

**CLOSING SPEECH OF THE CLOSING CEREMONY
2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SPECIAL
EDUCATION (ICSE 2017)**

**BY HIS HONOURABLE
DATO' SERI MAHDZIR BIN KHALID
MINISTER OF EDUCATION MALAYSIA**

[Salutation]

The Honourable Dato' Sri Michael Manyin Jawong, Minister of Education, Science and Technological of Sarawak,

Tan Sri Dr. Khair Mohamad Yusof, Director General of Education Ministry of Education Malaysia,

Mr. Prasert Tepanart, Deputy Director of SEAMEO Secretariat,

YBhg. Datin Dr. Hjh. Yasmin Hussain, Director of SEAMEO Regional Centre for Special Education,

Distinguished Speakers of ICSE 2017,

Passionate Teachers and Educators

Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good afternoon I bid to all,

1. I am very pleased to be with all of you here today to officiate the closing ceremony of the 2nd International Conference on Special Education held here in Kuching, Sarawak. This conference is indeed a positive note to begin my duty as the appointed deputy president of SEAMEO and deputy chairman of the SEAMEO Council Conference for the period July 2017-July 2019. It is fantastic to see that this conference has successfully attracted 650 delegates ranging from the presenters, experts and participants in the field of Special

Education from the Southeast Asian region and countries from all over the world.

2. The ICSE 2017 is the second conference organised by SEAMEO Regional Centre for Special Education (SEAMEO SEN). The 1st ICSE was held in Bangkok Thailand in 2015 and this year, the Ministry of Education of Malaysia and the state government of Sarawak have been given the honour to jointly support this significant conference on information and knowledge sharing through research and best practices in the field of Special Education.
3. The objectives of the conference reflect today's 21st century challenges and issues by focussing on the importance of inclusive education that welcomes diversities and providing services for children of all abilities. The education agenda today is full of challenges that must be handled with effective strategies and methods so that it can be realistically implemented. Therefore, I believe ICSE 2017 is an excellent effort by SEAMEO SEN in providing the important platform for discussions and knowledge sharing by all its attendees to develop new ideas and practices that can be adapted for children with disabilities.
4. The ICSE 2017 Resolutions are important statements of understanding and agreement of actions plans post ICSE 2017. The focus on Inclusive Education, Disaster Risk Management, Technical and Vocational Education and Early Childhood care and Education is the current education agenda of Sustainable Development Goals 4. It is hoped that all of us here would be able to reflect these ideas in our practices to benefit the lives of our children with disabilities. The most important element of special education is giving empowerment to the children to prepare them with independent living skills and they can also be trained with entrepreneur skills.

Ladies and gentlemen,

5. The Ministry of Education Malaysia is very committed to provide an inclusive education for all children. It is both a vision and a work in progress in Malaysia to ensure that the education delivery for children with disabilities is given utmost care and consideration. In response to global challenges, the education of children with disabilities must be

geared towards providing them with skills and knowledge that would empower them to lead independent lives and also to contribute to the communities.

6. The Ministry of Education in its Malaysian Education Blue Print 2013 - 2025 has addressed five systems of aspirations for Malaysian Education System that are compounded on access, quality, equity, unity and efficiency. These aspirations must be translated into actions and strategies that require a shift in actions, policies and implementations of our education system. I strongly feel that education for children with disabilities must be given emphasis and must be supported by building of knowledge, skills and professionalism for Special Education teachers.

7. One is unable to identify when someone has a disability, I believe it needs training and sincere human touch to detect it. We need to educate not only the teachers, but also the family and the public to respond kindly, and not be judgmental to children with disabilities. As a former educator, I would like to address to all that one must not make assumptions about a child's potential based on a label. People with disabilities have a range of capabilities, just like anyone else.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. My heartfelt thank you and utmost gratitude to the Sarawak State Government, the Sarawak Bureau of Convention, Ministry of Health Malaysia, International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment, UNICEF Malaysia, UNESCO Bangkok, Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia, Yayasan Hasanah, Yayasan Keluarga Batam, Yayasan Orang Buta Malaysia, the University of Tsukuba and the Japan International Cooperation Agency for their support and contribution in co-sponsoring this ICSE 2017.

9. Congratulations to SEAMEO SEN for this fruitful conference since its establishment. The success of the conference is the result of commitment of our partners and also the attendees of ICSE 2017.

10. For the speakers, presenters and participants, I do hope that ICSE 2017 has left a memorable impression in your memories of the last 3 days. The Sarawak State Government has been a gracious host for all of us during this conference and I thank them for the warm hospitality and strong support given for ICSE 2017. I wish a pleasant and safe journey home to all and hope that you will visit Malaysia again soon.

11. On that note, I now declare the 2nd International Conference on Special Education 2017 officially closed.

Thank you.