

# Student leaders exchange ideas at conference

SHAH ALAM: Some 1,000 student leaders gathered at the 10th University Scholars Leadership Symposium (USLS) 2019 here to share ideas and network with their peers.

Talks from movers and shakers as well as influencers from several global agencies and the United Nations were the highlight of the event.

The symposium, themed "Together We Serve", is being hosted by the Education Ministry in collaboration with Humanitarian Affairs Asia and Universiti Kuala Lumpur.

Some 150 universities from 85 countries have sent their student leaders to participate in the week-long event which kicked off yesterday.

In his speech, Education Minister Dr Maszlee Malik said USLS was a global leadership training programme spreading positive social change to inspire future leaders to step forward and serve communities in need.

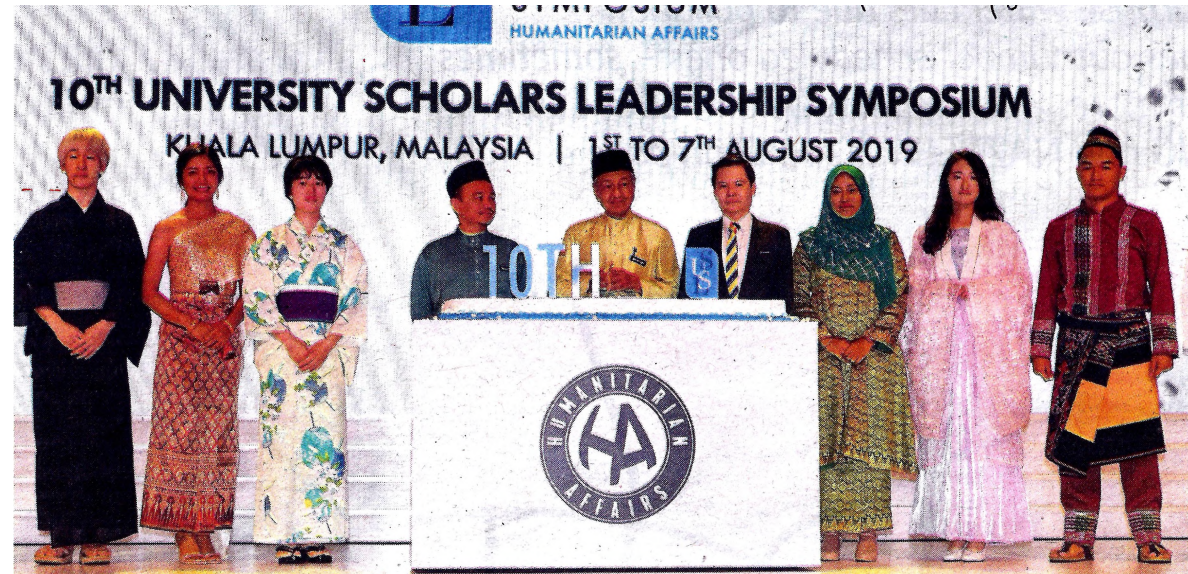
This, he added, was also exactly Malaysia's vision for the nation's higher education sector.

'Academic quality will always be one of the priorities for our education system,' said Maszlee, but he added that there was a need to see above and beyond academic excellence.

He expressed hope to take the vision and essence of what the USLS stood for into the Malaysian education system.

Malaysia, said Maszlee, was intent on developing individuals who were capable of being problem solvers.

"We have dedicated more than RM450mil for problem-solving research grants to public universi-



Meeting of minds: Dr Mahathir launching the USLS at the Setia City Convention Centre in Shah Alam. He is flanked by Maszlee (fourth from left) and Kim Solomon of USLS. — Bernama

ties. We have also repealed parts of the Universities and University Colleges Act that restricted our students from being involved in politics," he said.

One of the delegates, Kenyan student Whitney Ngigi, 21, from the United States International University, said she was attending to seek ideas on how to help those who were physically challenged.

"My university has about 20 disabled students, and there are many disabled people in my country," said Ngigi, who is partially vision impaired.

Ngigi, a third-year Psychology and Chinese Language student, said she was a member of her university's student council in charge of disability issues.

Ellie Hewitt, 21, from the Australian Catholic University in Melbourne, said her aim was to network with like-minded students who shared the passion of wanting to change the world for the better.

"This is a good platform to speak with people and share the same ideals on what we can do as youth," said the second-year International Development student.

Post-graduate student Saleh F. Hassan from Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, was greatly touched by the experiences of one of the speakers in Syria.

"Until now I have only heard about it from other sources but today, when I heard a Syrian telling us about what he has faced, it

allowed me to look at a wider horizon," said Saleh who is pursuing a PhD in Energy Resources and Petroleum Engineering.

Saleh, 29, who pursued his undergraduate degree at the Colorado School of Mines in the United States and his Master's degree at the Imperial College London, said he was also impressed by Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call for leaders to be humble.

"I felt a connection with the things Dr Mahathir mentioned in his speech," he said.