

**Welcoming Address by the Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Malaya (UM)**

**Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU)**

**Global Health Conference 2025**

**Theme: “Towards Planetary Health Equity: A Global Call for Shared Solutions”**

**Kuala Lumpur, Universiti Malaya | October 28-31, 2025**

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**Distinguished guests, esteemed colleagues, and friends,**

1. Selamat datang and a very warm welcome to Universiti Malaya and to Kuala Lumpur. It is both an honour and a privilege to welcome all of you to the APRU Global Health Conference 2025, held here at the heart of our campus – a gathering that brings together some of the most brilliant minds, compassionate hearts, and visionary leaders from across the Pacific Rim.
2. This year’s theme, *“Towards Planetary Health Equity: A Global Call for Shared Solutions,”* captures not just a call to action, but a shared moral responsibility – to safeguard the health of our people, our planet, and our future. It speaks to the urgent need to look beyond borders and disciplines, to see health as not merely the absence of disease, but as the foundation of sustainable human progress and planetary survival.
3. This year’s APRU Global Health 2025 forms an integral part of Universiti Malaya’s International Week, a celebration of global partnership, diversity, and cross-border collaboration.

4. We are deeply honoured that this event is also recognised as one of the officially sanctioned programmes held in conjunction with the ASEAN Summit 2025 here in Kuala Lumpur. This recognition reflects not only the confidence of the region in Universiti Malaya's global standing, but also Malaysia's commitment to advancing education, research, and innovation as central pillars of ASEAN's collective progress.
5. It is, indeed, a profound honour for UM to contribute to this historic moment – as the region and the world come together in pursuit of shared peace, prosperity, and health for all.
6. Universiti Malaya is hosting this global platform under the banner of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) – a network that represents the intellectual and moral conscience of our region. As Malaysia's leading and oldest university, UM stands proud to lead this important conversation on the future of health – one that transcends nations and demands shared leadership across science, policy, and humanity.
7. At a time when the world is navigating the complexities of post-pandemic recovery, climate crisis, ageing populations, and rising health inequities, universities must rise beyond traditional boundaries.
8. We must become architects of solutions – harnessing our research, innovation, and moral compass to build systems that heal, sustain, and empower.

9. The Pacific Rim is home to more than half of the world's population. It is where innovation meets vulnerability, where economic dynamism coexists with environmental fragility. The health of our oceans, our forests, our cities, and our people are interconnected – forming an ecosystem that either thrives together or declines together.
10. The APRU network embodies this interconnection – uniting world-class institutions from Asia, the Americas, and Oceania to tackle the greatest challenges of our time. It represents not only academic excellence but a shared vision: that the pursuit of knowledge must always be in service to humanity.
11. Through collaborative research, policy engagement, and capacity building, APRU is not merely a network of universities – it is a coalition of conscience. It brings together the best of science and the best of humanity, bridging diverse systems and perspectives to drive collective transformation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

12. Our era demands nothing less than transformation. We are witnessing the devastating impact of climate change, the spread of infectious diseases, the growing burden of mental health crises, and the persistent inequities in access to care and resources.
13. But we are also seeing something remarkable – the awakening of a shared understanding that human health and planetary health are inseparable. We cannot heal people while our planet remains sick.

14. This is why the vision of planetary health equity must become our guiding principle. It calls for action that integrates health, environment, and social justice – ensuring that every person, regardless of geography or background, can live a life of dignity, wellness, and hope.
15. Universities must be at the frontlines of this transformation. We are not just centers of knowledge – we are incubators of moral imagination. We have the unique ability to unite science, ethics, and empathy to shape the world we want to live in.
16. At Universiti Malaya, we are fully committed to this mission. Through the Faculty of Medicine, Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, and our many cross-disciplinary research centres, UM has long championed initiatives that blend medicine, public health, technology, and social science to improve lives and shape policy.
17. From advancing research on infectious diseases and mental health, to driving studies on environmental resilience, climate impact, and digital health innovation, we are proud to stand as a key node in the global network of knowledge driving the future of health.
18. But beyond research, we must also humanise science. We must ensure that innovation is guided by values – by conscience, compassion, and community. Science must not only tell us *how* to heal, but *why* we must heal.
19. Malaysia’s strategic position at the crossroads of Asia makes it both a microcosm of global health challenges and a model for regional cooperation.

20. We believe that Asia's voice, ASEAN's collective wisdom, and the Pacific Rim's shared strength can illuminate the path toward global health equity.
21. As we gather here today, let us reaffirm our shared duty to build systems that are preventive rather than reactive, inclusive rather than exclusive, and sustainable rather than extractive.
22. Our nations, diverse as they are, share the same air, the same oceans, and ultimately, the same fate. The health of one is the health of all.
23. Let this conference produce new frameworks for action, new research collaborations, and new moral courage to confront the inequities and crises that define our time.
24. The theme — *A Global Call for Shared Solutions* — reminds us that no single nation, no single institution, and no single generation can solve these challenges alone.
25. It will take all of us — working across borders, disciplines, and ideologies — to create a future where humanity and nature can coexist in balance.
26. This is where the Pacific Rim can lead. And this is where universities like ours must stand at the forefront — as the minds, hearts, and conscience of our collective future.

Distinguished delegates,

27. As we begin this journey, may we be guided not only by data, but by empathy; not only by innovation, but by inspiration.

28. Let us remember that every discovery we make, every policy we craft, and every collaboration we build must serve the ultimate purpose of improving the human condition.
29. As the host of APRU Global Health 2025, Universiti Malaya reaffirms its steadfast commitment to advancing the frontiers of global and planetary health – not just for Malaysia, not just for Asia, but for the world.
30. Together, we can create a future where health is not a privilege but a universal right – where the prosperity of nations is measured not by their wealth, but by the well-being of their people and the integrity of their environment.
31. On behalf of the Universiti Malaya community, I welcome you once again to our campus, to our city, and to this collective mission of hope.
32. Let this be a conference that redefines not only what we do, but who we are – as scholars, as leaders, and as custodians of our shared planet.

Thank you, and **welcome to Universiti Malaya.**