

**28/10/2014 - Keynote Address 17th International Conference Of
University Administrators**

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, Salam Sejahtera and Salam 1 Malaysia.

Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Dato' Sri Prof. Ir. Dr. Sahol Hamid Abu Bakar,
Vice Chancellor of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM);

Yang Berbahagia Prof. Dr. Azni Zain Ahmed,
Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic & International), UiTM;

Yang Berbahagia Dr. Hajah Zahrah Mokhtar,
Registrar of UiTM;

Yang Berbahagia En. Nordin Bin Jusoh,
Registrar of UNISZA;

Yang Berbahagia Pn. Ariza Ibrahim,
Bursar of UNISZA;

Yang Berbahagia Datuk Zolkopli Dahalan,
Johor State Development Officer;

Yang Berbahagia Datuk-Datuk, Datin-Datin, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

OPENING REMARKS

1. It is indeed a pleasure for me to be here this evening with all of you, and to be given the opportunity to address such a diversified audience comprising representatives from multiple universities and agencies attending the 17th International Conference for University Administrators. I would like to congratulate UiTM and the organising committee for successfully putting together this conference themed “Nexus of Administrators: Past, Present and Future”.
2. I also welcome and am thankful for this opportunity to offer my thoughts on good governance and the critical role of university administrators.

PUBLIC SECTOR AND GOVERNANCE

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. The Malaysian public sector is undergoing multiple changes in all aspects of the service; from leadership, management, finance, development practices and accountability, to name a few. The public service has embarked on this transformation journey in earnest in 2013, spearheaded by the Public Service Department and the Ministry of Finance. This year, all Ministries have been tasked to undergo its own transformation.
4. Why are we going through this transformation, you may ask? The reason for this is very simple: **transformation is a critical part of our**

journey towards 2020, and the public sector has no choice but to change and transform in order to meet the many challenges that abound. We must realise that the path towards becoming a high-income developed economy by 2020 is not an easy one, and thus, we cannot treat business as usual. Not only must our public service delivery improve to become more efficient and timely to meet the ever-growing demands of the *rakyat*, but we have the added responsibility of ensuring that governance of our public services is of a high standard. But why is this important? This is because **good governance leads to good management and performance, good stewardship of public funds**, and ultimately, **good outcomes**.

5. As public officials, we are responsible for good governance. Hence, we must ensure that what we do in the course of our duties serve public interest; that there are **positive outcomes for the rakyat**, and that there is **good value for the tax payers** who fund those services.

6. To further forward the realisation that public personnel play a pivotal role in ensuring good governance, I introduced the concept of **“Merakyatkan Perkhidmatan Awam”** or Humanising the Public Service in June 2012. This concept points to the fact that, far from being cocooned in large and air conditioned offices, public servants should go to the ground to **listen and understand the rakyat’s needs and expectations**, and search to **provide a better outcome for them**. This can be achieved through the provision of excellent and efficient service, with professionalism, integrity and accountability at its core.

BUDGET 2015: DEVELOPING HUMAN CAPITAL AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. The Budget 2015 recently announced by Y.A.B. Prime Minister of Malaysia has been characterised as a budget for the people. It addresses many fundamental issues identified as key to the livelihood of the nation and the people, such as the rising cost of living, education opportunities, employment and business, skills training and quality of life.
8. With emphasis on achieving a balance between the capital economy and the people's economy, Budget 2015 outlines seven main strategies, with the **third strategy** focusing on initiatives towards **developing Human Capital and Entrepreneurship**. This focus is not only on the quality of education and vocational training, but also stresses on development and maintenance of education facilities and support systems.
9. To ensure the **successful implementation of measures outlined** under this strategy and **prudent management of public funds allocated**, administrators within the higher education sphere must **ensure the practice of good governance is upheld** at all times, so that the nations' aspirations are achieved. Such is the critical role of educators and administrators in the education sector.

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ROLE OF ADMINISTRATORS

Distinguished Guest, Ladies and Gentlemen,

10. The education sector has become a main component in Malaysia's transformation towards a high-income nation as we focus on our country's most important resource: its people. Realising this, various initiatives have been introduced through the Education NKEA under the Economic Transformation Programme. As we are well aware, the Education NKEA aims to develop the entire education value chain, from early childcare and education, basic primary and secondary education, technical education and vocational training, to tertiary education for both domestic and international students.

11. As mentioned earlier, public officials are accountable and answerable to their citizenry. With such intense focus on the education sector, administrators within higher education must take cognisance that they are indeed answerable and accountable to their stakeholders, their students and ultimately, the *rakyat*. Thus, administrators must practice good governance to achieve the targets set.

12. At this juncture, I would like to share with you **six core principles of good governance** which I believe can be used to guide public officials, including administrators in higher education, towards a **high standard of governance** in our respective areas.
 - i. Firstly, **focusing on the organisation's purpose** and **on outcomes for citizens and service users**. This means that we must be clear about our organisation's purpose, and making sure that our customers receive high quality service that is value for money;

- ii. Secondly, **performing effectively in clearly defined functions and roles**, being clear about individual responsibilities and ensuring that those responsibilities are carried out;
- iii. Thirdly, **promoting values for the whole organisation** and **demonstrating good governance through behaviour**;
- iv. Fourth, **taking informed, transparent decisions and managing risk**, and being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken;
- v. Fifth, **developing the capacity and capability** of the governing body, thus ensuring that those appointed have the skills, knowledge and experience they need to perform their functions effectively; and
- vi. Last but not least, **engaging stakeholders** and **making accountability real**.

13. These six principles are not set in stone, but serve as a guide for all of us on how to achieve good governance. By having a better understanding of governance, we will then be able to identify our strengths and weaknesses in current governance practices, and undertake steps to improve them.

14. Hence, I would like to urge all of you, university administrators in higher education, to take an honest look at your own institution and its current practices, as well as your own individual behaviours when it

comes to good governance. Are there practices that you are proud of? Or are there areas that can be better?

15. If there is room for improvement, we must have the courage and imagination to undertake reforms and formulate policies to suit changing circumstances. Leaders and administrators today are facing challenges from all quarters and demands are coming from stakeholders. Therefore, we must be creative and innovative in the search for answers and in instituting reforms in higher education.

Importance of Good Governance

16. I would like to reiterate the importance of good governance in higher education and the public service as a whole. My observations and readings on governance have enhanced my conviction that governance is not merely formal rules and structures. It goes deep into the **roots of ethical values**. Public sectors across the globe have proven that unprincipled and corrupt practices have led to tarnished reputation, an erosion of public trust and devastatingly, the collapse of a government.
17. Hence, good governance must be embedded and institutionalised in every government agency, and must be a constant in public service. Stern action and heavy penalties must be imposed on those found guilty of malpractice, and bad behaviour must be eradicated. As you nurture the future leaders of tomorrow in your centres of higher education, you must internalise good governance principles such as trust, integrity and

accountability. And for good governance practices to truly succeed, it must start at the highest level of the organisation.

CLOSING REMARKS

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

18. During the course of the next few days, various papers will be presented by distinguished and learned guest speakers on topics covering integrity, human capital development, managing and leading across generations, and cultivating future leaders. I am confident that the presentations will provide the impetus for active discourse and learnings, and the many institutions and agencies gathered at this conference will be able to provide the education sector further insight towards exemplary work practices, worthy of future demands and needs.

19. I wish you all a fruitful and enjoyable conference. With that, it gives me great pleasure to **officially declare open the 17th International Conference of University Administrators.**

Thank you.

Wabillahitaufik walhidayah wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi
wabarakaatuh.