

Abdul Rasheed Ghaffour: Welcoming remarks - Global Islamic Finance Forum 2025

Welcoming remarks by Mr Abdul Rasheed Ghaffour, Governor of the Central Bank of Malaysia (Bank Negara Malaysia), at the Royal dinner in conjunction with the Global Islamic Finance Forum (GIFF) 2025 "Bridging tradition and tomorrow - advancing business, empowering communities", Kuala Lumpur, 12 October 2025.

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Allow me to begin by extending my heartfelt gratitude to the Royal Patron of Malaysia's Islamic Finance Initiatives, His Royal Highness Sultan Nazrin Shah, for gracing us this evening. It is a privilege to welcome His Royal Highness, and all of you - distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen - to this Royal Dinner, held in conjunction with the Global Islamic Finance Forum (GIFF) 2025.

GIFF convenes visionary minds and leaders on a platform that forges meaningful connections. Our presence here reflects a shared commitment and purpose, united in advancing Islamic finance.

Today, we stand at a strategic crossroad. Rapid global shifts and growing expectations for Islamic finance invite us to reflect on where we must go next. One path - lies in continued incremental progress, refining what already exists. The other calls for transformational shifts with strong leadership, redefining and elevating the role of Islamic finance to shape a more inclusive and sustainable financial system.

Transformation is not a departure from proven foundations that have served us well. Rather, it is a bold reimagination of what might be possible - a way to deepen our purpose and reaffirm our commitment to the values that define us. In our pursuit of advancing the Islamic finance industry, this means:

- First, widening the application of risk-sharing structures such as Mudarabah and Musharakah to foster inclusive economic participation, catering to more diverse risk-reward options;
- Second, positioning Islamic finance as the primary choice for halal economy development and sustainable finance; and
- Finally, unlocking the full potential of waqf and zakat as impact-driven financial tools. This involves developing clearer waqf investment frameworks, enhancing zakat governance and transparency, and better measuring outcomes through social return on investment (SROI).

These ideas are strategic opportunities for Islamic finance to chart greater prosperity for future generations. The relevance of Islamic finance tomorrow will depend on the choices that we make today - choices that reinforce our leadership, inspire innovation, and attract the next generation of talent to propel Islamic finance to greater heights.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we navigate this complex terrain, let us remain anchored in our values and united in our vision. For Malaysia, our journey in Islamic finance has not only been shaped by deliberate policy direction, but also a deep-rooted commitment to value-based finance that transcend financial metrics. Initiatives like the implementation of the Value-Based Intermediation; integrated application of social finance; and framework for green and sustainability sukuk - demonstrate how Islamic finance can serve a meaningful purpose - one that promotes inclusivity; sustainability; and integrity.

Globally, we are encouraged by the growing alignment among regulators, international organisations, and private sector stakeholders who share similar aspirations. This convergence presents a timely opportunity to strengthen cross-border collaboration and scale impact - ensuring that Islamic finance plays a central role in shaping a more resilient and values-driven global financial system. As we move forward, let us be reminded of the verse from Surah Al-'Imran (3:103): "And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided." This verse calls on us to be united and steadfast in our cause, beautifully encapsulating the spirit of collective strength and shared purpose that must underpin our efforts for greater impact.

In closing, I strongly believe that GIFF 2025 offers an opportune moment to reflect; reconnect; and reimagine - what Islamic finance can deliver. As we stand at the intersection of tradition and innovation, let us draw inspiration from the unwavering leadership of His Royal Highness Sultan Nazrin Shah in advocating the transformative potential of Islamic finance to address global challenges - which has brought visibility to Malaysia's Islamic finance ecosystem. His Royal Highness played a pivotal role - in shaping the discourse of Islamic finance and championing its alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. His vision for Islamic finance to catalyse global sustainable development continues to inspire the industry to think boldly and act with purpose.

With that, let us now embrace a moment of reflection and inspiration. Thank you.