



2024

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

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**PRESIDENT
SESSION 2024-2026**

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS BY Ir. Prof Dr JEFFREY CHIANG CHOONG LUIN

“ESG as Catalyst For Engineering Evolution”

Immediate Past President, Ir. Prof. Dr. Norlida Buniyamin,
Deputy President, Ir. Yau Chau Fong,
Vice Presidents, Ir. Dr. Siti Hawa binti Hamzah, Ir. Fam Yew Hin, Ir. Chen Harn Shean, Ir. Prof. Dr. David Chuah Joon Huang, Dato' Ir. Wan Nazari bin Wan Jusoh and Ir. Bernard Lim Kee Weng,
My respected IEM Past Presidents,
Members of the Outgoing and Incoming Excomm and Council,
Datuk-datuk, Datin-datin,
And my dear fellow IEM members,

A very good morning to all of you and thank you for your presence here at our 65th Annual General Meeting on this day 20th April 2024. Special acknowledgements to still serving and outgoing Council Members Session 2023/2024, not forgetting in particular still serving IEM Past Presidents, including Immediate Past President, Prof. Norlida.

For a proper address to all present, let me welcome and thank all the IEM Fellows, Corporate Members, Graduate Members, Senior Members, Student Members, Associate Members, Incorporated Members, and the new Grades of Members being Engineering Technologists and Engineering Technicians.

I am very honoured to be standing on this rostrum delivering this Incoming Presidential Address 2024; but for information to all, this is not my first time standing here in AGM delivering a speech or a report.

I have served IEM Council in two key office-bearer positions requiring such efforts – ie, as Honorary Secretary (Session 2008/2010; Session 2012/2014), and as Honorary Treasurer (Session 2010/2012; Session 2014/2016). My past roles have helped me to understand IEM and its operations thus preparing me, I hope, to face the challenges in the next two years, albeit at a higher level.

My fellow IEM members,

My Presidential Address this morning shall touch on the following key areas which I deem will be key to the sustainability and success of The Institution of Engineers Malaysia (IEM) in the many years to come.

1. Keeping our own house (IEM volunteers and IEM Secretariat) in order
2. Keeping and serving IEM membership to the best of our ability
3. Keeping and fulfilling the mandate given to us to realize Vision and Mission of the Institution
4. Keeping up with the times, technology and issues of the day

Besides keeping tabs with the four key areas as mentioned above, my proposed theme for my IEM Presidential Address 2024 is to carry out our tasks working hand-in-hand with the over-arching realization of ESG (which stands for Environment, Social, Governance) targets.

Hence the theme shall be: **ESG as Catalyst For Engineering Evolution**; which shall appear in three key upcoming mammoth events to be organized by IEM, viz. IEM Annual Dinner and Awards Night (1st June 2024) at One World Hotel, the **IEM** Convention and ENGINEER Exhibition 2024 (18th-21st September 2024) at KLCC Convention Centre, and last but not the least, CAFEO 42 (42nd Conference of ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organizations) from 22nd-25th October 2024 at Sabah International Convention Centre (SICC) Kota Kinabalu, Sabah – hosted by our IEM Sabah Branch.

As a footnote, for this year 2024, Malaysia (as represented by IEM) is the Chair of AFEO; hence we are hosting CAFEO42 for this round. For this, I would like to thank our IEM Sabah Branch for their willingness to organize and be the host for CAFEO42, with the full support of IEM HQ and also all of our IEM Branches nationwide.

My fellow IEM members,

1. Keeping our own house (IEM volunteers and IEM Secretariat) in order

It has been said that we should keep wise counsel to ourselves, before we dish them out to others. IEM has been around for 65 years, and we have 50K members (the bulk of which are students). That does not bode well for us. Over the past number of years, our Institution has relied on membership subscriptions as the main source of income annually (over 65%) as reported about the same by our Honorary Treasurer in today's Financial Statement report. We have endeavoured to establish other income streams, such as paid events and activities, property rentals, insurance, credit card services to members, IEM merchandise sale, uploading of IEM talks to youtube, etc. At the same time, we are also mindful of the high expenditures incurred annually, of which the bulk is personnel emoluments (ie staff salaries, ex gratias, etc). We have to think of ways to expand our income streams to generate more revenue so as to reduce dependency on subscriptions, and also to lower cost of operations.

Some years ago, one of our Past President (back in 2010/11) made a resolution for IEM to hit 100K membership by year 2020. On a positive spin, we are about half-way there now. But we have to realize too, that numbers do not tell the whole story – what we need to have, are more membership numbers in Corporate and Graduate grades, which are more sustaining, not lopsided towards student memberships. Hence, our Membership Drive and Promotion (MDP) must have the full support of all IEM volunteers and committees to carry out membership recruitment drive and most importantly to convert Student Members to Graduate Members, and also to undertake more professional interviews (PI) to boost corporate membership (from the current 12K to at least 25K).

