

GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION FORUM (GHEF2009)

Global Higher Education: Current Trends, Future Perspectives

The 2009 Global Higher Education Forum (GHEF2009) was held from 14 to 16 December 2009 at Parkroyal Hotel, Penang. GHEF2009 was jointly organised by the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia and Universiti Sains Malaysia with the Centre for Higher Education Research and Studies (CHERS), Ministry of Higher Education Saudi Arabia as co-sponsor. The Association of African Universities (AAU) and Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC) contributed intellectual support, whereas the National Higher Education Research Institute (IPPTN), Universiti Sains Malaysia served as the GHEF2009 Secretariat.

GHEF2009 brought together scholars, policymakers, researchers, academics and administrators to review, analyse, discuss and debate on various universal higher education issues in the south-south context. Specifically, GHEF2009 focused on the theme, Universal Higher Education, surveying and studying the benefits and challenges related to such a theme. At the same time, this forum also outlined the direction in developing and enhancing the higher education system.



GHEF2009 participants listening attentively in one of the sessions.

This forum was attended by 133 participants and 48 panel members from across 32 countries including Mexico, Ghana, Saudi Arabia, America, Hong Kong, Thailand, Japan, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Jordan, Papua New Guinea and Finland.

GHEF2009 was initiated by the Minister of Higher Education, Y.Bhg. Dato' Seri Mohamed Khalid Nordin and was officially closed by the Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Y.Bhg. Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah on 16 December 2009. In addition, GHEF2009 launched the Global Centre for Sustainability Studies (CGSS) and three books jointly published by IPPTN and the Universiti Sains Malaysia Press: 1) Student Loan Schemes:



The launch of new USM published books during GHEF2009.

Experiences of New Zealand, Australia, India and Thailand and Way Forward for Malaysia; 2) Quality Assurance and University Rankings in Higher Education in the Asia Pacific: Challenges for Universities and Nations; and 3) 50 Years of Higher Education Development in Malaysia (1957-2007).

GHEF2009 included four plenary sessions and seven parallel sessions, all held at Parkroyal Hotel. The GHEF2009 dinner banquet on the other hand, was held at Traders Hotel with cultural performances by dancers from the School of Arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia.

In a joint statement released by Universiti Sains Malaysia, CHERS, AAU (Ghana), AAU (Jordan) and CONAHEC, the said organisations have agreed that a specific working structure will be built immediately to enable members of the academic world to work and collaborate in reaching a collective common rating standard. In line with such intent, the leadership and governance aspects have to be enhanced as the basis of carrying out actions that will fulfil the aspirations of all parties, specifically in achieving education for sustainable development (ESD).

Overall, this forum successfully achieved its objective in concluding that academic leadership and scholarship play equally important roles in enhancing activities in sustainability.



The signing of the MoU between leaders of university/association.

CELEBRATING AND PRESERVING PENANG FOLKLORE: An inter-varsity collaborative project with the community

Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) in collaboration with Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) and Wawasan Open University (WOU) organised a one-day workshop on Penang Folklore: Celebrating and Preserving the Penang folklore on 12 May 2010. The workshop was part of a larger scale joint effort by the three universities, led by Associate Professor Munir Shuib from the School of Humanities, USM, to link and work together with the community in order to preserve Penang cultural heritage.

The objectives of this workshop were to create awareness among the Penang community about the importance of appreciating and preserving their folklore and to discuss possible strategies for the purpose of preserving and promoting Penang folklore. A blog (<http://penangfolklore2010.blogspot.com>) documenting various forms of Penang folklore was also launched during the workshop.

This event also involved Sekolah Kebangsaan Alma, Bukit Mertajam and the Kumpulan Boria Budayasari Pulau Pinang which performed traditional dances and boria, respectively. Traditional games, crafts, local products and food were on

exhibition and they were part of the event's attraction as they provided an enriching experience for participants as well as better appreciation of the Penang tradition.

The workshop was officiated by the Governor of Penang, Tun Dato' Seri Utama (Dr.) Haji Abdul Rahman Haji Abbas after a welcoming speech by Professor Lim Koon Ong, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Industry and Community Network Division, USM and followed by boria performance before the morning tea break. A forum on Empowering Penang Folklore was the following highlight with four panelists from USM, UiTM, WOU and Kumpulan Boria Budayasari. Penang heritage and folklores were featured prominently in the forum to give an overview of the wonderful tradition and practices of Penang community. A discussion session succeeded with questions, comments and suggestions from participants. A colourful performance by students from Sekolah Kebangsaan Alma was the final highlight which was then followed by a closing speech by Professor Dato' Abu Talib Ahmad, Dean of School of Humanities, USM. Everyone was then invited to lunch and traditional carnival where the exhibition was held.



The officiating ceremony of Penang Folklore Workshop.