

Opening Remarks

**PROF. DR. D. KAMARUDIN D. MUDIN**

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**UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH**

**INAUGURAL BIMP–EAGA HIGHER EDUCATION SUMMIT  
2017**

***"Education and Social Cultural Understanding for  
Regional Sustainability"***

***19 July 2017 | 8.00 am***

The Pacific Sutera Hotel, Sutera Harbour, Kota Kinabalu

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh

## **SALUTATIONS**

Yang Berhormat Datuk Dr. Mary Yap Kain Ching  
Deputy Minister, Ministry of Higher Education,  
Malaysia

To our Esteemed Speakers, Mr. Gaspar Gayona &  
Mr. Luigi Carbeneri

To all our Distinguished Guests, Datuk-Datuk,  
Datin-Datin, Professors, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to bid everyone a warm welcome to the Inaugural BIMP-EAGA Higher Education Summit, 2017. As the co-organizer of this Summit, I am also pleased to welcome all guests to our beautiful city of Kota Kinabalu, Sabah—the Land Below the Wind. Thank you for your support and participation.

## **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As you may know, the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines–East ASEAN Growth Area (or better known as the BIMP-EAGA) was established in the year 1994. Coincidentally, it was within this same year that Universiti Malaysia Sabah was also born into physical existence. At UMS, we pride ourselves as being an institution of higher education that produces graduates and quality human resources in a variety of fields.

Ever since the university's establishment, UMS has made consistent efforts to develop all aspects of its learning environment in order to provide an effective platform for nurturing the younger generation. Hence, it is important that we focus on matters that need to be timely addressed, particularly in the face of a rapidly changing educational landscape.

One of the ways of keeping abreast of current issues is through the exchanging of ideas. It is therefore timely that we, education practitioners and industry players from the BIMP-EAGA region,

are able to meet, discuss and exchange our experiences in this 2-day Education Summit.

It has been said that education can act as the key to creating opportunities as well as to unlocking the many barriers that this region may be facing. I do believe that through education, we can create greater cultural understanding, alleviate poverty, and achieve many other social and economic goals for societies within the BIMP-EAGA region.

And in line with the aim to generate a more people-centered and socially responsible community, institutions of higher learning are vital pieces of the puzzle. Therefore, it is timely that this Higher Education Summit is being held to ponder upon questions of how educational institutions in this region can cooperate to broaden the horizons for the BIMP-EAGA community.

Here at UMS, we look forward to strengthening the bonds we already have with institutions of higher learning around the world, and particularly in the BIMP-EAGA region. And we are always looking forward to creating new partnerships. Thus, it is my hope that through our discussions in this inaugural summit, we adopt the right path, to connect and commit our energy, so the BIMP-EAGA region prospers evermore.

**Distinguished            Guests,            Ladies            and  
Gentlemen,**



As we know, since its establishment, the BIMP-EAGA seeks to accelerate cooperation and growth in 4 main areas, which are the areas of tourism, agribusiness, connectivity and environment. These areas are also known as the original four pillars, or clusters, of the BIMP-EAGA. But all in all, these pillars have a common aim; and that is to increase trade through various cooperative measures.

Nevertheless, let us not forget that we in the BIMP-EAGA also have similarities in terms of history and cultural heritage.

As such, the social cultural education cluster was formed with the aim to strengthen the regional collaboration and connectivity in this area. And this has led to the establishment of the fifth pillar of the BIMP-EAGA in 2016, that is the Socio-Cultural and Education Pillar.

## **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In the next two days, I am positive everyone present will be exposed to a range of topics under the theme “Education and Socio-Cultural Understanding for Regional Sustainability”.

It is my hope that the papers presented in this Summit will not end here, but rather, spark deeper discussions and ideas for future research collaborations.

Let us agree to remove the negative connotations linked to the *ivory tower of academia*, and replace it with educational institutions as *educational beacons of hope* which guide all those willing to learn: students, faculty members, young professionals and skilled workers.

Let all institutions of higher learning in the region continue to apply knowledge to benefit society, our BIMP-EAGA community, in the true spirit of neighbourliness.

When we stand together, we are stronger as seats of learning that nurture young and old alike.

**Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Before I end my short speech this morning, I take this opportunity to congratulate the Organising Committee and everyone involved for their hard work and commitment in enabling this historic summit.

Lastly, I also extend our gratitude to the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia for choosing UMS as the host and co-organiser for this inaugural BIMP-EAGA Higher Education Summit.

Thank you.