



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**16 PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES PARTICIPATES IN THE
SME-UNIVERSITY INTERNSHIP 2014 CHAMPIONSHIP**

Students gain invaluable hands-on experience while helping local business to ‘turn-around’

KUALA LUMPUR, 28 October 2014 - In its endeavour to inculcate and advocate the spirit of entrepreneurship among young generations, SME Corp. Malaysia organised an Award Ceremony of the SME-University Internship 2014 Championship today at the Berjaya Times Square Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. The programme accords recognition of the talents and capabilities of students, from multiple disciplines, for their success in ‘turning around’ a small business. The programme is envisaged to be an impetus to acculturate entrepreneurship among the younger generations in driving the future economy of Malaysia.

80 students from 16 universities competed in the Championship event today which was graced by YB Datuk Ir. Haji Hamim Samuri, Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry (MITI).

The Champion received a trophy, cash prize of RM12,000 for the students and RM4,000 for the SME sponsored by Malaysian Industrial Development Finance Berhad (MIDF), a “Pre-approved Loan” of up to a maximum amount of RM20,000 from Perbadanan Usahawan Nasional Berhad (PUNB) to start their business, and an iPad each sponsored by SME Corp. Malaysia.

The 1st Runner Up received a trophy, cash prizes of RM8,000 for the students and RM3,000 for the SME sponsored by MIDF, while the 2nd Runner Up received a trophy and cash prizes of RM6,000 for the students and RM2,500 for the SME which is also sponsored by MIDF.

Winning team with no prior experience on starting a business will be participating in an apprenticeship training for 6 or 12 months (depending on the type of business) under the *Program Graduan Perantis*, an offer to undergo Management Training for a period of one (1) to two (2) years with a PUNB investee company, as well as *Program Pembangunan Usahawan CEDAR* under SME Bank.

Now running in its 6th year, the SME-University Internship Programme is an initiative to link SMEs to the universities as part of the Government's efforts to enhance the synergy between the industry and higher learning institutions in elevating the SMEs' capacity and capability. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in 2008, between SME Corp. Malaysia and Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), to roll out this Programme to all Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) throughout Malaysia.

During the final round of the Championship that was held today, the teams were required to present to a panel of judges on their ability to come out with creative and practical ideas to assist selected SMEs. This year saw an increase in participation in which 16 public universities participated in this program. Among those which were involved were Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM), Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

“Through the SME-University Internship Programme, students gain hands-on experience by seeing, touching and knowing about the pains and rewards of doing business. For this reason, entrepreneurial internship is seen as an excellent platform to provide students with that learning experience in a real business setting. Indeed, SME-University Internship Programme offers many advantages for the universities, students, as well as the SMEs. Students who have participated in these internship programmes tend to be better prepared for a career either in the job market or as new entrepreneurs”, said YB Datuk Ir. Haji Hamim Samuri, Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry (MITI).

The SME-University Internship 2014 Championship is supported by MIDF, PUNB, Leong Bee & Soo Bee Sdn Bhd, ProEight Offshore Engineering Sdn. Bhd, Sydney Cake House, CD Communication Group Sdn. Bhd., Jamu Mak Dara Sdn. Bhd. and Tomei Gold & Jeweller.

#END#