



RECORDS OF DISCUSSION

THIRD ASEM UNIVERSITY-BUSINESS FORUM PUTRA WORLD TRADE CENTRE (PWTC), KUALA LUMPUR 5-6 NOVEMBER 2012

The **THIRD ASEM UNIVERSITY-BUSINESS FORUM (3rd ASEM UBF)**, hosted by the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, was held on 5 and 6 November 2012 in the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). It was viewed as an important forum since it encouraged and facilitated the expansion of strategic cooperation of academia and industry in the field of higher education between the ASEM member countries.

The theme, '**Driving Innovation**', served as a platform for the higher education sector, the higher education institutions and the industry in Asia and Europe, to discuss and deliberate on various issues of significance to university-business cooperation in order to achieve successful collaboration between the two regions. The outcomes of this forum will be presented on the Fourth Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education (ASEMME4), taking place in Kuala Lumpur in May 2013.

The third ASEM UBF began with a short session, looking back at the recommendations of the Second ASEM University-Business Forum (2nd ASEM UBF), organized in Bonn in 2011. During the discussions of the 3rd ASEM UBF some of the issues raised in the Bonn Declaration were addressed. Three parallel sessions were conducted during the two-day forum:

- a) Accreditation / Recognition: Creative Society through Innovative Education System

- b) Graduate Employability based Curriculum: Human Capital Development for Innovation based Economy
- c) Knowledge and Technology Sharing: University as an Enabler towards Strategic University-Industry Partnership (Vendors, SMI/SME)

During the discussion in the **first parallel session** on Accreditation / Recognition, different models of university-business cooperations were presented. Many issues were raised, such as, (1) to form a globalised quality assurance system that is legitimate and comprises common values and practices, (2) the role of the university in creating a sustainable economy and students employability, (3) the need to understand industry's demands, (4) the necessity to push Malaysia for higher workforce in order to enhance production.

Having extensively deliberated, several suggestions were made on the followings:

- a) A qualification framework should be designed to reach closer partnership between government, industry & university; and
- b) To ensure high graduate employability, universities should work hand in hand with the industry, by designing university curricula, including the needs of industry and students.

Parallel session two on Graduate Employability-based Curriculum addressed the need for sustainable employability, the way problem-based project work works, and the need for industry-ready graduates. The working group discussed on issues such as: (1) the lack of fundamental skills that promote employability among fresh graduates; (2) graduates who aren't instilled with the courage to innovate; (3) problem based learning (4) the lack of stimulus to accelerate the growth of innovation in research and development in the Electronics & Electrical sector; (5) the lack of exposure of graduates to the world of work.

Several recommendations were put forward on the followings:

- a) Graduates should be instilled with the innovator's traits;
- b) A specific roadmap towards innovation should be designed;
- c) In the perspective of marketability and sustainability, curriculum design should be based more on real world problems;
- d) Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) should pay more attention to industry's demands and needs in exposing students to the world of work; and
- e) Change in the Teaching & Learning methodologies in educational institutions should be taken into consideration as the focus should be more on experiential learning.

During the **third parallel session** on Knowledge and Technology Sharing, the presentations focused on the institutionalizing of knowledge generation and exchange through industry and community engagement, a toolbox for successful science marketing, and the presentation of Silteerra Malaysia. Issues covered during the discussions were, among others (1) the lack of engagement between internal and external stakeholders (university and industry), (2) the poor collaboration, integration and engagement of the core business between university and diverse stakeholders, (3) the development of a clear goal and measurement of what needs to be achieved in relation to industry, (4) the difficulties in extending fellowship to university and vice-versa and (5) efficiency through innovation and economic growth.

A number of recommendations were put forward on the followings:

- a) Governance system and structures, related policies and the implementation between the university and industry should be strengthened;

- b) The partnership/collaboration models should be more holistic in approach;
- c) Communication barriers within and between organisations should be eliminated, and
- d) Achievements in the field of Knowledge and Technology Sharing should be kept track of and followed up.

In the perspective of offering students real life work experience within their education, the ASEM Placement Programme was presented. This programme, funded by public resources and industry, offers the possibility to qualified students to do a 2 to 6 months placement in the ASEM region. Before the actual start, the proposed scheme includes the establishment of a small scale preliminary work placement programme as a try-out. Based on Good Practices, the organizational structure, organizational procedures, financial means and methods awarding grants were illustrated.

With regard to the issues and suggestions discussed in the keynote speeches and the parallel sessions, and in the perspective of strengthening and enhancing university-business cooperation, following recommendations were made:

- A. There should be a focus on well-defined joint goals towards successful academia-industry collaborations on knowledge and technology exchange via proper governance and structure, policy and implementation;**
- B. There is a need for joint industry-academia efforts towards holistic employable graduates;**
- C. There is a need for an ASEM Graduate Innovation Roadmap (Specific Innovator's DNA);**
- D. There should be a reinvestment in a specific human capital development programme (government - industry - professional associations - university);**

E. The proposed ASEM Placement Programme should be worked out and followed up by interested ASEM member countries.

All recommendations will be taken into account during the ministerial discussions on Engaging Business and Industry in Education in May 2013 in Kuala Lumpur (ASEMME4).

Prepared by:

**MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION MALAYSIA
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