

**DRAFT TEXT OF THE SPEECH BY**

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**AT THE LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION ON  
ELECTRONIC LEARNING 2001  
(E-LEARNING 2001)**

**3.30 PM, 27<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2001  
CROWN PRINCESS HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR**

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Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and a very good afternoon.

- Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Datuk Dr. Johari bin Mat, Secretary General, Ministry of Education;
- Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Dato' Dr. Hj. Abdullah Sanusi bin Ahmad, Group Executive Chairman, METEOR Sdn. Bhd.;
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to begin by congratulating the organiser, METEOR Sdn Bhd (a consortium of 11 public universities) for their initiative in hosting the National Conference & Exhibition on Electronic Learning 2001 (E-Learning 2001).

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Education (MOE), E-Learning 2001 is expected to become the premier e-Education event of the year by bringing together institutions of higher learning, including the universities, e-Learning solution providers, regulators and courseware providers to further explore the future directions of e-Learning in Malaysia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As highlighted in the Third Outline Perspective Plan (OPP3) recently, our country is moving towards building a knowledge manpower; human capital will determine the competitive position of the nation. The successful development of a Knowledge Economy or K-economy, will depend on the quality of the education and training systems. The education system from pre-school to tertiary level will be reviewed to enable it to meet the manpower requirement of the K-economy.

The key areas for review include curriculum, teaching methods, enrolment at tertiary level and the quality of the teaching profession. Public and private tertiary institutions will need to become more market-driven and pro-active by moving beyond traditional areas to new fields of education. A system of life-long learning must be promoted to ensure that knowledge workers can continuously upgrade their skills and knowledge.

The thrust of human resources development in the near future will be to prepare a workforce that is capable of meeting the challenges of a knowledge-based economy so as to enhance economic productivity and competitiveness. The economic transformation will increase demand for technological skills and expertise besides developing a labour force equipped with tacit knowledge and a high level of thinking skills. Efforts are made to ensure that the education and training systems have the capacity to enhance the quality of intellectual capital as well as to expand the human resources base.

It is critical that the labour force possesses the ability to adapt and adjust to the changing demands of technological advances in the knowledge-based economy by acquiring new knowledge to upgrade their skill base. The widespread application and diffusion of ICT in all sectors will require workers with differing levels of computer skills such as computer design, complex data management system, data communications and networking as well as multimedia and internet development. Computer literacy and numeracy are essential skills that everyone should acquire in the workforce.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As an effort to improve the quality of teaching, we are concentrating on producing better teachers of higher standards following the changes in the curriculum in teacher training colleges. We believe that the ambience and the environment of educational institutions is an integral part of a quality education. They must be equipped with the latest equipment to assist students. That is why the Ministry of Education has introduced the Computers in Education (CIE) Programme as a way to enhance teaching and learning. We are also concentrating on the software, mainly improving the quality of the new curriculum as well as encouraging the introduction of newer courses, those that are at the forefront of technology and knowledge.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A market-sensitive education system is evolving here in Malaysia. Our schools and universities are taking up the challenge of globalisation by changing not only the content of curriculum and programmes but more importantly the delivery systems. IT-enhanced teaching and learning are already making computers an important equipment in schools. We have to race ahead to achieve a significant transformation in our educational infrastructure in order to produce a technologically competent and scientifically adept society.

Here in Malaysia, we speak of Vision 2020. This is not about one man's view of the future but a carefully planned response to global change and development. Malaysia's own development has reached a critical juncture. The structural transformation of its economy placed our society at the threshold of a fundamental shift; first into an information-based society and then beyond to a knowledge-based society. We have therefore positioned our education structures to enable the building of a pool of well educated, highly skilled and strongly motivated professionals. The nation's human capital is its most important economic and development resource. We are embarking on an educational journey (infused with a sense of urgency) that will deliver on the promises made to establish Malaysia as a fully knowledge-based industrialised country in the 21st century.

The government is facilitating change and seeking innovative approaches to expand the education base. Strategies for growth and development of education in the Seventh Malaysia Plan are a significant departure from the government-propelled initiatives of previous years. We have set the stage for a major revolutionary change in our education system. Since 1995, the Ministry of Education has successfully pushed through six pieces of legislation to position Malaysia as a regional education hub. The Education Act 1996; National Council on Higher Education Institutions Act 1996; the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996; National Accreditation Board Act 1996, the Universities and University Colleges (Amendment) Act 1996 and the National Higher Education Fund Board Act 1997 have facilitated a more market-centred education system.

