

Administration of Barack Obama, 2014

Remarks at the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre in Cyberjaya, Malaysia

April 27, 2014

President Obama. Well, hello, everybody.

Audience members. Hello!

President Obama. *Selamat petang.* [Laughter] I want to thank Prime Minister Najib for bringing me here today, as well as Cheryl Yeoh. Where's Cheryl? She was here just a second ago.

Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia. Cheryl. There's Cheryl.

President Obama. There she is over there—[applause]—who's going to be directing the Malaysia Global Innovation and Creativity Center, or MaGIC, and Startup Malaysia.

As Prime Minister Najib indicated, we are here because we have a shared commitment to fostering the spirit of entrepreneurship, especially among our young people. We want you to be able to create things and start your own companies and your own businesses and come up with your own products and services, because that's how our societies grow. And the dreams and talents of these young people help to fuel our economies and create jobs, and they also bring our countries closer together.

So, 5 years ago, when I was in Cairo, I called for a new partnership between the United States and Muslim communities around the world, partnerships where we could focus on the things that matter most in people's daily lives, including jobs and providing for our families. So often, the conversation between the United States and Muslim communities was around security issues, but the truth is, day to day, what people are concerned about is jobs and businesses and improving quality of life for themselves and their families. And that was not enough of a conversation that was taking place.

So I was proud to host the first Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Washington. Prime Minister Najib, who has been working to empower entrepreneurs here in Malaysia, hosted last year's summit in Kuala Lumpur. And the impact has been phenomenal.

Around the world, we are helping young entrepreneurs connect and collaborate and start their own businesses, serve their communities, tackle global challenges like expanding education and combating climate change, and create this center to turn their ideas into reality. And this center is a direct result of the entrepreneurship summit that the Prime Minister hosted. It's a one-stop shop so young entrepreneurs, they can come here, they can get help with their—to file a patent for their ideas, they can access loans and venture capital, they can get technical training and assistance, and they can get their businesses up and running.

And we just had a chance to see some innovations of some young entrepreneurs that have already been started: an online tool that helps student learn with digital presentations; a very impressive electric go-cart; a device that helps diabetics monitor cold sweats so that if they are in need of medical assistance, somebody will be alerted right away. And so this is the kind of entrepreneurship that Prime Minister Najib and I want to encourage. And it's innovation like these that's going to make our lives better and safer and healthier.

These young people here, they're going to be creating all kinds of amazing things when they get older. And the fact that this center is giving them the opportunity to learn computer coding early on, understanding that computer sciences and IT are going to be one of the keys to future growth, I think, is a testament to some outstanding investments by the people of Malaysia and the next generation.

So I want to thank Prime Minister Najib for all his efforts to support young entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs. I want to thank all of you for your determination and your imagination. I'm very excited to see what's going to happen not only with the entrepreneurs here in the future, but these young people and the remarkable things they'll do to help Malaysia grow, help the region grow, and help the world grow.

So terima kasih banyak for the good work that you're doing. [*Laughter*] Yes.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:53 p.m.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre in Cyberjaya, Malaysia.

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