On the issue with the Board of Engineers, Malaysia with regards to two matters, ie, the launch of the OB-PAE by the Board, and the drawdown of IEM representations to Board from five to three, which I find quite perplexing. Now, I have to admit here to members that I have not ever

served in the Main Committee of the Board of Engineers, even when I was IEM Hon Secretary, IEM Hon Treasurer right up to Vice President and even at the Deputy President level. I do not wish to make any conclusion from this – but it is perplexing. Anyway, we have other priority areas to tackle for our members.

Now, I only want to focus here on the launch of the OB-PAE which comes with new ways of assessing PAE candidates without them having to submit Report of their Work Experience nor a Technical Report of a significant project under their charge. On top of that, they are doing away with compulsory written essay for Section A (Technical) – only required if the candidate did poorly in the interview – which is also changed into an oral presentation (30-min) with Q&A thrown in by the two examiners. I believe the essay for Section B (Ethics) is still compulsory – but I would not be surprised if they also make that optional as well. Seems like BEM is trying to make it easier for graduate engineers to make their mark to PE (Tier 1). Maybe ensuring more engineers to attain the “Ir.” title is their main goal, so as to boost the number of PEs in this country, in order to impress the Minister of the day. I suppose our statisticians in Government were not too happy with our low PE number to Population ratio – compared unfavourably to our neighbours and regional partners / competitors.

Anyway, my focus here is to ensure that we maintain our own standards of competency in IEM's Professional Interview with our Outcome-Based PI. And I believe our Standing Committee on E&Q are doing their level best in running the PI process – which by the way, is in accordance with the benchmark set by IEA and IPEA, agreed upon by Malaysia, to gauge the professional competency of qualified engineers in this country. I have no qualms about our IEM volunteers in carrying out this PI assessment task, which is very commendable. I believe the passing rate for our PI is about 75% to 80%, which is a bit on the high side, so IEM should not be accused of being too harsh and strict, as compared to the Professional Engineer with Practicing Certificate (PEPC) examination conducted under the Board, with a passing rate of 5% thereabout, but definitely less than 10%.

In order to overcome the likelihood of less applications coming to IEM PI due to the “easier pathway” of BEM PAE, we will endeavour to communicate better with our members and the community on the need to maintain standards of engineering practice in this country. Also to make our application process more user-friendly, better streamlining, and less tedious in submission. That is something we at IEM will undertake and is committed to do.

The other part of keeping our house in order would be on how we can make our IEM Secretariat more efficient and not to go along the path of many other cumbersome organisations, be they public, private or NGO – with increasing number of full-time staff, in order to handle increasing numbers of committees, subcommittees, formation of TDs and SIGs, etc. without real and meaningful outputs. We may have to think of merging or even removing some of the TDs and SIGs to streamline the Institution's operations. This may go a long way to resolving the rising cost of human resources and operational cost as well.

At the same time, I would like to urge our volunteer members who are serving in IEM various committees and also holding offices, to be more considerate in dealing with IEM Secretariat staff in the course of attending and chairing meetings, working side by side in events and activities. Those serving members who are corporate leaders or holding high positions at their

workplaces, I suggest you all leave your top hats or get off the high horses at your own offices when you are at IEM interacting with other serving volunteer members and hardworking secretariat staff.

Enough about us not throwing stones in our own glass house.

2. Keeping and serving IEM membership to the best of our ability

Now let us move into areas of how we (as in IEM volunteers and secretariat) serve the needs and benefits of our own members. The problem that IEM has been facing in the past few years or maybe even longer, is IEM has been focusing on many outreach missions. To that end, I would envisage during my term as IEM President, I would like to forge ahead in the following endeavours :

- (i) collaborating with and joining the efforts of external organizations (both public and private) in the hopes of championing the cause of practising engineers and to uphold nation building, but not to the extent of foregoing in our duty of listening to the voice of our members.
- (ii) IEM has become so internationalized that we are now the Secretariats of two regional engineering organizations, ie. FEIAP and AFEO; and very actively involved also in IEA, IPEA, WFEO, APEC Engineers, just to name a few – I believe quite a number of our own members are not even aware of all these, and what are the real benefits of IEM being the host/secretariat especially in handling the many affairs of these adopted organizations; hence it is imperative that we have to communicate regularly and consistently with our members of the happenings at the upper echelons, decision makings at the highest level, the recent developments in the regional professional arenas.
- (iii) My personal vision and mission, are to uphold IEM as still the premier professional engineering institution in the country and in parallel to also uphold the voice and ambitions of our members, in the course of their daily career work and to provide an outlet and avenue for them to channel their views, their wishes and their grievances – which we as their focal points can reach out to the right Government agencies, etc. as part of the voluntary efforts of serving IEM office holders.
- (iv) At the same time, we cannot relegate our Standing Committee on Welfare and Member Services as the stepchild in comparison to the other supposedly higher profile Standing Committees (such as Finance, Corporate Affairs, Professional Practice, Examination & Qualification, Activities among the others); the reason being Welfare and Member Services is supposed to handle the proposal and adoption of benefits for our deserving members, especially to those who are loyal and had been standing by IEM through thick and thin – by providing special benefits in the form of free membership to retired engineers from practice, life insurance and healthcare benefits, corporate rates in hotels and holiday stays, professional indemnity insurance, credit cards and special banking access, special high end to mid-range automobile prices and so many more.

