

Emeritus Professor Tan Sri Dr Zakri Abdul Hamid

*The Founding Director and Distinguished Professor of the UCSI's International
Institute of Science Diplomacy and Sustainability*



From 2010 to 2018, Professor Zakri was the Science Advisor to the Prime Minister of Malaysia. From 2001 to 2005, Professor Zakri co-chaired the UN's mega-study, "Millennium Ecosystem Assessment". He is the founding Chair of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and a member of the UN Secretary-General's Scientific Advisory Board. He sits on the Global Leadership Council of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). He has been appointed by the United Nations (UN) as the Co-Chairman of STI Advisory Board of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Recently, he has been appointed as a member of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Scientific Advisory Board.

Previously, he was the Chair, of Malaysian Bioeconomy Development Corp (Bioeconomy Corp); Chair of the Board of Directors, University of Malaya. Presently, he is the Pro-Chancellor, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), and Multimedia University (MMU). Recently, he has been re-appointed as the Joint-Chair of the Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT).

Zakri's professional interests include crop science, biodiversity, and science diplomacy. He has received numerous awards: Fulbright-Hays Fellowship (1981); Rotary Research Foundation Gold Medal Award (1999); ISSAAS Matsuda Award (2013); ASEAN Meritorious Service Award (2014); Zayed International Prize for the Environment (2014); the Academy of Science of South Africa Distinguished Visiting Scholar Award (2015); Merdeka Award for the environment category (2015); the Midori Prize for Biodiversity Award (2018); Global Competitiveness Award conferred by the Global Federation of Competitiveness Council, Washington DC (2017); ASEAN Biodiversity Hero Award (2017); Most Eminent Brand Laureate Award (2019); United Nations Malaysia Award (Environmental Sustainability) (2019); and Anugerah Akademik Negara (2019).

In January 2017, the US-based "Biofuel Digest", an influential industry magazine hashailed him as one of the "Top 100 Influential Persons in the Advanced Bioeconomy 2017".

In Malaysia, he has been conferred the rank of Senior Fellow by the Academy of Sciences Malaysia with the title of “Academician” (2015); Honorary Doctorate in Science, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (2013), Honorary Doctorate in Biotechnology, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (2013) Honorary Doctorate in Science, Universiti Putra Malaysia (2015); Honorary Doctorate in Science, University of Nottingham (2015). Also, conferred with a Datukship (1991); Dato’ Sri (2012), and a ‘Tan Sri’ (2014).

Three species have been named after Zakri: a beetle (*Paleosepharia zakrii*), a cicada (*Pomponia zakrii*) and a pitcher plant (*Nepenthes zakriana*).

Professor Dr Zakri is also presently the Chairman of Atri Advisory, a consultancy company advising governments, regional bodies, and international organisations on science and technology for sustainable development, conservation, and sustainable use of biodiversity. He is also spearheading the Wyss Foundation and National Geographic’s Campaign for Nature 30x30 initiatives in the ASEAN region as the ambassador and science advisor.

Recently, he was elected as the founding member of the Paris-based International Council for Science (ICSU) and is currently the fifth holder of the Tun Hussein Onn Chair in International Studies at The Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia.

As a scientist, educator and researcher Tan Sri Zakri has made a lasting contribution to the observation, analysis, and assessment of global biodiversity and ecosystem services. In doing so he has fostered the remediation and protection of the natural environment and promoted environmental sustainability.

Tan Sri Zakri’s achievements, particularly in his global role in championing environmental issues have highlighted, to the wider community, Malaysia’s efforts in the realm of sustainable development. A passionate advocate for sustainable development he recognises that “sustainable development for Malaysia is poverty elimination – it is about promoting human well-being.”

While he maintains that “science, technology, and innovation can be an engine for our economic development” Tan Sri Zakri is also a strong believer that “development must be tempered with a respect for the environment.” He has led efforts to develop a global assessment of biodiversity and its ecosystem services to provide scientific relevant policy advice for world leaders. His contribution has at its core an inclusive and integrated methodology and approach, a global perspective, and a long-term vision that has and will lead to further development. In this regard, his unerring commitment to protecting the natural environment and promoting environmental sustainability personifies the Spirit of Merdeka and its pursuit of excellence and contribution to the Nation.