

WELCOMING SPEECH  
PROF. DATUK DR. D KAMARUDIN D MUDIN  
VICE-CHANCELLOR  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

HIS EXCELLENCY DR MAKIO MIYAGAWA  
AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO MALAYSIA

YAB DATUK SERI PANGLIMA MASIDI MANJUN  
MINISTER OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND  
ENVIRONMENT SABAH

Ms Horoko Matsuo  
HEAD OF THE JAPANESE CONSULAR OFFICE IN  
SABAH

Officers and Academicians of Universiti Malaysia  
Sabah

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great honour to host such an esteemed group of personalities today and on behalf of the UMS family, *Selamat Datang* to Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

In 2017 we celebrate the 60th anniversary of diplomatic links between Malaysia and Japan. The ties between our countries are grounded on the basis of many facets – we share similar traditions and cultural values, economic aspirations, societal ambitions and we are sited

within close regional and geographical proximity. The Malaysia- Japan link has grown from strength to strength over the years, and it is our hope that this bilateral relations continue to flourish in the coming years.

Your Excellency.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Modern-day trade relations between our two countries were established from as early as the 1970s brought about by Japan's massive industrialisation surge which in turn generated

demand for Malaysian commodities. In the 1980s, the “Look East” policy (LEP) and the 1986 Promotion of Investment Act paved the way for Malaysia to focus on Japan in terms of trade, technical expertise and a re-orientation of national economic direction and partnership. This thus created an unprecedented inflow of direct investments into Malaysia by Japanese multinationals. The policies and incentives set in place by the governments of the day for both nations have always been from the perspective of easing, assisting and supporting bilateral

Malaysia- Japan affiliations and cooperation, past and present.

Your Excellency.

Malaysia as a developing country has greatly benefited from this bilateral relationship not only from the trade perspective but perhaps more importantly in helping create and nurture a skilled workforce. Your Excellency, such had been the success of the Look East Policy in the 1980s that the Malaysian government has embarked on the second wave of the LEP, version 2.0, which is anchored on economic and sustainable

development attainments primarily green technology and renewable energy innovations, specialised technical skills, safe and reliable ecosystem management, small and medium enterprise empowerment, and senior citizen programme facilitations. In LEP version 2.0, Malaysia looks towards Japan for assistance and cooperation to further forge ahead in developing our people and our environment, and establishing our place in a technology- driven world.

Your Excellency.

Universiti Malaysia Sabah has been privileged to be part of this mutual cooperation and friendship between Malaysia and Japan. Our vision is for the existing cooperation and engagement between UMS and Japan to be sustained and further developed. We at the University firmly believe human capital as the basis for any progress, a perspective I am sure is equally shared by Japan.

The are many initiatives taken by UMS with extended assistance from Japan, which I will mention only a few here.

In early 2000, talks began between the Institute for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ITBC) with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which was later translated to the Bornean Biodiversity and Ecosystem Conservation Project

Phase I (BBEC Phase I) and later, BBEC Phase II. During this time, officers from the State Government of Sabah and UMS were sent to Japan to train on all aspects on ecosystem conservation including training on the methods of media-reporting. The Sabah Biodiversity Enactment was passed in the year 2000, but the instrument for enforcement was lacking. Through partnership with the Japan Government, enough human-resource was trained, paperwork done and the Enactment came into force in 2008, after which, management of matters relating to

access, research and exploitation of biological resources from Sabah was returned to Kota Kinabalu. Today, all scientists working in the state enjoy a shorter approval time and saving costs of having to travel to Kuala Lumpur for Research Permits.

Your Excellency, BBEC did not stop there – Because we developed expertise in Ecosystem Management through this initiative, Sabah began offering training in this field to third world

countries in Southeast Asia, South Asia, Australasia and Africa. It is called the Third Country Training Program (TCTP), a hallmark of a Malaysia-Japan initiative and the only TCTP program outside of Kuala Lumpur. Since 2009, UMS and Sabah state agencies host 25 in-service officers from these countries to be trained here and are exposed to the wealth of biodiversity and ecosystem in this state. Funding comes on a yearly basis from JICA and our Malaysian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In nine years, we have built an Alumni of nearly 200 officers in the

benefitting countries, who will move up their ranks and lead their own agencies with the spirit of like-mindedness in conservation and other shared values gained from this training.

However, being an academic and research institutions, our main responsibilities has always been to develop expertise to allow for extensive exploration into the frontiers of knowledge in all possible fields.

Japan, is one of the closest developed country to Malaysia and this is the reason that UMS continues to send academicians pursuing their postgraduate degrees in Japan. Prof Dr Ho Chong Mun, the Director of the Office of Internationalization and Global Engagement was at Yokohama University and he speaks and write Japanese. We have many more and they are posted in most of our academic faculties. Japanese Language is being thought here and is one of the most popular languages on campus.

Taking care of that part of the bargain is the job of AP Dr Jualang here, the Dean of the Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language Learning.

Your Excellency, Japan is an insular country and the sea and ocean around Japan provide much of Japan's food source. It is the same here, a Malaysian State popular with extensive diversity and styles in providing seafood. For the citizen of the world who are still searching for the seafood

they longed to taste, they should come here. Then go to Japan, then return here and start all over!

But we also realise how fragile our waters are and so are our food security. Since 1994, when UMS began operation, Japanese scientists have already been with us working our way to create scientific and practical ways to culture high quality fish. Our strongest ally in this field is Kindai University in Japan and, together, the

UMS-Kindai Aquaculture Development Centre was established here last year. It was a major undertaking and for UMS, it is a giant leap that will multiply our strength and expertise in this field, which, of course, strive to produce more and better seafood for all. Twenty-three years on and there is so much to explore.

Your Excellency,

Along these undertakings and partnership, we gain so much, making new findings, producing better ways of doing things and sharing new

knowledge with the world, but being human, we are also humbled by the diversity of cultures, language, observing respect, and to some others, finding love and raising families.

Your Excellency,

There is certainly a deeper plot to all this and please let me end my speech with this note:

This is a story in which we are the heroes, the warriors, the good things, the love, the synthesis we make out of being protagonists and antagonists and, indeed, the happy endings. It is a story of two people, two nations who make the best out of their friendship.

Domo Arigatou Gozaimasu (Thank you).