

Welcoming Speech by Chairman of ISI, Mr. Cheah Chyuan Yong at the Malaysia Anti-Corruption Forum, 5 September 2019, Sunway Resort Hotel & Spa

It is my absolute honour to be on stage this morning, graced by these lofty individuals, who have made a profound impact in their countries, on the fight against one of the most serious problems destroying economies around the world.

Today is a special day. It is a special day because Malaysia has done the impossible in its modern history by exposing a deep-rooted tradition of corruption that has affected our government for many years. But solving it is a completely different thing. The fight is not over, the fight has just begun. Malaysia Anti-Corruption Forum (MACF) is therefore a suitable and timely platform, bringing the private sector, the public and the government together, to collaborate and help chart the future of our fight against corruption.

The United Nations Secretary-General once said "Corruption begets more corruption, and creates a corrosive culture of impunity". This is the nature of corruption. Therefore, in order to get rid of corruption, we need to go deeper into its cause and effects.

MACF was established for that very reason. We are not only interested in catching the bad guys, we are interested in how they become bad in the first place, and what we can do to stop bad guys from breeding. In this short speech I want to touch on 2 things.

First is the presence of grey areas, which allow for moral abuse. If we have strong laws, with good implementation, we can reduce grey areas which lead to corruption. But is that enough? Can we use technology to help get rid of grey areas totally? What is the propensity of a police officer, who earns a small income and work long hours, to receive corruption? Is a higher salary, like what is done in Singapore, a good thing?

And second and most importantly for me personally, is the importance of education from the parents. We can have all the laws in the world to combat corruption, but if the mindset of the people is not changed, it will be an uphill battle. Yes school is important to provide good values, but good values start at home. Parents must teach the values of accountability, and not the culture of impunity.

All these issues will be covered in our sessions throughout the day. We hope that you can help us contribute your ideas to enrich our conversation, and deliver impactful points that can be accepted both by policymakers and the private sector, as two main actors in the fight against corruption.

I hope we can all learn and build from here. Let us leave it to the experts to talk about it. Last but not least, I would like to express my deep thanks to our sponsors Myve Intelligence, Big Brain Bank, Farm in the City, SIRIM Qas International Sdn. Bhd. for supporting our Forum. And to our supporting organisations Transparency International Malaysia, Anti-Bribery Anti-Corruption (ABAC) Agency, OECD and Sunway Group, who believe in our cause and fighting with us alongside. Thank you.