

Zeti Akhtar Aziz: Creating a sustainable pool of talent for Malaysia

Speech by Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz, Governor of the Central Bank of Malaysia (Bank Negara Malaysia), at the Kijang Emas Scholarship Award Ceremony, Kuala Lumpur, 30 April 2015.

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In preparing for the future, a future that is going to be fundamentally different from the current environment, talent development has become more important than ever before. The environment before us is rapidly changing and is continuously becoming more interconnected, more complex and certainly more competitive. It is also becoming more uncertain and unstable. Malaysia has, however over several decades, demonstrated time and again our ability to face the challenges arising from these transformative changes, supported by our resilience and strong foundations. Human capital makes up a critical component of these foundations. Developing the talent that we have and making greater investments in our talent pipeline will contribute to generating the development of our future leaders that will be able to effectively operate in this new environment. Education and capacity building to generate the new talent with the right skills, mindsets and values, as well as effective talent development strategies and their implementation, have now become key priorities of the nation.

The Kijang Emas Scholarship Award is an eminent scholarship award that is part of the Bank's commitment to creating a sustainable talent pool for the nation. The Kijang Emas Scholarship is distinct from the Kijang Scholarship in that the recipients are given the freedom to pursue any field of study at top universities in any country of their choice. The Bank also does not impose any bond on the recipients except that they return, contribute and partake in the development of our nation.

To date, 44 high potential talent have been awarded the Kijang Emas Scholarship. The recipients have graduated or are currently pursuing their studies in diverse fields of study including Medicine, Engineering, Law, Economics, Dietetics, Actuarial Science, Accounting, Dentistry, Biochemistry, Genetics, Architecture, Psychology and Geophysics in top universities around the world such as MIT, University of Pennsylvania and the University of Cambridge. Thus far, 11 Kijang Emas scholars have completed their undergraduate studies and have returned to serve the nation, while another seven scholars are expected to complete their studies in the next six months.

For the 2015 Kijang Emas Scholarship, we received a total of 212 applications from top SPM students scoring straight A+ for their 2014 SPM. From this, the Bank shortlisted the top 24 students based on their SPM results and also on their level of involvement in co-curricular and sports activities. The students then underwent a rigorous evaluation process under the Bank's "Kijang Academy" which assessed their technical and leadership competencies, as well as their values.

We are pleased to award four outstanding students the Kijang Emas Scholarship this year. Having just completed their SPM, they will be enrolled into the respective pre-university programmes. Following their pre-university programmes, Imran aspires to be a Mechanical Engineer, Hajar is keen to read Chemistry while both Ying Xin and Nur Shazlin aspire to be Doctors. I am confident that all of you will do your best and will contribute for the future of the nation.

In addition to the Kijang Emas Scholarship award, every year the Bank also awards scholarships to 50 high achieving SPM students for them to pursue their undergraduate studies abroad with the objective of them being part of the Bank's future talent pool. The Bank has put in place a structured, holistic and collaborative Scholar's Development Programme to support all of our scholars throughout their studies. The programme aims to develop high-quality and well-rounded scholars with leadership qualities as the next generation of young talent who will be the leaders of tomorrow for the Bank and our nation.