



**MINISTRY OF INVESTMENT,
TRADE AND INDUSTRY**

**CLOSING KEYNOTE BY
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**FOR
NUSANTARA YOUTH FORUM 2025
*“Nusantara Youth Leadership:
From the Region to the World, Leading the Way to
Sustainable Change”***

4:30PM | 28 JUNE 2025 |

MENARA PETRA, PUTRAJYA

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

[Salutations]

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, Salam Sejahtera dan Salam Malaysia MADANI.

1. Thank you to **PIMPIN** (Persatuan Alumni Majlis Perwakilan Pelajar UiTM Malaysia) for inviting me to the **inaugural Nusantara Youth Forum 2025**. Standing here among so many young faces—students, young professionals, entrepreneurs, volunteers, and artists—I am reminded that **youths do not simply represent the promise of tomorrow**; you also embody the **spirit, talent, and potential that is shaping our region today**.
2. I was informed about today's panels—spanning leadership, entrepreneurship, volunteerism, and the creative arts—which I hope has been productive in its objective to unlock the immense potential lying within the young people of Malaysia and across our region.

[ASEAN Chairmanship: Inclusivity, Sustainability, and Youth at the Centre]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. In line with the theme, *“from the region to the world, leading the way to sustainable change”*, I think it would be appropriate for me to start by highlighting that Malaysia has the distinct honour of chairing ASEAN this year. As MITI is tasked with leading the Economic Pillar, I accept both the pride and the responsibility that comes with this role.
4. ASEAN’s theme for 2025, **“Inclusivity and Sustainability,”** is not a mere slogan—it is an **urgent call to action**. For us, inclusivity means putting youth as part of our collective agenda, not just as a checkbox, but as architects and partners in shaping the region’s future.
5. Today, leadership is no longer about waiting your turn, holding a certain title, or reaching a certain age. **True leadership is defined by those who have the vision to see what is possible, the courage to act, and the resilience to learn from every challenge.**
6. Across ASEAN, I see young Malaysians—and young people from every nation in our region—launching startups, advancing green technology, innovating in creative industries, and challenging conventions. **In a rapidly**

**changing world, the right time to lead is never tomorrow.
The right time is always now.**

[Entrepreneurship: Building a Regional Powerhouse]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. As MITI Minister, I cannot overstate the **importance of entrepreneurship in driving both economic progress and social transformation**. Today, the most exciting businesses in Malaysia—and indeed throughout ASEAN—are being **founded, led, and grown by youths**. Whether you are developing tech solutions, running sustainable farms, designing innovative products, or launching platforms for social impact, you show the world what is possible when ambition is united with purpose.
8. At MITI, and as part of our ASEAN leadership, we are actively **creating more space for young entrepreneurs to thrive**. Through initiatives such as the ASEAN SME Academy and the Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA), we are breaking down barriers so that you can **start, scale, and connect your ventures beyond borders**. DEFA, the world's first regional digital economy treaty, is projected to grow ASEAN's digital economy to over US\$2 trillion by 2030 and generate millions of jobs. These are not just statistics; they are doorways to your future.

9. As we open doors for young entrepreneurs and innovators, it's important to mention how **Malaysia's own long-term strategies align with these regional ambitions**. Through the **New Industrial Master Plan 2030 (NIMP 2030)**, Malaysia is transforming our industrial landscape by focusing on high value-added sectors, advanced manufacturing, and future-oriented skills. NIMP's core mission is to create quality jobs and ensure our industries—especially in E&E, green tech—remain globally competitive, resilient, and sustainable.
10. National framework such as NIMP is not just about Malaysia's progress. They also **complement ASEAN initiatives** like DEFA and the ASEAN SME Academy, creating a seamless ecosystem that supports youth—from upskilling and financing to market access—so you can truly take your ideas from the region to the world.

[From Region to World: ASEAN's Youth as a Global Force]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. As youths of ASEAN, you are not just part of a national movement; you are central to a **regional powerhouse that is increasingly visible on the world stage**. ASEAN, with nearly 700 million people—**300 million of them youths** like

yourselves—stands as one of the most vibrant and dynamic regions globally.

12. Your collective energy, creativity, and technological savvy have already begun to transform how we work, how we connect, and how we respond to challenges. Whether it is advancing the digital transformation, leading the green economy, or developing inclusive business models, **you have the power to shape not only Malaysia's future, but the future of an entire region—and, by extension, our influence on the world.**
13. The theme of the Nusantara Youth forum is not just aspirational. It is happening today. Across industries, Malaysians and other ASEAN youths are founding global start-ups, winning awards in arts and culture, and pioneering solutions to challenges such as climate change, poverty, and education gaps.

[Volunteerism: Leadership in Service]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

14. One of the inspiring threads running through today's panels has been the **spirit of volunteerism and community service**. Service is not a side activity; it is at the **core of strong leadership and social resilience**. Youths from

Malaysia and around ASEAN have been at the frontline—responding to disasters, driving social innovation, and strengthening our social fabric through compassion and action.

15. In the context of our region's challenges—be it disaster relief, mental health, or social inequality—volunteerism isn't just a moral duty, it's an **essential pillar for community-driven progress**. The spirit of “gotong-royong,” working together for the common good, is what binds our societies and lifts us all.

[Arts, Culture, and Identity: Our Distinctive Advantage]

16. I also want to recognise the discussions around arts and culture that took place today. Too often, we treat the creative sector as secondary to the “main” economy. The truth is, **culture and creativity are economic engines, identity builders, and bridges between nations**.
17. From music and film, to heritage crafts and digital storytelling, ASEAN's creative industries are gaining global attention. **We must be proud of our roots and our stories**, and have the confidence to take our art, our languages, and our heritage onto the world stage. **A strong sense of**

identity—fueled by creative expression—**sets us apart as leaders not just of today, but of the future.**

18. As the world grows ever more complex, **our ability to stay united while celebrating diversity will set ASEAN apart.** It is our diversity—of background, of ideas, of talent—that will propel us from the region to the world, leading meaningful change.

[Conclusion: From the Region to the World]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

19. As we close this forum, I urge each of you to reflect on what you have learned today—not just from the speakers, but from each other. Think about how you can:
- **Step up as leaders**, wherever you are. Start small, think big, and inspire others to follow.
 - **Embrace entrepreneurship as a force for good.** Build businesses that solve real problems and make a positive impact.
 - **Champion volunteerism.** Every act of service strengthens our communities and builds your leadership for the world.

- **Celebrate and share your culture.** Let the world see ASEAN's creativity, unity, and diversity.
20. **You are not alone.** You are part of a new generation of changemakers—connected, resilient, and ready. You have the support of your peers, your communities, and leaders across the region who are invested in your success.
21. As we look ahead, remember that **real change always starts at home**—with yourself, your community, your region. But the world is watching. **The choices you make today**—the courage to act, the willingness to serve, the creativity to innovate—**will shape not just ASEAN's destiny, but our impact on the world.**
22. **I leave you with this challenge:** let's build a future where ASEAN's youth are known not just as followers, but as pioneers; not just as recipients of change, but as architects of a better world. Thank you.

Wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.