



**PRAXIS 2023:  
ADVANCING MALAYSIA'S STRATEGIC INTERESTS**

**WELCOMING REMARKS BY  
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HILTON KUALA LUMPUR**

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Yang Berhormat Dato' Sri Hajah Nancy Shukri, Minister  
of Women, Family and Community Development,

Excellencies, distinguished panellists and delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Assalamu'alaikum warrahmatullahi wabarakatuh,  
selamat pagi, good morning!

1. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the PRAXIS 2023 Conference and I look forward to meeting you over the course of the day!
2. At ISIS Malaysia, our primary mission is to provide in-depth research, analyses and policy proposals on



strategic international and domestic issues that affect the vital interests of the nation.

3. On the international front, we organised the 36th APR in August to discuss great power rivalry, the evolution of the Indo-Pacific, and regional political developments, among many other topics pertinent to the stability of the region. I am pleased to share that this was well received by both Malaysian delegates and those from abroad.
4. Our work on the domestic front centres on PRAXIS, which is our flagship domestic-focused conference guided by the central tenet of translating theory into practice. As a policy-oriented think tank, what this means is that the pursuit of knowledge and the comprehension of various theories and concepts must be applied and oriented towards policy solutions.
5. In this regard, those from the research community will be keenly aware and appreciative that this cannot be done in a vacuum, locked away, separate and in silo from the wider policymaking community. Rather, we know that policy research must be consultative. It must be multistakeholder to reflect the multifaceted challenges facing our country. Above all, our proposals must be pragmatic, actionable and aligned



with the needs and aspirations of the people and the nation.

6. In conceptualising this year's PRAXIS, the team and I had set our sights on being more ambitious. We wanted to go above and beyond organising just another conference. We wanted to ensure that we execute our mandate to provide critical thoughts and articulate our positions to best advance Malaysia's strategic interests.
7. To that end, we began by reaching out to four leading voices to guide our work for PRAXIS this year, and it is through their abled stewardship, we are here today. These leading voices, thought leaders, and experts within their various fields were engaged as lead experts to guide our work on food security, the care economy, semiconductors, and climate resilience.
8. While Oscar Wilde has proclaimed that the only thing to do with good advice is to pass it on, Confucius reminds us that real knowledge is to know the extent of our ignorance.
9. Nevertheless, Immanuel Kant in his *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* - The Critique of Pure Reason – would appear to have the last word on this: "All our knowledge begins with the senses, proceeds then to the understanding, and ends with reason."



10. So, in this vein, I would like to extend ISIS Malaysia's profound appreciation to Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Zakri Abdul Hamid, Professor Datuk Dr Norma Mansor, Dr Sharbanom Abu Bakar, and Dr Larry Wong for sharing their time, experience, and knowledge with us.
11. Further to this, the team and I decided to expand the work that we do – before and after the PRAXIS Conference. In the months that led to this day, we organised multistakeholder roundtables to identify the most pertinent issues associated with those four topics. These issues were then mapped accordingly, in order to formulate the design of today's four sessions, where we will be deliberating over possible policy solutions.
12. At this juncture, I would like to thank the roundtable participants for your buy-in into the PRAXIS process. Your insights on these various issues helped shape today's programme and our work moving forward.
13. Following today's conference, the policy solutions put forward by our esteemed panellists will be compiled, along with our internal research and analyses, to produce policy briefs that will be distributed to all stakeholders. These briefs will be succinct in form, and actionable and pragmatic in substance – and we



trust that this will move the needle forward for better policy solutions for the country.

Distinguished delegates,

14. This year's theme, "Advancing Malaysia's Strategic Interests", was selected after much deliberation. We believe that it is apt and timely to capture today's zeitgeist, wherein we celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Malaysia's formation against a backdrop of emerging challenges.
15. This includes a challenging global economy, uncertain geostrategic landscape, climate disasters, food insecurity and domestic demographic shifts. These challenges can threaten to throw nations off their development pathways, especially ones with an open-trading economy like Malaysia.
16. It is with that imperative that we identified the four focus areas for this year: food security, the care economy, the semiconductor ecosystem, and the transition towards a nature-positive economy.
17. It is self-evident that at this inflection point of our development journey, we can ill afford inaction and business-as-usual approaches cannot guarantee continued gains. PRAXIS 2023 thus represents a collective endeavour to deliberate on these key areas



and design solutions towards advancing Malaysia's strategic interests.

## **Conclusion**

Distinguished delegates,

18. Let me now take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks and gratitude to everyone who made today's conference and the larger work we are doing with PRAXIS possible. When we first initiated this endeavour, there was hesitancy among some members of my team vis-à-vis its buy-in among the larger policymaking community.
19. Almost a year in, I am deeply pleased to share that this hesitancy was misplaced. Over the past 10 months, we have no doubt that we can count on the community's steadfast support – be it those from government, policy research, academia, civil society, and non-governmental organisations.
20. On that note, I would like to recognise and thank:
  - the Social Wellbeing Research Centre at Universiti Malaya;
  - Shazana Agha, Anis Farid and the team at the Women's Aid Organisation;



- Associate Professor Andrew Kam from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia; and
  - Dr Gopaldasamy Reuben Clements from the Zoological Society of London
- ...for their significant contributions towards the research component of our work for PRAXIS this year.

21. To the speakers and moderators of today's conference, my deep appreciation for your readiness to share with us your time, knowledge and expertise. Without a doubt, your contribution towards solving the issues facing the country will enhance the richness of this conference's deliberations.
22. To our partners, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Felda Global Ventures, and The Asia Foundation, thank you for your generous contributions that have allowed us to explore in-depth these topics and to organise this conference so successfully.
23. Last, but never least, thank you to you, our dear and respected delegates. Your probing, thoughtful questions and insightful interventions over the course of today will ensure a lively and engaging conference.
24. I trust that with all our collective minds, we will be able to put knowledge and theory into practice.



## **Introducing YB Dato' Sri Hajah Nancy Shukri**

25. I now would like to take the opportunity to welcome Yang Berhormat Dato' Sri Hajah Nancy Shukri, the Minister of Women, Family and Community Development.
26. The honourable Minister's keynote address will play a crucial role to add impetus to today's discourse, particularly on the care economy.
27. Malaysia is already an aged-nation and we are well on our way to becoming a super-aged nation by the middle of this century.
28. This creates a multitude of challenges, including the growing need for professional, affordable and accessible care, and a shrinking labour force that can undermine continued growth.
29. Spearheading our endeavours into the care economy, the honourable Minister plays a crucial role in ensuring that our social security continues to move forward.
30. Without further ado, I now call on Yang Berhormat Dato' Sri Nancy Shukri to deliver the keynote address.

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