

**Welcoming Statement by**  
**YANG HORMAT DATO' PROFESSOR DR. MOHD ROSLAN SULAIMAN,**  
**VICE CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**On the Occasion of the**  
**NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AGEING 2022**  
**"Sustainable Development in an Ageing Society"**  
**Opening Session, 3.00 p.m.**  
**17 October 2022 (Monday)**  
**The Everly Putrajaya**

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Bismillahirrahmanirrahim.

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Taala Wabarakatuh and Good Afternoon.

**Yang Berhormat Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed**  
Minister in the Prime Minister's Department for Economic Affairs

**Her Excellency Dr. Asa Torkelsson**  
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Representative for Malaysia

**Yang Berbahagia Prof. Dr. Siti Anom Ahmad**  
Director, Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing, UPM

Distinguished keynote and plenary speakers, forum panelists, paper presenters, researchers and participants,

Honorable guests, dignitaries and representatives of various government ministries, departments, and agencies, civil society organizations and private corporations

Principal officers of Universiti Putra Malaysia,

Media representatives,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. I am most grateful to Allah, the most gracious and most merciful, for His blessings in giving us this precious opportunity to gather at this National Conference on Ageing 2022.
2. I bid everyone a warm welcome to this scientific meeting where researchers, whether academics or non-academics, present and discuss findings from old age and ageing studies. Conferences like these are one of the primary venues for scientists to share their work with colleagues and the public, as well as connecting and engaging each other as an integral part of the scientific process.
3. Over twenty (20) years ago on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002, Universiti Putra Malaysia set-up the first Institute of Gerontology (IG) in the country - a research entity dedicated to the study of old age and ageing. Under the leadership of its founding director, Yang Mulia Dato' Dr. Tengku Aizan Hamid, IG trailblazed its way in mainstreaming population ageing issues in national development. In recognition of its efforts, the Institute was rebranded by the Cabinet of Malaysia to become the Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing (MyAgeing™) on 20 March 2015. Within the past two decades, the number of older persons aged 60 years or over has grown from about 1.4 million in 2000 to 3.4 million in 2020. One out of every ten persons in Malaysia is an elderly and this is projected to grow rapidly.

4. Now, more than ever, the focus on and importance of gerontology and geriatrics research can make a positive difference as ageing is a global megatrend with unprecedented challenges as well as opportunities. How can we put our knowledge to work for tangible outcomes and impact on the lives of the people?

Ladies and gentlemen,

5. The importance of research and education, rather than just education alone, has shaped the unique contribution of research universities such as Universiti Putra Malaysia. We rise or fall on the strength and quality of our research outputs, but success is not measured by mere words on paper. Our research efforts must also be relevant to the society that we live in, and it is this service to the nation that forms UPM's core business and hence our motto "With Knowledge We Serve".
6. Population ageing issues are indeed complex and wide-ranging, and we need strong empirical evidence to assist in policy planning and development, program monitoring and evaluation, as well as breakthroughs in applied and basic sciences. Like other countries in the Southeast Asian region, we are getting old before getting rich as a nation. Rapid modernization, urbanization and industrialization have resulted in the rise of older persons due to the convergence of increased life expectancy and lowered fertility. How will the national healthcare and social protection systems adapt to changing realities and where can we find the political will to go after sustainable reforms that are much needed as our society ages? We added years to life but how about life to years?

Ladies and gentlemen,

7. Bridging policy, research and practice is a tall order when we work or talk with different goals or purposes. We all share the same ultimate goal – a Society for All Ages, in line with the idea that the Malaysian Family can only be Strong Together (*Keluarga Malaysia, Teguh Bersama*). It will be difficult to succeed if we work at cross-purposes. In science, we believe in standing on the shoulder of giants. The scientific community is strong not because of who came before us, but because an understanding of the knowledge by researchers in the past can help us to progress intellectually, so that we do not keep reinventing the wheel. It is the reason why the development of a fraternity of researchers like the Malaysian Ageing Research Network (MARN) should be applauded and supported. We can only affect change by working together, deliberating on all possible evidence, and form an optimal consensus for action.
8. On behalf of Universiti Putra Malaysia and the organizers, I wish you all an engaging and interesting discourse, in anticipation from what I noted – on a rich variety of issues and challenges related to ageing. I am especially enthused by the involvement of professional groups such as the Gerontological Association of Malaysia (GeM), the Malaysian Society for Geriatric Medicine (MSGM) and the Malaysian Healthy Ageing Society (MHAS). I understand that there are also plans afoot to initiate a new Malaysian Society for Gerontechnology. It is hoped that this event will provide a platform for closer networking, collaboration and cross-pollination of ideas in our future working relationships, including

the sharing of expertise as well as research data from various disciplines to improve the lives of older persons.

9. At this juncture, I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to the co-organizers and sponsors as well as everybody involved in making this national conference possible. We appreciate the opportunity and support by the United Nations Population Fund Malaysia, the World Health Organization, the Economic Planning Unit, PMO's Office, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development Malaysia, the Ministry of Health and our friends from the print and electronic media. A note of congratulations is also in order to Professor Ir Dr. Siti Anom Ahmad, Director, Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing, UPM, and her energetic and hardworking team in putting this excellent event together. Last but not least, thank you to all the participants, who travelled near and far, and chose to be here to contribute towards the building, and making of gerontological ideas, knowledge and technology for Malaysia.

Thank you very much and Wabillahi Taufiq Walhidayah Wassalammualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.