



SPEECH:

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OFFICIATING ADDRESS:

**UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AND INNOVATION INVESTMENT
SUMMIT 2026 (URIIS 2026)**

ON:

22nd SEPTEMBER 2026 (TUESDAY)

9.00 AM

VENUE:

WTC, KUALA LUMPUR

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh,
Salam sejahtera and salam Malaysia Madani

SALUTATION

(To be provided on the day of the event)

INTRODUCTION: FROM USING TECHNOLOGY TO BUILDING IT

1. Malaysia has spent decades building a strong position in global industry. In sectors such as electrical and electronics, semiconductors and advanced manufacturing, we are already part of the supply chains behind technologies used around the world.
2. **But being part of the value chain is one thing. Owning more of the value is another.** So now we must ask ourselves..

how much of the research and technology created from Malaysian knowledge eventually becomes Malaysian intellectual property, Malaysian products and Malaysian companies?

3. Having said this... it does not mean we are turning away from foreign investment. Far from it. Investment has helped Malaysia build industrial capability, develop talent and connect our economy to global markets. ***The next task is to use that foundation to create more of our own.***
4. **But this is also where the challenge becomes harder.** Producing good research is one thing - taking it through validation, finding the first industry partner or customer, attracting capital and eventually scaling it into a viable business... is another. **Many promising technologies are most vulnerable at this stage.**
5. So if Malaysia wants to produce more home-grown technologies and enterprises, this is the gap we have to solve. Not at the beginning of the innovation journey, and not at the end, but in that critical space in between. ***This is our missing middle.***

CLOSING THE MISSING MIDDLE

6. Alhamdulillah, **the good news is that Malaysia already has a strong base to build from.** In the Global Innovation Index 2025, Malaysia ranked 34th out of 139 economies and second among upper-middle-income economies.
7. **So the foundation is there. The challenge is what we do with it.** Malaysia performs better in **innovation inputs** such as talent, infrastructure, research capacity and investment - than in **innovation outputs**, which reflect how effectively those strengths are translated into products, technologies and economic value.
8. Put simply, we already have many of the ingredients for innovation. What we need now is the recipe that brings them together - so that talent, research, capital and industry can **produce greater value** for the country.
9. Too many promising technologies still struggle to move from research to pilot, from pilot to commerciali-sation and from commerciali-sation to scale.

*This is the **missing middle** that we must strengthen.*

10. From my experience, the problem is not always the quality of the research. More often, it is the lack of the right partner, capital or pathway to scale. This is where government, universities, industry and investors must work more closely together.

So to close this gap, I believe Malaysia must make three important shifts.

FIRST SHIFT : FROM GRANTS TO CAPITAL

11. The first shift is **from depending mainly on grants to building a broader ecosystem of capital.**
12. Public funding will remain important, especially for fundamental research and strategic areas. But once a technology shows real potential, government cannot carry it alone. That is when industry, investors and private capital must come in.

13. Government can help fund discovery, **but it cannot fund every stage of scale.** Research grants create possibilities; investment meanwhile helps turn the most promising ideas into products, companies and markets.
14. We have seen how powerful this can be. Google began as a research project at Stanford University. What started as an academic idea eventually grew into one of the world's most influential technology companies.
15. The lesson is simple. Good research needs more than funding at the beginning. It needs the right capital, partners and market pathway to move further. If we get this right, we will not simply fund more research. We will finance more outcomes.

SECOND SHIFT: FROM RESEARCH OUTPUTS TO REAL-WORLD SOLUTIONS

16. The second shift is from **measuring research mainly by what we produce, to what we are able to solve.** Publications, patents and prototypes remain important, surely - but their greatest value comes when they **improve**

lives, strengthen industries and address real national challenges.

17. Malaysia already has many areas where research can make an immediate difference - food security, healthcare, energy, automation and productivity. These are not only challenges; they are opportunities to develop Malaysian solutions for Malaysian needs.
18. I believe **Rural Malaysia can be one of the best places to test whether an innovation actually works.** The desa should not only receive technology after it has been developed elsewhere; it can become a place where new solutions are tested, refined and proven in real conditions.
19. Digital healthcare, renewable energy, water technology and smart logistics are examples where innovation can create direct impact in rural communities. When research solves a real problem faced by our people, that is when innovation moves from theory to value.

20. So as the Minister responsible for rural development... I can already offer you a ready-made laboratory... **our rural areas, our kampung. And if you need a place to start, Bagan Datuk is always available.** Come not only to conduct research, but to solve real problems on the ground.

THIRD: FROM TALENT TO ENTERPRISE AND OWNERSHIP

21. **The third shift is from talent to enterprise and ownership.** Malaysia has long been a strong destination for investment and manufacturing. **The next step is to build more value from the capabilities we already have.** Malaysia is targeting **RM500 billion in investment and 60,000 highly skilled local engineers by 2030.**
22. That is a major national investment in talent and capability. But to me... talent alone is not enough. We must ensure that more of that **knowledge and expertise eventually produces Malaysian technologies, intellectual property and companies that can compete globally.**

23. We should not only be proud when something is **Made in Malaysia**. We should aim to see more technologies **Invented in Malaysia**, and increasingly, more intellectual property and enterprises **Owned by Malaysia**.
24. So, while Malaysia must remain a place where the world comes to invest, increasingly we must also become a place where the world comes to discover what Malaysians have created. ***That is also the ambition behind the Malaysia Blue-Nation Agenda that I have previously outlined.***

CLOSING : CREATE. COMMERCIALISE. OWN.

Ladies and gentlemen,

25. In the end, what I want to see from URIIS is a stronger pathway that takes promising Malaysian research from the lab to industry, investment and the market. We already have the talent and the ideas. **Now we must help the best of them scale.**
26. I would therefore like the Ministry of Higher Education, together with other Ministries, our universities, industry and investment partners - to follow through on the most promising

technologies emerging from this summit - *to see what attracts capital, what moves towards commerciali-sation, and what is holding the rest back.*

27. As we look towards 2030, our ambition can be captured in three words: **Create. Commercialise. Own.** We must create more from Malaysian knowledge, bring more of it successfully to market, and retain more of the value we generate.

Creation without commerciali-sation leaves good ideas unrealised. Commerciali-sation without ownership means we create value, but capture too little of it.

28. Malaysia has the ideas, the talent and the capability. URIIS must help turn that potential into real outcomes. **I know this room is filled with knowledge, ideas and expertise. Now, it is time to turn all of that into a game changer for Malaysia.**

29. With **Bismillahirrahmanirrahim**, I hereby officiate the **University Research and Innovation Investment Summit 2026.**

Wabillahi taufik walhidayah,
Wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.