

Dare To Follow Your Dreams, Obama Challenges Young Entrepreneurs

Bernama

11 Oct, 2013

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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 11 (Bernama) -- United States President Barack Obama has challenged entrepreneurs, especially youths and women the world over, to pursue their dreams relentlessly and empower themselves as it will bring about greater good to mankind in more ways than one.

He said that the freedom to pursue one's dreams such as starting a business would bring wide-ranging benefits to people living in all the four corners of the globe including deepening the partnership between US and the Muslim community.

"Whether you live in KL (Kuala Lumpur), Kuwait or Kansas City, when you're free to have your own ideas, to pursue your dreams, start your own businesses, serve your own communities, it isn't just good for your (own) nation.

"It means new prosperity and progress for us all," he said in his video message shown at the opening session of the 4th Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) 2013 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre here Friday.

Unable to attend the gathering due to the partial government shutdown, stemming from budgetary problems in Washington, Obama sent Secretary of State John Kerry and Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker to represent him.

Obama said he was pleased to see the progress which had been achieved since he first mooted the GES initiative in Cairo, four years ago.

"To everyone gathered at the (Kuala Lumpur) summit especially young entrepreneurs, thank you for your commitment to the call I issued four years ago in Cairo on the need for a new partnership between the US and the Muslim community around the world.

"I was proud to host the first entrepreneurship summit (in Washington in 2010) and proud with the progress made since," the president said in his three-minute video.

After Washington, Istanbul hosted GES 2011 while Dubai in the United Arab Emirates played host to the third GES edition last year.

Notwithstanding its earlier target audience, the GES has gained traction from outside the Muslim community, as evident from the presence of nearly 5,000 delegates representing various social backgrounds over 100 countries at GES Kuala Lumpur.

Obama noted that the GES had set its sights on empowering a new generation of entrepreneurs, including women, through skills training and access to capital, hence helping small businesses to grow including via new collaborations in science and technology.

"We do all this because we believe that the same daring spirit brings us together to meet other challenges as well, from hunger to health, to climate change, and it's a spirit that you can sustain," he said.

Obama thanked Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak for hosting GES 2013 which the president described as an important gathering.

"It's a tribute to Malaysia as an example of a dynamic economy, an engine for regional prosperity and a country that is increasingly connected to the global economy," he said.

The American leader said likewise, Malaysia's diversity, tolerance and progress could be a model to countries around the world.

Obama said he had told Najib that he looked forward to visiting Malaysia in the future as Washington and Kuala Lumpur continued to deepen their partnerships.

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