



**MINISTRY OF  
INVESTMENT, TRADE AND INDUSTRY**

**SPEECH**

**by**

**YB Senator Tengku Datuk Seri Utama Zafrul Aziz**

**Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry**

**at**

**THE LAUNCH OF COGNIZANT MALAYSIA'S REGIONAL  
HUB IN GREATER KUALA LUMPUR**

**Friday, 19 May 2023**

**Time: 10.00 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.**

**Venue: Cognizant Malaysia, Level 30, Menara Shell,**

**211 Jalan Tun Sambanthan, 50470 Kuala Lumpur**

YBhg Datuk Seri Isham Ishak, Secretary General of Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry

YBhg Datuk Muhammad Azmi Zulkifli, CEO of InvestKL

Yang Berusaha Encik Mahadhir Aziz, CEO of MDEC

Jane Livesey, CEO of Cognizant, APAC

Andrew Lim, VP, Head of ASEAN and Greater China of Cognizant

Effendi Azmi Hashim, Country Manager of Cognizant in Malaysia

Ladies & Gentlemen

Good morning and *Salam Malaysia Madani*.

1. It gives me great pleasure to join you today as we commemorate a significant milestone for our nation's FDI story and digital economy, which is the decision by Cognizant to invest further in Malaysia.
2. In line with our New Investment Plan (NIP), aligned to the New Investment Aspirations (NIA), **both domestic (DDI) and foreign direct investments (FDI) play a key role in accelerating the nation's growth and revitalising Malaysia's investment landscape**, especially in responding to emerging trends.
3. Launched in October 2022, **the NIA is anchored by five key pillars, including increasing economic complexity, creating high-value job opportunities, extending domestic linkages, developing new and existing economic clusters, as well as improving inclusivity.**

4. In 2022, **Malaysia successfully attracted approved investments totalling RM264.6 billion (USD59.9 billion)**. This translates to **more than 4,500 (4,454) projects, with roughly 140,000 (140,370) job opportunities** to be created.
5. The biggest contributor to our approved investment figure is the services sector. Malaysia's services sector recorded close to **3,600 (3,581) projects** valued at RM154 billion (USD34.8 billion), which is expected to create **in excess of 63,000 (63,464) new jobs**. This represents a 58.8% increase over the previous year's investments of RM97 billion (USD23.3 billion).
6. Foreign investment accounted for 55.1% of total approved investments in the services sector, or RM84.9 billion (USD19.2 billion). **The information and communications sub-sector dominated the services sector, with approved investments worth RM84.7 billion (USD19.2 billion), or 55%**. Projects approved related to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) services, including data centres and cloud computing services, with an investment value of RM72.4 billion (USD16.4 billion).
7. That last point leads us to why we are here today - to celebrate the launch of Cognizant Malaysia Regional Hub in Greater Kuala Lumpur. I feel proud that Cognizant – as the global leader in the professional services industry – has chosen to expand its operations in Malaysia, empowering more businesses to tech up and reimagine their processes as they transform their operations to stay ahead in this fast-changing world.

8. **What began as a small team of 32 employees in 2014, Cognizant Malaysia has grown into a workforce of over 2,000 delivering cutting-edge digital solutions throughout the region.** All these are no coincidence, as Malaysia is rapidly emerging as the digital hub of ASEAN thanks to a few factors:
- a. **Firstly, Malaysia's highly developed ICT infrastructure,** including high-speed internet connectivity and a well-developed telecommunications network provides a conducive environment for digital innovation and growth.
  - b. **Secondly, the country boasts a large pool of tech talent,** with graduates majoring in key subjects such as computer science, electrical engineering, and data science. Malaysia's skilled and diverse workforce makes it an alluring destination for companies seeking to enhance its digital capabilities and regional footprint.
  - c. **Thirdly, Malaysia's robust intellectual property protection framework and rule of law** also assure investors like Cognizant that their innovations and investments will be safeguarded and protected.
9. In short, **Cognizant's growing presence is a testament to Malaysia's ease of doing business, strong economic fundamentals that support MITI's pro-industry, pro-trade and pro-investment stand.** It is also an affirmation that Malaysia is a competitive investment destination in the region, and of Greater KL's

ability to attract leading global companies looking to expand their regional foothold. These are, indeed, the result of the Government's continued efforts to create a conducive landscape for businesses to thrive in Malaysia.

