

ASIA e UNIVERSITY, MALAYSIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO E-LEARNING IN ACD

Statement by YAB Dato' Seri Najib Tun Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia

AT THE PLENARY SESSION OF THE 2ND ACD SUMMIT
10 OCTOBER 2016

"ONE ASIA, DIVERSE STRENGTH"

His Excellency General Prayut Chan-O-Cha
Prime Minister Thailand,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to you, Mr Chairman, and the Government of Thailand for the warm hospitality extended to my delegation during our stay in this great city of Bangkok. I would also like to congratulate Thailand for its successful stewardship of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue.

Mr Chairman,

2. The global economic outlook has been difficult for some time. According to the World Economic Outlook report by the IMF, global growth is projected to be just 3.1 percent in 2016.

3. Weak domestic demand in developed economies; low commodity prices; increasing fiscal and current account imbalances; and policy tightening are some of the factors that have dampened recovery, especially in the commodity-exporting economies. Global growth is forecast to expand next year, but only to 3.4 percent.

4. More importantly, the report underscores the need for enhanced policy coordination among countries.

5. It is imperative that ACD Member States are more united and work collaboratively, so that Asia can fulfil its potential as the major driving force for global economic growth.

Mr Chairman,

6. Our Organisation is unique as a pan-Asian regional group, with diverse members from five different sub-regions of Asia. It could, if we truly act together, bear out the theme of this Summit - "One Asia, Diverse Strength".

7. We should act to promote common development and prosperity in Asia, resisting interference from outside powers. The day of the old empires is long gone. The peoples of Asia insist that our own cultures, our own laws and our own sovereignty be respected by all.

8. If this is to be the Asian Century – and I believe it is – we must stand tall and seize control of our own destiny. Our peoples and our countries are stepping up to the challenge of leadership as the centre of global gravity shifts to the east – to Asia. We must show ourselves equal to the new role that is our continent's future.

Mr Chairman,

9. Since its inception in 2002, the ACD has contributed to that future. However, I believe that we are not capitalising fully on what we can do as an organisation. We need to focus on specific programmes that will yield quick and tangible outcomes, strengthening the relevance of the ACD.

10. We have the relevant experience in Malaysia, where under our National Transformation Programme Gross National Income has nearly doubled, 1.8 million jobs have been created, and poverty has nearly been eradicated.

11. We also had the experience – and honour – of chairing ASEAN last year, at the end of which we declared the establishment of the ASEAN Community.

12. As such, we welcome the ACD Vision on Asia Cooperation 2030, a strategic document that will propel our shared continental aspiration to create an Asian community.

Mr Chairman,

13. In Malaysia's journey of nation building, we have learned that developing human capital is one of the key factors that contribute towards national progress, social development and economic growth.

14. In this regard, we warmly support the ACD pillar on education and human resource development being given special emphasis. The pillar aims to open up possibilities for our peoples by reducing poverty, raising living standards, and capitalising on labour skills.

15. Malaysia is aware of the diversity and the different stages of development in higher education among the ACD Member States.

16. As a co-prime mover of the education and human resource development pillar, Malaysia reaffirms our commitment to developing the Asia e University into a major educational platform which will enhance people-to-people connectivity among the ACD Member States.

17. Since its beginning in 2008, AeU has enrolled around 2350 international students from 60 countries, and has established partnerships in 25 countries.

18. Through the AeU platform, institutions of higher learning in Asia will be able to leverage on each others' resources and facilities. And via AeU Open and Distance Learning programmes, students from across the ACD Member States will be able to enjoy high quality, affordable, accessible and relevant courses.

Mr Chairman,

19. In concluding, I firmly believe that the ACD can be an effective, continent-wide forum that will drive Asia forward in facing and overcoming the challenges that face us today and tomorrow.

20. We must ensure that its future is marked by cooperation, interdependence, sharing, caring and complementarity. We can attain this, if we show the necessary political will, and work collectively for the good of all. I'm sure that all present have the determination to do so.

Thank you.

