

**WIEF 2014 - 'INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH'**

**Oleh : YAB. DATO' SRI MOHD NAJIB BIN TUN HAJI ABDUL RAZAK,  
PERDANA MENTERI MALAYSIA**

**Tempat : Madinat Arena, Ground Floor, MJCC, Dubai,UAE**

**Tarikh : 28/10/2014**

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Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and Good Afternoon.

**His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Makhtoum,**

Vice-President, Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai

**His Excellency Nursultan Nazarbayev;**

President of Kazakhstan,

**His Excellency Md Abdul Hamid;**

President, People's Republic of Bangladesh,

**His Excellency Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao;**

Prime Minister, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste,

**The Honourable Tun Musa Hitam,**

Chairman of the World Islamic Economic Forum Foundation;

His Highnesses,

His Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is an honour to be here for the 10<sup>th</sup> World Islamic Economic Forum.
2. In the past ten years, the Forum has brought thinkers and leaders together to talk about the big issues we face: from food security to economic development.
3. This year, our theme is 'innovative partnerships for economic growth'. I know WIEF have an impressive set of speakers lined up to talk about everything from design to development economics.
4. But today, I would like to talk about a partnership that is essential for growth. A partnership that involves public, private and third sectors; a partnership that makes human and economic development possible – education.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. Education is central to our history. Indeed, the first word Allah revealed to the Prophet Muhammad was 'read'. In the Golden Age of Islam, the world's first universities – the Bayt al-Hikma in Baghdad, and al-Qarawiyyin in Fez – were established in Muslim lands.
6. From Cairo to Cordoba, scholars from around the world came to Islamic capitals to engage in study, translation and discourse; preserving works from antiquity, and advancing human knowledge in everything from astronomy to geography.
7. For centuries, Muslims led the world of learning. But despite notable successes, we did not turn this strong start into a lasting legacy.
8. Today, too few Muslims are able to read or write; according to the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, illiteracy rates in some Muslim countries reach 40 percent for men, and 65 percent for women.
9. Our tradition of pioneering science did not produce a generation of modern scientific leaders: only two Muslims have won the Nobel Prize for chemistry or physics.
10. We have the world's oldest universities, but few of the world's best. And Organisation of the Islamic Conference countries spend just a third of the global average on research and development.

11. The end result is that too many Muslims are missing out on opportunities – and too many Muslim nations are missing their greatest assets – their people.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

12. By prioritizing education throughout life, we can realise the potential of our people - reducing poverty, raising living standards, and unlocking 21<sup>st</sup> century growth. We need new and innovative partnerships between educators, governments and private and third sectors to make good the gap.

13. The starting point is literacy, the foundation for success. According to the World Literacy foundation, Illiteracy costs the world economy more than \$1 trillion a year. But the human cost is greater still: a child born to a literate mother is 50 percent more likely to live past the age of 5.

14. We should unite behind the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's call to 'use all means available' to ensure our people can read, write – and contribute to national economic and social development. We should follow the example of Arab states, whose adult literacy has risen by 20 percent in the past 20 years; or South East Asian nations, where literacy rates are consistently above 90 percent.

15. Alongside efforts to improve adult and youth literacy, we should continue to focus our policies and resources on schooling. Primary and secondary education is the standard that makes achievement possible. UNESCO reports suggest that each year of additional schooling increases a person's earnings by up to 10 percent- and GDP growth by 0.37 percent.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

16. One of the world's most courageous education activists is a Muslim: the Nobel Peace laureate Malala Yousafzai, who has drawn global attention to the struggles that some girls still face in accessing education.
17. We should honour her inspiring courage and work by continuing to focus on providing quality primary and secondary education for all our citizens; preventing young people from dropping out of school; and working with countries with sizable Muslim minorities to understand why some Muslim communities are underachieving, while others are flourishing.
18. We can also do more to build up the quality and capacity of our higher education systems. As technology spreads further into the workplace, creating new sectors and careers, countries are competing to create strong knowledge-driven economies.
19. That includes scientific knowledge, where countries like Turkey and Iran have made significant leaps forward. By investing in research and supporting scientific study, countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia have built strong reputations and even stronger results. And when it comes to encouraging new technology sectors, our hosts, Dubai, have lead the way, making the digital economy one of the pillars of their economic policy.
20. Often, the conversation about education stops at the university level. But we can also do more to encourage a culture of lifelong learning. That

includes post-graduate and vocational technical programmes in specialty areas. Malaysia, which issued the world's first sovereign sukuk, has made a strategic decision to focus on Islamic finance, with institutions and courses designed to train professionals in this fast-growing sector.

Ladies and gentlemen,

21. Meeting these objectives will require innovative partnerships – between private sector education providers, governments and communities. But by making education a priority – from early years to later life – we can unlock new opportunities for our people, new human resource for our businesses – and new growth for our nations.

Thank you.

Wabillahitaufik Walhidayah Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi

Wabarakatuh.