We shall be constantly be on the lookout for more special promotions and benefits in service to our loyal membership.

- (v) Besides the above, education scholarships to members and their children will continue to be given to deserving recipients at special IEM events such as IEM Family Day, IEM Engineering Week, etc.
- (vi) As for our regular IEM activities, members will be charged at our own organized seminars, courses, workshops, conferences at very reasonable rates compared to outside corporate/market rates; and also have easy access to earning continuing professional development (CPD) hours for renewal of the professional practicing status – this is from the high achievable effort of our Standing Committee on Activities.

There is so much more of what we can do for our members, the above is just the tip of the iceberg, in my humble opinion. Let us, volunteers, strive to work harder to sought out and to offer much more benefits in service to our loyal and subscribing members.

My fellow IEM members,

3. Keeping and fulfilling mandate given to us to realize Vision and Mission of the Institution

It is without doubt that IEM do have vision and mission statements (as extracted from IEM webpage):

Vision

The Institution of Engineers, Malaysia aims to be the premier learned engineering society championing the adoption of ethics and professional best practices in all sectors of the industry.

Mission

IEM shall

- *promote sound professional engineering practice in support of the socio-economic development objectives of the nation.*
- *service the needs and interests of its members and the public and uphold the social standing image of the engineering profession.*
- *contribute towards nation building and shall strive to enhance society's consciousness of science and technology.*

In my personal opinion, the Vision Statement is fine – which states clearly what is the end goal or where we would like IEM to be, especially in the mind and opinion of people relevant to our ideals.

As for the Mission Statement, I suppose item (2) should be on top, in line with my stated opinions earlier about giving our top priority to our members and to keep our own house in order, and to uphold the profile and image of engineers and engineering as a noble profession in the eye of the community and public.

The other two Mission Statements has to do with IEM contributing either in leadership role or in support of initiatives or actions to uphold or to elevate issues of engineering for the benefit of nation building. This will have to be in joint collaboration with various Government agencies (such as JKR, JPS, BEM, CIDB, MITI, MOSTI, KPKT) and fellow professional bodies (such as PAM, ACEM, MBAM, REDHA, RISM) and many more. Not forgetting the many universities and colleges (both public and private) whom IEM has signed MOU with, we will continue to collaborate with them to ensure that quality of teaching and learning, and relevance of engineering content and course delivery are maintained or enhanced, in co-operation with Engineering Accreditation Council (EAC).

To that end, I do pledge that IEM shall work hand in hand with these various organisations / institutions, to serve the aspirations and needs of the community and the nation. We have to thank our Professional Practice, Corporate Affairs and Examinations and Qualifications Standing Committees for taking the lead in staking IEM stand and interests in these many issues.

We may have to tweak the vision and mission statements slightly in order to cover IEM's initiatives and current active and leading roles in holding Secretariats for Regional Co-operation / Collaboration, in FEIAP and also AFEO. I firmly advocate for the continued pursuit of these endeavours by IEM, as they do enhance the value of IEM membership significantly. These initiatives provide our members with invaluable opportunities to broaden their horizons beyond domestic borders, tapping into international markets. Moreover, they serve as platforms to showcase Malaysia's capabilities, technological prowess, exemplary work ethics, and adept management skills in steering multinational engineering projects.

On the whole, we are being served well by our Corporate Affairs and Professional Practice Standing Committees as the mainstays of IEM in assisting IEM to fulfil many of the aspirations of IEM as depicted in these Vision and Mission Statements. Of course, to that end, we must also give credit and credence to other supporting Standing Committees, ie. Finance (for budgeting and cost control measures), Admissions and Practical Training (for skills upgrading and training of engineers among our membership ranks), Information and Publications (for communicating ideas, views and latest technological advancements and knowledge to members).

Let me move on to the fourth and last area for my focus area in my presidential address.

4. Keeping up with the times, technology and issues of the day

In terms of IEM aspirations for our members, our community and our nation, we have to keep our eye on the latest developments and happenings around us, both locally and internationally.

