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RHB PARTNERS UKM TO ACCELERATE KNOWLEDGE IN DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES

Kuala Lumpur – RHB Banking Group (“RHB” or the “Group”) strengthened its strategic collaboration with Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (“UKM”) towards fostering sustainable human capital development by cultivating knowledge in digital technology, particularly in the field of banking and finance through the RHB-UKM Endowment Fund.

The long-standing knowledge transfer partnership between RHB and UKM which started in 1997 with the creation of RHB’s Chair in Finance was refreshed in late 2018 with the establishment of the RHB-UKM Endowment Fund. As at June 2021, the Endowment Fund has total funds of RM8 million. The funds will be channelled towards creating opportunities for academicians and students of UKM to build capability and accelerate knowledge in digital technology, promote and enhance quality research and innovation in financial services, and to enhance the competitive advantage for both RHB and UKM.

“Collaborations between corporate institutions and institutes of higher learning are critical in driving innovation in the economy. The RHB-UKM Endowment Fund provides us with the opportunity to play an important role in creating knowledge foundations in digital technology through Research and Development for the next level of breakthrough or marketable new findings. It also enables us to play a role towards futureproofing our next generation of leaders at the source, and eventually talent identification as well as acquisition,” said Dato’ Khairussaleh Ramli, Group Managing Director and Group CEO of RHB Banking Group.

“Through this collaborative initiative, our team of specialists in Data Analytics work closely with UKM in sharing real life experience, key notable achievements and providing practical input from a banking and finance perspective. This complements UKM’s design process for research programmes focusing on the importance of digital technology, amongst others covering Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Cloud Computing, and Chatbots towards driving customer-centricity within a fast-evolving political and economic landscape,” added Dato’ Khairussaleh.

As part of its long term plan to meet its objectives, the RHB-UKM Endowment Fund has appointed Professor Dr Ujwal Kayande, Professor of Marketing and Director of the Centre for Business Analytics, Melbourne Business School as Chair and Visiting Professor at the UKM Graduate School of Business. He has over 20 years of experience and is renowned globally in areas of research specialisation covering Marketing Analytics, Marketing Strategy and Business Analytics.

Thus far, more than 300 participants consisting of academicians, alumni members, postgraduate students, researchers and RHB senior leaders have benefitted from various programmes and lecture series conducted by Professor Dr Ujwal. These programmes are focused on the theme of investing in data analytics to gain competitive advantage for long-term economic sustainability.

“We aim to design programmes that are adaptive to current developments and will address crucial issues in the market through research activities, education, and training. This also involves collaboration with other organisations and institutes, as well as by conducting seminars and conferences. Participation from the corporate sector and in particular, RHB Banking Group, provides us with access to valuable practical knowledge and insight from a key player within the financial services industry. The RHB-UKM Endowment Fund allows us to further develop relevant research programmes to expand technology-driven services in business management, wealth management and entrepreneurship, while supporting the development of knowledgeable, ethical, responsible, and innovative future business leaders,” said Professor Dato’ Dr Imran Ho Abdullah, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Industry, Alumni & Community Partnerships), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

To better support the Research and Publication programme under the Endowment Fund, the Board of Trustees of the Endowment Fund has set up the RHB-UKM Research Grant that is available to UKM academicians and researchers annually, with applications for the 2021 grants being opened in April this year. The call for proposals received a total of 22 applications, which have then been assessed by the RHB-UKM Grant Evaluation Panelists with grants being awarded to 5 research projects.

RHB remains committed towards nurturing future generations, through collaborative efforts with universities and this also forms part of UKM’s focus as outlined in the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education). In the wake of a challenging economic environment and drastic changes in consumer behaviour brought about by COVID-19 pandemic, there is a greater need for Universities to collaborate with the industry to remain relevant, progressive and competitive.

More information on the RHB-UKM Endowment Fund can be found at <https://www.ukm.my/gsbukm/rhb-ukm-endowment-fund-2/>