



**OPENING KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY  
YB Dato' Sri Dr Adham bin Baba  
Minister of Health Malaysia  
at the  
MALAYSIAN HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE 2021  
*“Accelerating the Transformation of Health Systems in a  
Pandemic – Challenges & Opportunities”*  
13 August 2021 @ Zoom Platform**

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President, KSI Strategic Institute for Asia Pacific

Excellencies, Distinguished Speakers & Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Asalamualaikum and Salam Sejahtera

1. It gives me a great pleasure to address all of you at the **Malaysian Healthcare Conference 2021** organised by KSI Strategic Institute for Asia Pacific (KSI). Congratulations for your efforts in bringing together inspiring leaders from around the healthcare sector to discuss the issue of healthcare transformation in this conference. Today's theme on ***“Accelerating the Transformation of Health Systems in a Pandemic - Challenges & Opportunities”*** is apt and relevant with current healthcare climate both locally and globally.

2. It has been over a year since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic. The pandemic has and is placing enormous strain on all of us. It has undoubtedly brought about huge changes in healthcare systems all over the world. **One of the major impacts is in accelerating the digital transformation of healthcare globally.**

Malaysia was able to put together a COVID-19 digital response with 6 main focus areas:

- Strategic Risk and Communication
- Community Engagement
- Operational Efficiency
- Insights and Foresights
- Infrastructure and Upgrade
- Research and Clinical Trials

Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. COVID-19 has also made the case for the importance of **healthcare transformation** and emphasized the importance of **health equity and access in our communities**. Health and wealth are interlinked. Health systems cross sectors to support more economically active societies. We need to start shifting paradigms in healthcare by making systemic challenges more obvious, by proving the case for integrated and digital delivery, and more flexible workforces.

4. In our fight against the pandemic, one area which is equally important to us is on **mental health**, not just our **front liners** but the **population in general**. Human psychology also has an impact on the outbreak. Thus, proper strategies to manage human psychology, especially mental health, is very important to break

the vicious cycle. We need to manage mental health using cognitive-behavioural approaches, mindfulness and spirituality. By practising the cognitive-behavioural, mindfulness, and spirituality strategies, we may enhance our acceptance, optimism and commitment to prepare for a 'new or renewed normal'. **Managing our mental health is our utmost priority now to ensure the curve can be flattened and COVID-19 can be defeated.**

Ladies and Gentlemen.

5. One of the defining aspects of the current pandemic was the **unprecedented levels of misinformation, conspiracy theories, and rumours reproduced by lay and social media** related to COVID-19. These can only be counterproductive in the fight against the current pandemic, both in the short and long term. Perhaps, this is an outcome of the pandemic taking place during the “social media age”. Social media platforms have responded to the majority of the social media posts rated false by fact-checkers by removing them or attaching various warnings. Facebook has recently announced its policy on Covid-19-related misinformation. Facebook will remove posts with false claims about all vaccines.
6. **Consistency in the public health messaging as well as increased funding dedicated to fact-checking seems to be needed as the immediate first step.** It seems inevitable that post COVID-19, there will be a review of policies, guidelines, and regulations relating to individuals' rights. There are also needs to

review the implementation of drastic public health measures, as well as the governance of new technologically driven solutions within healthcare.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. The fight against COVID-19 is already pushing health systems toward a more integrated and value-based approach to managing disease. In this respect, the massive disruption that societies are facing as a result of the pandemic. It also represents an important long-term opportunity to create more patient-centred health systems. It should facilitate continuous learning through sharing standardized data, and benchmarks and, as a result, employ resources more effectively to meet patient needs.
8. Out of crisis comes learning and innovation - both to face our immediate challenge and to build more sustainable health systems, for a healthier and safer world in the decades to come.
9. In conclusion, I wish all of you a fruitful conference and my appreciation to KSI for inviting me here. With *Bismilahi Rahmani Rahim*, I officially declare open this **MALAYSIAN HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE 2021**.

Thank you