

## **Speech by the Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Malaya**

3rd Meeting Joint Malaysia-Russia Commission for Economic Scientific,  
Technical and Cultural Cooperation.

### **Advancing Higher Education and People-to-People Ties between Malaysia and Russia in an Age of Global Disruption**

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Distinguished Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is a great honour to be here virtually, for the 3rd Meeting Joint Malaysia-Russia Commission for Economic Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation.
2. I deeply regret that I am unable to be with you in Russia for this important meeting, but I am truly proud to join this meaningful platform in spirit, and I sincerely hope to meet all of you in person in the near future.
3. The world is no longer moving in a linear or predictable direction. Supply chains are being redesigned. Energy routes are being contested. Scientific capacity is becoming a core instrument of national resilience. Human capital is now the most decisive form of strategic power.
4. In this new reality, higher education can no longer remain a passive sector. Universities must become engines of national preparedness, scientific sovereignty, technological confidence and global trust-building.

5. This is where Malaysia and Russia must strengthen their partnership with greater ambition, clarity and urgency.
6. Malaysia and Russia share a relationship that is grounded in diplomacy, education, science, technology, trade, cultural understanding and people-to-people ties.
7. Universiti Malaya stands ready to contribute meaningfully to this partnership. The Malaysia-Russia partnership must now move from general cooperation to strategic convergence.
8. First, we must deepen collaboration in science and critical technologies. Russia has long-standing strengths in fundamental sciences, engineering, aerospace, nuclear science, mathematics, physics, space science, defence technology, agriculture and advanced industrial capabilities.
9. Malaysia brings the advantage of its strategic location in Southeast Asia, its diversified economy, its growing digital and semiconductor ecosystem, its young talent base, and its role as a bridge to ASEAN, the Muslim world and the Indo-Pacific. These strengths are complementary.
10. We should therefore develop stronger university-to-university and research-to-industry pathways in artificial intelligence, quantum science, nanotechnology, space science, advanced materials, robotics, cybersecurity, green technology, energy transition, medical science and food systems. These are no longer optional areas of academic interest. They are the defining sectors of the next global order.

11. Second, we must strengthen cooperation in human capital and talent development. At the heart of every strategic partnership is people. People-to-people ties are not soft diplomacy. They are strategic infrastructure. They allow nations to engage beyond headlines and beyond the limits of geopolitics.
12. Third, we must explore cooperation in sectors that are central to national resilience — food security, energy security, health security and technological security.
13. The past few years have shown that food and energy can no longer be treated as ordinary commodities. They are strategic assets. Russia is a major global player in food, agriculture, energy and scientific capability.
14. Fourth, we must position Malaysia and Russia as bridges between regions. Malaysia can help bring Russia closer to Southeast Asia, not only through diplomacy, but through education, research, youth exchange, cultural understanding and institutional partnerships.
15. This is not merely about bilateralism. It is about building a wider corridor of knowledge between Southeast Asia and Eurasia.
16. In closing, the future will belong to nations and institutions that build trust before crisis, talent before demand, and knowledge before disruption.
17. Let Malaysia and Russia move forward with that conviction — not as distant partners, but as strategic knowledge partners linking Southeast Asia and Eurasia with purpose, confidence and shared ambition.

Thank you