

IMU Advanced Microbiology Collaborative Research Laboratory Officiating Ceremony

Speech by Prof Datuk Lokman Hakim Sulaiman
Pro Vice-Chancellor of Research, International Medical University
16 April 2019 | IMU, Bukit Jalil Campus, Kuala Lumpur

SALUTATION LIST

- 1. Tan Sri Dato' Dr Abu Bakar Suleiman**
Chairman of IMU Group
- 2. Prof Aziz Baba**
Vice Chancellor, International Medical University
- 3. Prof Victor Lim**
Pro Vice-Chancellor, Institutional Advancement, IMU
- 4. Prof Diana Eccles**
Dean of Medicine, University of Southampton
5. Deans and representatives from Partner Medical School
6. Representatives from the Ministry of Health
7. My fellow IMU colleagues and students
8. Distinguished guests
9. Members of the media
10. Ladies and Gentlemen

Salam sejahtera and a warm welcome to the International Medical University (IMU).

1. It is an honour for me to invite you to witness the officiating ceremony for the IMU Advanced Microbiology Collaborative Research Laboratory today (IMU-AMCRL). The first collaborative partner of IMU-AMCRL is the University of Southampton. The partnership in education and research between IMU and University of Southampton can be traced back to 2002. Since then, the two universities have engaged in various research activities, especially in the area of infectious diseases and microbiology. Among the notable achievements include the success in securing a research grant from the Newton Engku Omar Fund to understand antibiotic resistance pattern and prevalence of pathogens in upper respiratory tract in Malaysia populations. The same project was also selected as the runner-up for the Newton Prize Award in 2017. Separately, researchers from the two Universities had secured research funding from the Malaysian Government's Fundamental Research Grant Scheme last year to elucidate the impact of diabetes on the composition of gut microbiome and upper respiratory tract pathobionts.

Ladies and Gentleman,

2. In the past decade, the microbiological sciences have undergone revolutions of unprecedented scale. This development which is fuelled in a large part by advanced molecular microbiology techniques and high-throughput sequencing, is fast reshaping the way scientists approach the myriad of microbiological and infectious diseases confronting our society today. At the same time, advanced molecular microbiology techniques are also useful for monitoring the effectiveness of therapeutic regimes and identifying potential resistant strains that may impact long term treatment programmes.
3. Most of the research and innovation on the management and control of infectious diseases are conducted by the developed nations. Due to the lack of sophisticated equipment, expertise and training centres, there remains a lack of capacity in carrying out advanced procedures and research, leading to the high disease burden especially in pockets of remote regions within developing countries.
4. The IMU AMCRL was conceived to address these challenges. We hope that the facility will foster cross-disciplinary research across the broad scope of infectious diseases with our Partner Universities, and to capture the full potential for synergy at the interface of microbial genomics, ecology, and functional genetics.
5. With the existing MOU with Ministry of Health Malaysia, the IMU will also act as a catalyst to foster stronger network between our partner universities and Malaysian research institutions such as the Institute for Medical Research (IMR), Makmal Kesihatan Awam Kebangsaan (MKAK, National Public Health Lab) and Makmal

Kesihatan Awam Veterinar (National Veterinary Lab) to research into the solutions for hard to diagnose pathogens and to improve the current outbreak response. Further, training workshops will be organised to build the research and service capacity in Malaysia. Indeed, the establishment of IMU Advanced Microbiology Collaborative Research Laboratory is a key milestone for infectious disease research in Malaysia. We hope that one day, the facility will become the regional centre for research and training in advanced microbiology techniques and infectious diseases.

Thank you.