10. And there is further good news in that our **New Industrial Master Plan 2030 (NIMP 2030)** will seek to enhance all these advantages, and **better position Malaysia and Greater KL as the gateway to Asia**. We are also looking to further improve the ease of doing business for investors, both foreign and domestic. All these, and more, will be unveiled in our NIMP 2030 towards the end of 2023.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. Beyond its immense spill-over to Malaysia's robust technology sector, I am happy to note that **Cognizant also empowers next-generation talent, women in tech and diversity, while deeply emphasising on ESG and sustainability** in everything they do. This is how any future-forward company should operate.
12. I have been informed that **Cognizant's emphasis on continuous learning** is a key factor to its success and competitive advantage. There are **upskilling and reskilling programmes** for its existing employees, with employees in Malaysia **benefitting from more than 64,000 hours of learning in 2022**.
13. Further, the company's **highly prioritised campus graduate programme since 2016 has hired over 150 graduates** in Malaysia.

14. All these represent the company's commitment to remain at the forefront of digital innovation by ensuring that employees' expertise is constantly updated to stay ahead of the curve in our rapidly changing world defined by technology.
15. Related to all that, I am pleased to note that Cognizant Malaysia's Regional Hub is home to:
  - i. **Cognizant Malaysia's Innovation Experience Lab**, the first Innovation Experience Lab in ASEAN
  - ii. **Cognizant-AWS Centre of Excellence**
  - iii. **Quality Engineering and Assurance Centre of Excellence** and;
  - iv. **Offshore Delivery Centre**

Ladies and gentlemen,

16. The key question is "what is next on the cards for Cognizant?" I am pleased to share that Cognizant Malaysia has exciting plans ahead which include:
  - a. **Firstly, the creation of 5,000 new jobs by 2026 to be filled by Malaysians.** And I was made to understand that a majority of these are highly-skilled, highly paid jobs.
  - b. **Secondly, the development of an Innovation Experience Lab in Malaysia** which will be designed for their regional and global clients to experience Cognizant's technologies and solutions.

c. **Third, the set-up of a dedicated Centre of Excellence in Malaysia for cloud platform technologies with AWS.** This, I was told, will drive cloud transformation in Malaysia and the rest of the region.

17. All these will involve sizable investments that will have a significant impact not just on the business landscape but also on Malaysia as a whole.

So, Ladies and Gentlemen,

18. I feel that **the launch of the Regional Hub today is not just a physical expansion, but a symbol of the company's growth, progress, and commitment to its investment in Greater KL and in Malaysia.** I am confident that this new space will be a hub of innovation and facilitate productivity for many years ahead. We welcome more strategic investments from Cognizant and will gladly partner you on this.

19. Thank you, InvestKL, for your instrumental role in facilitating Cognizant Malaysia's plans here, as they join more than 120 leading global companies who have also set up operations in Greater KL. I would also like to extend a special thanks to MDEC and other agencies for their collaborative efforts in making all this happen.

20. Let me assure you that **MITI and its agencies will continue to play our role in attracting quality digital investments, creating more value and opportunities for growth via data and cloud-based**

**technologies, as well as generating high-paying jobs for Malaysians.**

21. These investments are also important in **creating spill-over effects for our SMEs, who can also become world class by being part of the vendor ecosystem of multinationals like Cognizant**, in line with our digital aspirations as outlined in our 12th Malaysia Plan.
22. On that note, I would like to congratulate Cognizant once again on the establishment of your Regional Hub. MITI looks forward to working closely with Cognizant Malaysia to create a vibrant and sustainable tech economy. Thank you.