

**Welcoming Speech by  
Professor Dr Mohamed Ibrahim Abdul Mutalib  
Vice Chancellor Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS**

**NATIONAL SCIENCE CHALLENGE 2018**

**Monday, 9 July 2018**

**10.00 am**

**Seminar Room 7 & 8, Undercroft, UTP**

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Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

**Representatives from the State Education Department**

**Associate Professor Dr Hanita Daud**

Chair, Fundamental and Applied Sciences Department

**Associate Professor Dr Suriati Sufian**

Chair, Chemical Engineering Department

**Dr Mohana Sundaram Muthuvalu**

Chairman of National Science Challenge 2018

Representatives from Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM)

Lecturers and judges, teachers and students,

Participants of the National Science Challenge 2018

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh and a very good morning to all.

Welcome to the National Science Challenge 2018 Perak State Level here in Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS (UTP) and thank you to everyone here for your presence and support. I am truly delighted to be in this event with the representatives from Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM), State Education Department of Perak, teachers and of course, our special guests, the participants of National Science Challenge 2018 Perak State Level. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the organisers from the Fundamental and Applied Sciences and Chemical Engineering Department. All of them have been working hard to ensure this programme will run successfully. I truly appreciate everyone's dedication.

Students, Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

According to the Science and Technology Human Capital Report and Science Outlook 2015 by Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM), only about 90,000 science students sit for the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination annually. This falls short of the 270,000 students needed if the country is to meet its human capital needs. What's more, of those taking STEM-based programmes in school, 12% migrated to non-STEM programmes at the tertiary level. \*

There is a need to curb this worrying trend in the declining interest in STEM and together with ASM, UTP is raising student interest through new learning approaches and an enhanced curriculum, as well as raising public and student awareness. We hope that through organising competition such as this, we can foster a culture of excellence in science to promote, nurture and enhance interest in Science, Technology, Innovation (STI) among school

students. Throughout the years, this competition has evolved into a more consolidated and challenging programme. National Science Challenge has also proven to play a significant role in cultivating the passion and interest in STI among secondary school students.

For this year, the challenge involves 4 different levels of competition, i.e. Preliminary Level, State Level, Semi-Final Level and Grand Final Level. The preliminary Level has been conducted from May 25 to June 1, 2018 nationwide. At the State Level, 5 top teams will be selected to compete. The winning team at the State Level will represent their respective state to the Semi-Final Level that will be held at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

UTP is honoured to host this year's National Science Challenge Perak State Level which involves 5 top teams of which are SMK Tsung Wah, SMK Methodist (ACS) Ipoh, SMK Sri Perak, SMK Ave Maria Convent and a Wild Cards Team (a team comprising students from SMK Tsung Wah, SMK Sri Perak and MRSM Taiping). The winners of the State Level will compete in the Semi-Final Level and Grand-Final for a chance to witness the Nobel Prize Award Ceremony in Stockholm, Sweden.

Students, Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We truly believe that by establishing this partnership with ASM, the National Science Challenge will gain recognition as one of the most significant science competitions in Malaysia. It will also elevate UTP's image as a supporter and contributor towards nurturing the country's future scientists and leaders. This collaboration of UTP-ASM will produce results, for our

younger generation to be competitive, innovative and dynamic, which is in line with what is envisaged by the leaders of our country.

My heartiest appreciation to Young Scientists Network-Academy of Science Malaysia (YSN-ASM), Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) and ExxonMobil Subsidiaries in Malaysia for the invaluable support. Thank you to the organising committee for the commitment and dedication in ensuring the success of this event. For the participants of the National Science Challenge 2018, all the best and good luck.

Thank you.

\*Facts taken from **UTP IMPACT: Sparking Innovation**  
[18 March 2018, The STAR]