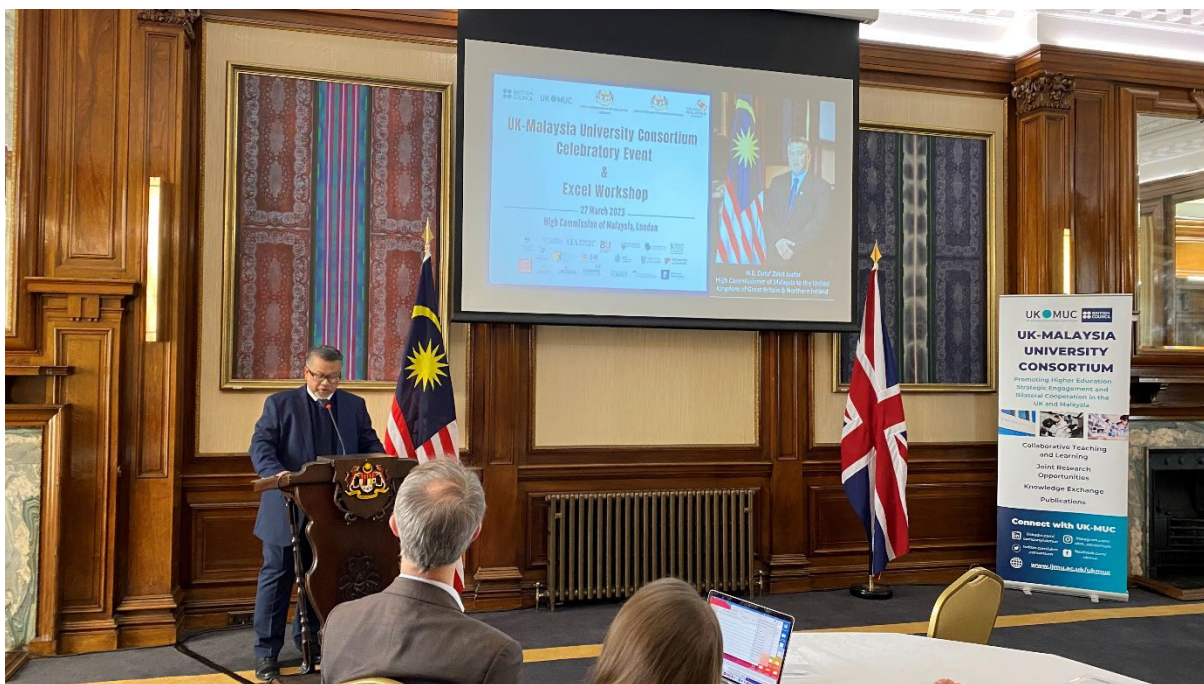




His Excellency Dato' Zakri Jaafar, High Commissioner of Malaysia to the United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland: Opening Remarks

UK-MUC Celebratory Event and EXCEL Workshop
The High Commission of Malaysia, London
27 March 2023



I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude to the Liverpool John Moores University, the Consortium Secretariat, the British Council Education, Malaysia, London and all the UK Project Board members for their education and hard work in making this event possible.

As we celebrate the 1st anniversary, let us reflect on the strong and long-standing relationship between Malaysia and United Kingdom. As everyone here can appreciate, this began well back before independence, and it has been described as close and warm to this day.

Post-independence, this relationship has now not only an advisory level but also extended to multilateral fora in the Commonwealth United nations, in Asian trading

with you and has indeed, provided many benefits to the people of both countries. Allow me to briefly touch on the state of ties today.

As the tourism sector is gradually gaining momentum post COVID, the number of UK visitors to Malaysia is now back on the rise. Last year we recorded 100,000 UK visitors coming into Malaysia increasing compared to the figure in 2021 thanks to COVID, and much still a lower figure back in 2020 of 60,868. This positive trend, we assure you we expect it to continue this year and beyond.

In terms of bilateral trade, Malaysia is the UK's second highest trading partner in the Southeast Asian region. On the Malaysian side, the UK is the 9th largest foreign investor in Malaysia, with over 200 companies in various economic sectors.

It is worth noting that there are approximately 80,000 Malaysian nationals residing in the United Kingdom at present. Out of this figure, nearly 13,000 individuals are students pursuing their studies in various academic disciplines. The remainder of population consists of professionals, businessmen, craftsman of various trades.

The education sector therefore continues to be one of the main pillars of the relationship between Malaysia and the United Kingdom, and Malaysia is the seventh country with the highest number of foreign students in the UK at the moment. At the same time, there are more than fifty schools and five UK universities operating in Malaysia, and I'm pleased to say here that this is your one and only consortium of UK universities operating outside of the UK in Southeast Asia.

Ladies and gentlemen, the UK is a testament to the strong relationship between Malaysia and the UK in the field of higher education.

As everyone knows, UK-MUC was launched back in March 2022 with the aim of promoting sustainable international partnership and accelerating upward change in areas such as quality and research innovation, with twenty Malaysian public universities and sixteen UK universities as UK-MUC members.

During its first year, UK-MUC has achieved significant milestones. These include the consideration of being with our office in London, Education Malaysia London, developing a fresh, intense and sustainable programme of international collaboration excellence, extending higher education capacity, quality, mobility and employability and strengthening partnership in research, which includes the Excel Workshop today.

This achievement is a testimony to the dedication and hard work of all those involved in the project. This Excel Workshop is an excellent opportunity for the UK-MUC members to learn about this teaching innovation and how it can benefit your institutions. I'm confident that this will provide valuable insights and inspiring new ideas and initiatives that will benefit the Consortium and the education sector as a whole

As we move forward, it is important that we continue to develop clear vision for the UK and please do note, that the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia and the British Council are committed to supporting and advising the development of this vision. This will ensure that the UK remains a leading platform for international collaboration and partnership in the field of higher education.

I would like to express my gratitude once again to all those involved in making this event possible. And I look forward to seeing the continued success of the UK-MUC in the years to come. So once again, thank you for your attention and have a successful workshop.