I would like to highlight on the following key aspects:

- (a) On the Theme "Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) for practice and adherence to, by IEM
- (b) Evolution of engineering practice in the direction of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Industrial Revolution (in both IR4.0 and C4.0)
- (c) Contributions by IEM Technical Divisions, Special Interest Groups and various Sections (Women Engineers and Young Engineers)
- (d) The big IEM annual events such as IEM Convention and ENGINEER Exhibition
- (e) Position Papers, Guidelines and other IEM publications, for review and adoption by Government agencies

The theme ESG was adopted in view of the importance of continuing the previous presidency theme which focused on sustainability of our institution and our profession in the light of the worldwide pandemic challenge faced. Hence, for the year 2024, IEM shall embark on promoting the ideals of ESG – ie. preserving and protecting our environment, to foster the relationship and interlinks of engineering technology advancement with social aspect (as in economy, trade, politic, law and order, and last but not least poverty), and that rules and regulations in conjunction with ethics, apply fully and comprehensively in engineering practices, that we, as engineers are held accountable to the public in works produced, not compromising safety, health and welfare to all stakeholders.

My fellow IEM members,

IEM has published a number of Position Papers in all relevant areas of engineering affecting the public welfare, and a number of them focused on IR4.0 and C4.0, which are at the stage of preparing White Papers for JKR and KRR for consideration. The many IEM Technical Divisions and Special Interest Groups will be expected to continue their contribution to draft and publish Malaysian Standards and Industrial Papers and Standards for the engineering industry and fraternity. These efforts by IEM volunteer experts are well appreciated, as they collaborate with Standards Malaysia (under the auspices of MITI).

It was during the presidency of Ir. Ong Ching Loon when he initiated the well-received and important annual event, IEM Convention and ENGINEER Exhibition which was held for the second year in 2023. This event will be continued as part of IEM's tradition during my presidency term. So, do anticipate the 2024 IEM Convention & ENGINEER Exhibition coming up in mid-September 2024, again to be held at KLCC. We are expecting a bigger and grander event this year, with more crowd and visitors, and more exhibitors from overseas especially from China, Japan and Korea. There will be more parallel activities, symposiums and the like by our various Technical Divisions, SIGs and Sections.

Again, let me emphasize that the theme ESG will be prevalent throughout this convention and exhibition to highlight the commitment of IEM to champion the ESG issue as part of our nation's effort and commitment. And the ESG theme will also take centre stage at our upcoming 65th IEM Annual Dinner and Awards Night, which will be held on 1 June 2024 – at One World Hotel. So, please put this evening date into your 2024 diary so that you would not miss a very special evening of good food, entertainment, awards and lucky draws.

And last but not the least is our next big event, the 42nd Conference of Association of Engineering Associations of ASEAN (CAFEO 42), which shall be hosted by our IEM Sabah Branch at their new Sabah International Convention Centre (SICC), which I have visited as part of IEM delegation there in mid-January 2024. I assure you that the SICC is huge and well facilitated by amenities suited for an international event like CAFEO42 in which we can expect over 1500 delegates from our 10 ASEAN engineering partners as well as other international organisations.

By the way, Sabah is organizing this event on behalf of IEM as Malaysia was selected as the host for 2024. Having taken over as host during the last CAFEO41 in Bali, IEM will also be the Chair of the ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organizations (AFEO) which is the Owner and Champion of CAFEO42. As mentioned above, IEM had also been hosting the Secretariat of AFEO for the last 30 odd years. So, I strongly urge our IEM members (both in Peninsular and in Sabah and Sarawak) to make way and flock over to Kota Kinabalu from 22 to 25 October 2024, to enjoy this prestigious ASEAN event.

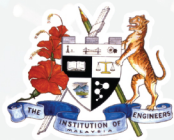
One last item, which is related to keeping up with the time and issue of the day, let me refer you to the news article which appeared in the New Straits Times on 21 February 2024, in which our then Madam President touted on the need for us all to address the issue of competitive starting salaries being crucial for local engineers' career advancement. For your information, the content of that article was contributed mainly by the Chair of our Standing Committee on Information and Publications, Ir. Abdul Razak Yakob, with some tweaks here and there by a few Excomm members including yours truly. Let me say that for the benefit of our members, this issue is very important to us all, to sustain our young engineers and our profession for the future. **And we, at IEM, shall prioritize to address this during my presidency term.**

Conclusion

My fellow IEM members,

In conclusion, as always upon the end of every presidential address, every IEM President including yours truly humbly seek the kind and strong support by all IEM members (both present today at our 65th Annual General Meeting, and also those who are absent with apology), to ride along with me for the journey ahead for this year 2024, and part of 2025 till the next AGM. We will work together for the benefit and betterment of our IEM members, our community and our nation's well-being.

I thank you all from the bottom of my heart for your presence today to listen to my presidential address from the beginning to the end. Thank you all once again for your full support, for me, for all IEM volunteers serving you, and also to our dedicated Secretariat.



IEM

The Institution of Engineers, Malaysia