resolving people’s challenges and generate new sources of economic growth and shared prosperity?

Innovation for development is essentially about empowering all levels of society to tackle the most pertinent issues in their communities via breakthrough ideas. We need a diversity of voices and contributions for this to happen and to generate creative solutions. It is heartening to see this conference convening stakeholders not only from government agencies and private sector entrepreneurs, but also from the scientific community, civil society, and grassroots innovators among B40 and indigenous groups.

Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

Closing

I would like to thank the Honourable Prime Minister, YAB Dato' Sri Ismail Sabri bin Yaakob, for his presence here today in providing the keynote address for this important event. My gratitude as well to YB Dato' Sri Mustapa, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy), and Datuk Seri Saiful Anuar, Director General, EPU.

¹ https://www.wipo.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/wipo_pub_gii_2021/my.pdf

² <https://themalaysianreserve.com/2022/03/02/malaysia-needs-big-innovation-purpose-to-stay-ahead/>

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UNDP will continue to support the Government of Malaysia in accelerating technology adoption and innovation as laid out in the 12th Malaysia Plan over the next 5 years and beyond, to achieve Malaysia's agenda for more sustainable prosperity for all.

I would also like to congratulate the organizing team for pulling off such a timely summit and I look forward to the outcome. Thank you.

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