

Zeti Akhtar Aziz: Asia School of Business – meeting Asia’s increasing demand for talent

Remarks by Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz, Governor of the Central Bank of Malaysia (Bank Negara Malaysia), at the Signing Ceremony of the Collaboration between Asia School of Business and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, 8 April 2015.

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President Rafael Reif,
Dean David Schmittlein,
And dear colleagues from MIT and the Asia School of Business

It is my very great pleasure to be here in Cambridge at this ceremony today, for the formalisation of the collaboration between Bank Negara Malaysia and MIT for the establishment of the Asia School of Business in Kuala Lumpur.

Bank Negara Malaysia has for more than a decade now, been involved in extensive investment in education – not only for the financial sector, but for the broader economy. Our reach has also not only been for the development of talent from our own country, but it has also extended to the Asian region and beyond. This is based on our conviction that the next generation of talent – whether in the private or public sectors – needs to recognise and understand the dynamics and interconnectivities of the new regional and international environment. In particular, as the pace of economic and financial integration that is now taking place in Asia intensifies, the talent needs to appreciate the implications of the new inter-linkages and its implications. Our aspiration is to contribute to the development of future leaders that are able to effectively operate in this new environment. The establishment of the Asia School of Business is, therefore, a complementary initiative to meet the increasing demand for talent with such leadership and management capabilities.

Bank Negara Malaysia is most honoured to partner with the MIT Sloan School of Management in the establishment of the Asia School of Business. The Bank is very much drawn to the education philosophy of MIT Sloan that emphasises on both analytical rigour and practical application to real-world challenges through project-based, action learning, and the focus of its relevance to the different economic sectors. The Bank also shares MIT Sloan’s dedication to encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship.

The increasing importance and influence of Asia in the global economy has increased international interest to better understand Asia – the economies, businesses and people that comprise the region. Being home to a significantly diverse group of businesses – from multinational corporations to large home-grown conglomerates and vibrant small and medium-sized enterprises, Asia provides unique educational and research opportunities to advance thought leadership in a wide range of activities. The Asia School of Business will offer two key differentiating value propositions: the emphasis on the practical application of business management education, to apply theories of the classroom in a broad range of organisational and institutional settings; and to be a global knowledge and learning centre that focuses on insights, perspectives and expertise from the emerging world, especially the Asian region.

The ultimate vision is for the Asia School of Business to be a premier business school that develops transformative and principled leaders who will contribute to the advancement of the emerging world, particularly in Asia. Bank Negara Malaysia’s commitment to this collaboration is not only in providing the 20-acre land that is in the green lung of Kuala Lumpur for the campus and in building state-of-the-art facilities for the School, but being very much part of the Asian region, we hope that Malaysia, and more specifically, the Central Bank, will also be leveraged upon for our knowledge and experience in the region.

Located in the heart of Asia, Malaysia offers an eclectic mix of cultures and ethnic backgrounds that reflects the heterogeneity of Asia. As a highly open economy, Malaysia has strong economic and financial inter-linkages with the world, from Asia to the advanced economies and other emerging economies, including Latin America, the Middle East and Central Asia. The School will, therefore, draw extensively from the network of businesses in the emerging world to provide a platform for learning and research, and thus offer an extensive experience of the diversity that exists, in particular, in Asia.

With the strength founded in the collaboration, I am confident of our potential to develop the Asia School of Business on solid foundations. The Bank looks forward to working with MIT Sloan in making this collaboration a success.

I am pleased to now introduce the first President and Dean of the Asia School of Business, Professor Charles Fine. Professor Fine is the *Chrysler Leaders for Global Operations Professor of Management*, and a *Professor of Operations Management and Engineering Systems*, at MIT Sloan. He has served as a Professor at MIT Sloan for over 30 years, and has teaching experience as a visiting faculty at the Stanford Business School, the Harvard Business School and the Indian Business School. His research focuses mainly on supply chain strategy and value chain roadmapping. His work has supported the design and improvement of supply chain relationships for companies in the electronics, automotive, aerospace, communications, and consumer products industries.

Kindly join me in welcoming Professor Fine.