

Speech By YBhg Tan Sri
At The Visit To The International Institute Of Health Sciences,
Sri Lanka
At 10.00am, 31st January 2013

- Dr Amal Harsha De Silva, Director of Health Services, Western Province
- Dr Kithsiri Ediringhe, Managing Director IIHS
- Mr Repin Ibrahim, Vice President (Business Development)
- Ladies and Gentlemen

1. My sincere appreciation to the International Institute of Health Sciences, Sri Lanka for collaborating with Open University Malaysia (OUM) in the provision of nursing programmes. I understand that the MOA with IIHS was signed on 8th March 2010 and since then we have four (4) cohorts of nursing students totaling 61 active students undergoing the Bachelor of Nursing programme. In addition to this, there is also one (1) cohort of four (4) students undertaking the Master of Nursing programme starting in May 2012.

2. At OUM, our mission is to make tertiary education accessible to everyone regardless of geography or time constraints. This is made possible through the open and distance mode of teaching and learning as well as flexible entry requirements; thus playing a supportive role in the human capital development of Malaysia.

3. As an ODL institution we certainly have the capacity to deliver our programmes to the masses, as we are not constrained by a physical campus. Specially designed learning materials including those in print as well as in electronic form, provide an enriching learning experience for learners. By embracing the latest technology in teaching and learning we are able to extend our outreach without compromising quality. This is in tandem with the expectations of working adults whereby they demand a flexible learning system.

4. OUM's objectives in its international footprint, namely emerging economies is:-

- To leverage on the ODL approach to encourage and fully espouse the concept of democratised education.
- To contribute to Malaysia's 'brand' as a viable destination for international learners and a quality provider of higher education.
- To share its ODL approach to help institutions in developing countries to offer, conduct and deliver OUM academic programmes, especially to working adults.
- In helping emerging economies, OUM's internationalisation approach focuses on the concept of mutual benefit

5. OUM's cutting edge in championing ODL in the international arena include:-

- OUM's approach in internationalisation is unique in that it locates all its activities abroad and allows its partner institution to act as an overseas learning centres.

- OUM searches for partner institutions that share its educational vision and mission, particularly in the focus on providing higher education opportunities via ODL to working adults.
- The ODL mode employed by OUM leverages on various ICT to support and complement a blended pedagogy that combines face-to-face tutorials, self-managed learning and online learning. e-Learning as the main mode of learning is the reason why OUM has been able to offer and conduct many of its academic programmes overseas.

6. OUM's international partnerships allow partner institutions to operate independently, i.e. they are able to enroll learners and conduct all teaching, learning and assessment activities independently. OUM as the provider, supplies the relevant learning materials, sets assessment standards, endorses marking schemes, assessment results and when necessary, teaching staff as well. This arrangement has proven to be feasible for both parties as OUM does not interfere with regular day-to-day operations at these institutions, providing them with sufficient autonomy whilst still ensuring quality by monitoring and endorsing the relevant processes.

7. OUM also gives technological support, mostly in the form of subscription to OUM's learning management system (known as myVLE or my Virtual Learning Environment) as well as the provision of learning materials and other relevant e-content.

8. All of these points indirectly allow OUM to promote ODL as a feasible approach for internationalisation in higher education;

successfully partnered with ten (10) institutions in various countries, i.e. Kingdom of Bahrain, Yemen, The Maldives, Ghana, Sri Lanka, Hungary, Vietnam, Somalia, Mauritius and Zambia.

9. The concept of mutual benefit is important, as OUM believes in the sharing of expertise and ICT facilities, joint curriculum development as well as sharing of learning materials and support services.

10. Quality is a subject which OUM is very passionate about. Over the years, we have incorporated various measures for quality assurance to complement the requirements stipulated by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency. This includes conducting regular audits on our internal departments as well as benchmarking our practices with that of comparator institutions. We also adopt and adapt best practices from ODL institutions throughout the globe. As for the overseas learning centres, we do conduct yearly quality audits on-site.

11. Since its establishment twelve (12) years ago, we have a cumulative intake of 113,309 students. The active student population is close to 35,000 with the Alumni population more than 45,000.

12. Currently we offer 57 academic programmes ranging from the Diploma right up to the PhD programmes including the Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration.

13. We are indeed very pleased to see this collaboration starting off at the right footing and we look forward to expand the scope soon. Judging by the encouraging response to the intakes we have every confidence that this collaboration can go very far in a short time. Once again we wish to congratulate the leadership and staff of IIHS.

14. To the academic staff of IIHS we would like to say that from now on you are associate faculty members of OUM. We look forward to organising activities in areas of common interests. This can be in the development of learning materials, joint-research or staff exchange programme.

15. To the students, thank you for choosing to study with OUM and we wish you every success in your studies.

Thank you and God bless.