

DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE JEFFREY CHEAH INSTITUTE ON SOUTHEAST ASIA (JCI) AND OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE INAUGURAL JCI CONFERENCE

18/03/2014

SUNWAY UNIVERSITY, BANDAR SUNWAY, SELANGOR

DYMM Raja Nazrin Shah

The Regent of Perak Darul Ridzuan

Royal Patron, Jeffrey Cheah Institute on Southeast Asia and

Royal Research Professor, Sunway University

Y.Bhg Tan Sri Dr. Jeffrey Cheah

Executive Council and IAAC member, Jeffrey Cheah Institute on Southeast Asia Chancellor of Sunway University and Founder and Chairman, the Sunway Group

Professor Dato' Dr Woo Wing Thye

President, Jeffrey Cheah Institute on Southeast Asia

Members of the Media

Distinguished guests

Ladies & Gentlemen

1. First of all, I would like to congratulate Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah on the setting up of the Jeffrey Cheah Institute on Southeast Asia (JCI) to be a component of the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation (JCF) in association with Sunway University. Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah did inform me some time back that he was planning a Think Tank as the latest addition to his Sunway Education Group. I therefore was very pleased when I received the invitation to attend the inauguration of this Institute. I admire Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah for being a great proponent for elevating the standards of education in this country and for contributing towards making Malaysia an Education Hub for the region. If more Malaysian corporates followed Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah's excellent CSR concept of "Giving Back to Society", I would have less headaches in financing good education in Malaysia. Please join me in giving a round of appreciation to Tan Sri for his commendable efforts and foresight.

2. This Government has been working very hard recently to put Malaysia on a growth path that is knowledge-driven. The establishment of a high-quality think tank would therefore contribute immensely to making our Malaysian economy and society more knowledge-based.

3. To have a significant growth in this area, Malaysia must do more than improving its national hardware by increasing its capacity to absorb and generate new technological knowledge. Malaysia must also upgrade its national software by increasing its capacity to

plan, design and implement better public policies. This upgrading is where the JCI can come in and play a transformative role, to enable us to realize our Vision 2020.

4. Malaysia will naturally have better public policies when there are high-quality, non-partisan think tanks like JCI, ISIS, the Perak Academy and ASLI CPPS, among others, competing to increase the range of policy choices, and to deepen the analyses on the proposed policy options. The institutionalization of constructive criticism, in the discussions about public policies, represents progress on two fronts: one, progress in the development of civil society in Malaysia; and, two, the strengthening of democracy in Malaysia. I see the founding of the Jeffrey Cheah Institute on Southeast Asia (JCI) as part of the process of strengthening the trend, in closer state-society collaboration in policy-making and implementation.

5. The feature about JCI that I particularly admire is that the JCI is a university-based think tank because of its close association with Sunway University, Monash University Malaysia, and Harvard University. The integration of theory and practice is certainly commendable and pragmatic towards supporting nation-building efforts, and quite distinct from the ivory tower nature of traditional research organizations. I therefore like the activist nature of the research that I understand JCI will embark upon.

6. I also appreciate the fact that an academic think tank like JCI is more capable of helping the Government to solve some of the most challenging problems that it faces today. For example, how the Government should mitigate and adapt to climate change; or how the Government could contribute to the reshaping of global and regional governance that is necessitated by globalization and by the emergence of new economic drivers and regional blocks. It is clear that the satisfactory solutions to these issues require us to synthesize knowledge from a broad range of academic disciplines.

7. JCI is well-placed to do these types of synthesis because of its access to talents in the various academic departments in Sunway University and Monash University Malaysia. The anticipated research collaboration with Harvard will strengthen JCI further as an academic think tank.

8. For this I would like to personally urge the management of JCI to take full advantage of your institutional location to play the role of knowledge-synthesizer vigorously, objectively, and creatively. I am confident you will do this job well. You can count on the government to consider your policy recommendations seriously.

9. I wish you all the best in your national and regional mission, and may your journey towards your goals be rewarding. With this, in the name of Allah most Gracious most Merciful, Bismillahirrahmanirahim, I hereby launch the Jeffrey Cheah Institute for South East Asia (JCI) and declare open the Inaugural JCI Conference 2014.

Wabillahitaufiq walhidayah wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

Thank you.