With the legal framework almost complete, the education system is indeed set for a quantum leap which will bring sweeping changes to our institutions of learning, enabling them to offer a wider range of courses, different options and approaches to learning, better management, new teaching methods and an overall increase in productivity and standards.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

E-Learning is often referred to as the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to deliver a broad array of solutions in the delivery of teaching and learning. As such, opportunities towards accessibility and flexibility to learning are tremendous. Therefore, e-Learning will be among the important tools in the development of a knowledge society.

E-Learning is still a fairly new term to the people in Malaysia and Asia, although similar concept has been developed quite significantly in the west for the past 10 years. In a global environment that is increasingly influenced by the information and communication technologies (ICT), we tend to speak of the establishment of knowledge society. ICT is now regarded as a global communication enabler. Education can now capitalize on the leading-edge technologies to explore new ways of teaching and learning. The conventional study environment will be structured to be more interactive to accommodate to the changing trends of new emerging education system.

The increasing importance and pervasiveness of ICT in the world, its transformative impact on society and its dynamism are just some of the features that demand expression of a deeper meaning for ICT than is necessary for other traditional technologies. This requires a process of information acculturation which goes beyond awareness creation and education to changes in attitude and behavioural patterns. Therefore, a shared vision of IT must be created.

I would like to qualify that we are doing a disservice to the advancement of e-Learning by referring it as *alternate learning* or *alternate delivery*. Some people associate the word *alternate* with *second-rate* or *substitute*. It can be construed as describing a temporary or less optimal situation. It can become a self-fulfilling prophecy and set expectations that are not in line with your

strategic direction. E-learning is already happening and will be a mode that will be pervasive in a knowledge society.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

E-Learning would not be enough if all we wanted to do was to build and deliver learning on the Web. The effort has to start with building an e-Learning strategy, one that has a greater likelihood of success. I foresee that organisations would need to consider the following issues to ensure that their e-Learning strategy produces results :

- **New approaches to e-Learning** – including instructional strategy to provide courseware and business simulations, and **knowledge management** that provides informational databases and performance support tools.
- **Learning architectures** – the coordination of e-Learning with the rest of the organization's learning efforts.
- **Infrastructure** – the use of the organization's technological capabilities to deliver and manage e-Learning. This must include general Web Access to so-called "learning management systems". The lack of a good infrastructure may stop e-Learning on its tracks.
- **Learning culture, management ownership, and change management** – the creation of an organizational environment that encourages learning is good for a business, this must be supported by

senior managers who are truly engaged in the process. Without an e-Learning champion, the initiative may never get off the ground. The effective use of change management will certainly help to foster the process.

- **Sound business case** – the development of a compelling business case that supports e-Learning. New indicators may be identified to measure the quality of education.
- **Reinventing the training management** – the adoption of an organisational and business model that supports rather than limits the growth of e-Learning. New approaches to learning will require new approaches to running and professionalising, the training/learning function.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The launching of this event is opportune as it is consciously intended to produce a new generation of Malaysians who are intellectually competent and ICT literate. This is in line with the Government's mission to develop a world-class quality education.

With the break through in ICT, we are on the route towards the institutionalisation of ICT in the education system. This appreciation resulted in the emergence of Smart Schools Concept i.e. the students will be able to adapt to the internet technologies and hence develop the critical information seeking



competencies which will be vital to manage the information explosion. I hope to see both the public and private sectors play a more proactive role in developing the education environment towards greater academic excellence. The public universities, who are at the forefront of technology and knowledge, can help develop the educational softwares and coursewares.

The theme chosen, **Towards E-Learning Society** is very appropriate in light of the effort of the Malaysian Government to establish a knowledge-driven society, as part of the agenda in preparation for the K-Economy.

I am glad to know that this event has received overwhelming support from both the public and private education sector. The participating companies are showcasing the latest educational technologies, emerging ICT application and IT training programmes, IT education, digital libraries as well as IT research projects undertaken by the universities. The public especially parents and students should grab this golden opportunity to appreciate the importance of e-education.

I strongly believe that the E-Learning 2001 will be a successful event that will benefit all of us. With **Bismillahir Rahmannir Rahim**, I am pleased to officially launch the **E-Learning 2001 National Conference & Exhibition**.

Wabillahitaufik    Walhidayah    Wassalamualaikum    Warahmatullahi  
Wabarakatuh.

Thank you.