

SPEECH BY:

**YB DATO' SERI DR HILMI BIN HAJI YAHAYA
THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH MALAYSIA**

ON THE OCCASION OF:

**OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF IMU HEALTHY CAFETERIA
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE
IMU WELLNESS PROGRAMME**

Date : 11 May 2017 (Thursday)
Time : 11:50 AM
Venue : Atrium, International Medical University,
Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur

- 1. Yang Berusaha Profesor Abdul Aziz Baba**
Vice-Chancellor
International Medical University (IMU)
- 2. Dr Mei Ling Young**
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, International and Engagement
International Medical University
- 3. Dr Zainuddin Bin Abdul Wahab**
Director
Jabatan Kesihatan Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur & Putrajaya
- 4. Representative**
Department of Health and Environment
Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL)
5. Senior Management, Deans, Faculty members, Staff and Students of IMU
6. Distinguished Guests
7. Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh, Salam 1 Malaysia and a very good afternoon to everyone present,

1. Henry Ford, the father of the modern automobile once said and I quote, *“Coming together is a beginning, Keeping together is progress, Working together is success”*. Unquote. Thus, it is indeed a pleasure to be here today with you, especially when the IMU is celebrating its 25th Anniversary this year, with the highly apt theme of *“Better Health, Better Society”*.

Ladies and gentlemen,

2. It has once been said that *“Life is not merely being alive, but being well”*. Hence I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the University on embarking on this important journey towards good health through the practice of healthy living or healthy lifestyle. In this regard, IMU has certainly been seen to make significant efforts in promoting healthy eating and wellness at the workplace
3. I understand that the Pandan Serai Café in Bukit Jalil has recently undergone various levels of audits and has successfully attained three concurrent awards namely, ***Kafeteria Sihat*** and ***MyBeSS*** awards from the Ministry of Health Malaysia and the ***Grade A*** award from *Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur*. I would thus like to commend the IMU on these notable achievements and also on being the first university in Malaysia to have its cafeteria endorsed as *“Kafeteria Sihat”* or Healthy Cafeteria. Congratulations on this significant achievement!
4. As we are all aware, Malaysians seem to be getting less healthy nowadays. It is unfortunate that with our increasing economic development and with our health indices matching those of developed countries, the waistlines of our people are also growing at an alarming rate.
5. The various National Health and Morbidity Surveys (NHMS) have revealed that the prevalence of obesity amongst adults aged above 18 years had

risen from 4.4% in 1996 to 17.7% in 2015. We have become less active physically and indulge in unhealthy foods and unhealthy eating habits. The same survey has also indicated that the prevalence of adequate intake of fruits or vegetables i.e. equal to or more than 5 servings amongst adults has been reduced from 7.5% in 2011 to 6.0% in 2015.

6. In fact, the Malaysian Adult Nutrition Survey (MANS) 2003 and 2014 indicated that sugar and condensed milk have consistently remained in the top 10 amongst daily consumer foods! The Ministry of Health Malaysia is cognisant of this eating behaviour and to address this, we are developing significant partnerships for health with other government and non-government agencies through National Plan of Action for Nutrition of Malaysia 2016-2025. Within this Plan, strategies have been formulated and activities are being implemented to address the various nutrition and health-related conditions in the country. These include advocacy, increasing knowledge, improving practices and making the environment more supportive of the intended behaviour change. The recognition for Healthy Cafeteria is one of the efforts to make available a more supportive environment.

Ladies and gentlemen,

7. Due to our busy work life and time constraints, the majority of Malaysians are eating out in cafeterias, restaurants and other eateries. The lack of food premises that offer healthy, clean and safe food is one of the factors that prevent people from practising healthy eating. As a result, the establishment of a Healthy Cafeteria is one of the strategies that can help provide an environment to support and encourage the public to practice healthy eating habits
8. To date, since the launch of the *Kafeteria Sihat* initiative by the Nutrition Division in the Ministry of Health in 2012, a total of 162 cafeterias within the MOH have obtained this coveted status. I am thus pleased that the IMU has been inducted into this exclusive fraternity and, as mentioned earlier, is the first university whose cafeteria is now certified as Healthy Cafeteria. It also meets the food safety standards set by the MOH.

Ladies and gentlemen,

9. Over the last few decades, the rise in unhealthy lifestyles such as inactivity, poor nutrition, tobacco use and frequent alcohol consumption are contributing greatly to the escalation of the prevalence of Non-Communicable Diseases such as Type II diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases, and cancers.
10. The NHMS has indicated that the prevalence of diabetes mellitus has risen from 11.6% in 2006 to 17.5% in 2015. Alarmingly, hypercholesterolemia has risen from 20.7% in 2006 to 47.7% in 2015! In fact, in the latest National Health and Morbidity Survey Report, Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) now contribute to an estimated 73% of total deaths in Malaysia. This has serious implications for the health and well-being of the Malaysians population as well as great socio-economic impact as well.
11. These chronic conditions have become a major burden as they may lead to decreased quality of life, premature death and disability as well as incurring increased health care costs but more alarmingly, is the trend of these conditions affecting the younger population. An estimated 35% of NCD deaths in Malaysia occur in individuals aged less than 60 years. Hypertension, smoking, diabetes, high blood cholesterol levels and high BMI are the biggest contributors to both disability adjusted life-years (DALY) amongst younger adults in Malaysia. These, chronic conditions add to the economic burden because of illness-related loss of productivity and reduced performance while at work.
12. Workplace wellness programmes with lifestyle-management programmes can help reducing health risks. Such programmes usually aim to prevent the onset of diseases by addressing health-related behaviours and risk factors such as obesity, smoking and physical inactivity. I am thus pleased that the IMU, being a university that trains future healthcare professionals, has taken the initiative to ensure that you

“walk the talk” and embark on a wellness programme. This wellness programme offers health screenings and ongoing activities to engage with its staff to cultivate a healthier lifestyle, in addition to providing health coaching and disease prevention talks and workshops as well as preventive dental screening. “Knowing is the first step in our efforts to take action for life”.

13. The Ministry of Health is indeed pleased to work with institutions as the IMU which are important partners in our quest to attain the Vision for Health which is, “A nation working together for better health” and I would like to heartily congratulate the IMU for paving the way for other workplaces and educational institutions to follow.

14. It is thus with great pleasure that I officially launch the **IMU ‘HEALTHY CAFETERIA’ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE IMU WELLNESS PROGRAMME.**

Thank you.