

**SPEECH BY**

**YANG BERHORMAT**

**PEHIN ORANG KAYA INDERA PAHLAWAN**

**DATO SERI SETIA AWANG HAJI SUYOI**

**BIN HAJI OSMAN**

**THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION**

**ON THE OCCASION OF**

**THIRD UNITED STATES HIGHER EDUCATION FAIR**

**20 JAMADILAWAL 1437/ 29 FEBRUARY 2016**

**2.00 PM,**

**SONGKET BALLROOM ,**

**THE RIZQUN INTERNATIONAL HOTEL**



***Alhamdulillahi Rabbil ‘Alameen, Wassalatu Wassalamu ‘Alaa Asyrafil Mursaleen Sayyidina Muhammadin, Wa’alaa Alihie Wasahbihie Ajmaeen***

His Excellency, Craig Allen, U.S Ambassador to Brunei Darussalam;

Yang Mulia,the Deputy Minister of Education;

Excellencies;

Mr Michael Shaver, Regional Education Advising Coordinator, Education USA

Permanent Secretaries, Representatives of U.S Higher Education Institutions, Vice Chancellors, Rectors, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Senior Government Officials, Students, Parents/Guardians, Distinguished Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen.



And a very good afternoon.

1. I would like to thank Ambassador Craig Allen for inviting me this afternoon and I congratulate the Education USA and the U.S Embassy for organising this Fair which I understand is part of the annual Southeast Asia University Fair Series.
2. I learnt that fifteen U.S universities and colleges participate in the Fair this year; which will also be held in one of our schools in Belait District. (Sekolah Menengah Sayyidina Ali) This will provide the opportunity for the students in Belait district and nearby areas to also know about US Higher Education system and the admission process.
3. As Your Excellency highlighted earlier, we have a growing number of students heading to the United States to study. This increase clearly reflects the interest on the US Education System. With 17 US universities in the Top 20 of the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, US Higher Education system prepares opportunity for our students to partake in one of the best education system in the world. Therefore, I encourage our students to explore studying opportunities in the States.
4. There is already a strong tie between Brunei’s own higher education institutions and that of the US top universities. There are more than 15 active MoUs between them, of which collaborations have focused on student exchanges, joint-or-abroad programmes as well as research. One programme in particular, the Masters of Public Policy and Management at Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) allows for a semester in top Policy Schools of Georgetown **University, University of Maryland, Duke University and University of California, Berkeley.** We are benefitting from these collaborative activities: from technology and knowledge transfers, and adopting the best practices in higher education to invigorate ours. Ultimately, this is about developing human capacity of young Bruneians. I hope the collaboration will be strengthened, the volume of activities increased, and innovative initiatives continued to be explored.

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

1. Currently, our national enrollment rate to higher education institution is at 20%, and we aspire to achieve a 35% enrolment rate by 2020. The Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam continues to invest to increase access in the country and abroad through various initiatives including introducing different types of scholarship programmes.
2. One of the initiatives is the Education Loan Scheme (or the Skim Bantuan Pinjaman Pendidikan), which gives the opportunity for those not able to receive or not opting for scholarship, to enroll into higher education either abroad or locally. The uptake has been encouraging, and we see this facility being used for those wishing to study in the US, too. The Ministry will continue to work on increasing accessibility, with an emphasis on the quality of education received by our students, and WHERE they get them. We also put much weight on the value and worthiness of the degree, especially its effect on the marketability and employability of our graduates.
3. To conclude, once again I would like to say thank you to Education USA and the US Embassy for this invitation, and congratulations on the success of this event. I also like to welcome participating universities and colleges to Brunei Darussalam, and hope you will have a pleasant stay in Brunei.

**وبالله التوفيق والهداية والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته**

***Thank you.***