

KEYNOTES ADDRESS BY DATO' SERI KHALED NORDIN, THE MALAYSIA MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION DURING THE 25TH ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM HEAD OF DEFENCE UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES AND INSTITUTIONS MEETING HELD IN KUALA LUMPUR FROM 1ST TO 3RD AUGUST 2023

SALUTATION

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim, Assalamualaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh,
Good Morning.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure and honour that I am here with you today as the Minister of Higher Education for this momentous occasion, the 25th ASEAN Regional Forum Heads of Defence Universities, Colleges and Institutions Meeting (25th ARF HDUCIM). I extend my warmest welcome to all the delegates and participants from esteemed institutions across the ASEAN region and beyond.

This gathering holds immense significance as it brings together academic leaders and experts in the field of defence education. It provides a platform for us to exchange ideas, share best practices, and collectively contribute to the advancement of defence education diplomacy for sustainable peace and security.

ROLES OF THE MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The Ministry of Higher Education takes pride in its role as the custodian of higher education institutions in our nation. We understand the crucial role these institutions play in shaping the minds of our future leaders, particularly in the field of defence and security studies. Through rigorous academic programs, research endeavours, and educational

exchanges, our universities and colleges strive to produce graduates who are not only intellectually competent but also imbued with a strong sense of leadership and ethical responsibility.

The Ministry of Higher Education recognises the importance of holistic education that goes beyond mere academic pursuits. We strive to create an enabling environment that nurtures not only intellectual growth but also character development and critical thinking skills. It is through these efforts that we prepare our graduates to face the complex challenges of the modern world.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Higher Education plays a vital role in ensuring the output and outcomes of our universities and colleges. We focus on quality assurance, accreditation, and continuous improvement of programs to ensure that our institutions meet international standards of excellence. We actively promote research and innovation, encouraging our academic staff to engage in cutting-edge research that addresses pressing concerns of the nation as well as defence and security concerns.

Additionally, the Ministry of Higher Education places great emphasis on international collaborations and partnerships. We believe that through strategic alliances with like-minded institutions, we can enhance knowledge exchange, research collaboration, and student mobility programs. These partnerships not only broaden the horizons of our students but also foster a global perspective on defence and security issues.

DEFENCE INSTITUTIONS IN SECURITY AND DEFENCE

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As in other defence institutions globally, the National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM), under the purview of the Ministry of Higher Education, plays a pivotal role in our defence education ecosystem. NDUM stands as a beacon of excellence, fostering intellectual growth and professional development among our cadet officers and defence personnel. It is through institutions like NDUM that we cultivate the next generation of leaders who will safeguard our nation's security and contribute to regional peace and stability.

NDUM's emphasis on multidisciplinary education and research is another distinguishing factor. The university offers a range of programs that span the fields of defence studies, international relations, strategic studies, military science, and related disciplines. This comprehensive approach equips graduates with a broad skill set and a deep understanding of the complex and evolving security landscape.

In line with the Ministry of Higher Education's focus on quality assurance, NDUM upholds rigorous academic standards. The institution's commitment to excellence is reflected in its faculty, who are renowned experts in their respective fields. They bring together a wealth of knowledge and experience, nurturing students to become critical thinkers, problem solvers, and leaders who can contribute effectively to the defence and security sectors.

Allow me to further emphasise the uniqueness and niche of the defence institutions in the landscape of higher education. These institutions hold a distinct position as an institution that combines the realms of security and defence with academic excellence.

One of the remarkable aspects of defence institutions which is also a public university is their dual nature, which encompasses both cadet officers and civilian students. This integration of cadet officers and civilian students within the same institution creates a vibrant and dynamic learning environment. It fosters interdisciplinary collaboration, knowledge sharing, and a comprehensive understanding of security and defence issues from diverse perspectives.

The presence of cadet officers in public universities enhances the academic experience by infusing real-world insights and practical applications into the classroom. These future leaders of our armed forces bring with them unique experiences and a deep understanding of the operational aspects of defence. Their presence enriches the learning environment and facilitates a holistic understanding of security challenges and the strategies required to address them effectively.

Moreover, the inclusion of civilian students in public universities further amplifies the institution's impact. These students, from various academic backgrounds, contribute fresh ideas and different viewpoints to the study of security and defence. Their engagement in discussions, research, and joint projects with the cadet officers enhances mutual understanding, facilitates knowledge exchange, and fosters a sense of shared responsibility in ensuring peace and security.

FOCUS OF THE MEETING

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we convene here today, let us seize this opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions, share our experiences, and explore avenues for collaboration. Let us strive to develop innovative approaches to defence education that promote peace, understanding, and cooperation in our region. Your collective efforts in providing a transformative learning experience and producing well-rounded graduates who are prepared to navigate the complexities of the security landscape are truly commendable.

Let us continue to leverage the strengths and capabilities of the ARF HDUCIM and other institutions within the ASEAN Regional Forum to foster cooperation, dialogue, and mutual understanding among defence universities, colleges, and institutions. Together, we can contribute to the advancement of defence education diplomacy and work towards sustainable peace and security in our region.

Thank you once again to the National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM) and its partners for hosting this prestigious event. Your exceptional work in organising this meeting is a testament to your commitment to promoting knowledge exchange and collaboration in defence education. Your dedication and commitment to excellence have ensured the smooth running of this meeting.

CONCLUSION

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all the participants, speakers, and resource persons for joining us today. Your contributions and insights will undoubtedly enrich our discussions and lead us towards meaningful outcomes.

I wish you all a productive and engaging conference. May this 25th ARF HDUCIM pave the way for strengthened collaboration, enhanced defence education, and a more secure and peaceful future for our region.

Thank you, and may our deliberations be fruitful.

Wabillahi taufik wal hidayah, wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.