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PUBLIC CONFERENCE 2005 "BUILDING CONNECTED
COMMUNITIES: PEOPLE AND TECHNOLOGY"

A Very Good Evening,

YB Dato' Sri Dr Jamaludin Jarjis
Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation;

Mr. George Newstrom
Chairman, World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA);

Y. Bhg Datuk Dr Mohamed Arif Nun
Chief Executive Officer of Multimedia Development Corporation (MDC);

Y. Bhg Dato' Dr Michael Yeoh
Chief Executive Officer, Asian Strategic and Leadership Institute (ASLI);

Mr. Lee Boon Kok
Chairman, The Association of the Computer and Multimedia Industry Malaysia
(PIKOM);

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I would like to start by saying that Malaysia is pleased to be the host for the Global Public Policy Conference (GPPC) 2005 being held here in Kuala Lumpur in September 2005 and to welcome our guests from all over the world. Allow me to also welcome the World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) delegations who are here with us today.

2. I am pleased to note the commendable effort by the co-organizers of GPPC 2005, PIKOM, MDC and ASLI, in bringing together the local and foreign ICT communities which comprise policy experts, decision makers and leaders of organizations from both the public and private sector. I believe your presence here for this 2-day conference will definitely enrich the discussions and deliberations as to how we can explore the potentials of ICT in the global networked economy and address future policy requirements. The theme for GPPC 2005 "Sharing Opportunities in the Network Economy" is indeed very appropriate and timely in the wake of challenges brought upon by the fast-paced and dynamic ICT industry. In order to keep up with the progressive pace of change and escalating state of ICT, we have to continuously arm ourselves with knowledge and awareness of what is taking place around the world follow closely business and technology trend..

Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. The country's premier ICT project, Multimedia Super Corridor, envisioned as a catalyst for the ICT development for the country, has seen much success as it enters

into its 9th year since its inception in August 1996 which includes the creation of over 1,200 MSC-status companies, 26,000 knowledge-based jobs and the creation of many home-grown ICT-related products and services, talent and technopreneurs. I am also proud to note that MSC-status companies represent 47 percent of the total listed on MESDAQ.

4. The Malaysia ICT industry has been enjoying good growth, in line with global trends and spurred by strong government support. According to a market research firm, IDC, Malaysia ICT market is expected to reach a value of US Dollars 10.5 Billion in 2007 which represents a significant amount of growth. In fact, the Malaysia ICT industry is expanding at a compound annual growth rate of 8.3 percent, which is even faster than the global average of 6.2 percent. The second quarter of 2004 recorded the best performance in almost four years – registered GDP growth rate of 8 percent. Such robust economic growth will naturally provide a strong fundamental in supporting the further growth of the ICT sector.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. The Malaysian government firmly recognizes that ICT is fundamental in addressing the challenges of globalization, and as a leader amongst developing nations, we have made thorough preparations to contribute to GPPC 2005, and that has included hosting our own National Public Policy Workshop (NPPW) to understand better where we stand on many of the topics we are indeed discussing at GPPC 2005. In particular, we are very interested in sharing our experiences and learning from others in the strategic areas of E-Government, Information Security, International Trade, and Digital Divide.

6. Emphasis in improving public sector delivery system will be one of the major thrusts of the upcoming 9th Malaysia Plan to be launched next year in efforts to fulfill the rising demands and expectations of public at large. Among the key points from the NPPW were the existence of a more efficient, integrated, transparent and citizen-centric public sector delivery system.

7. The government is embarking on a new initiative to offer a number of government services through a single gateway. The gateway will also provide access to strategic community portals, to provide citizens and businesses with information and services without having to navigate the government's vast machinery. Portals represent a progression from the current scenario of disparate agency websites.

8. The e-Procurement is an obvious testimony to one of the e-Government; successful implementations of ICT to further enhance public service delivery to public and private entities. The e-Procurement application has enabled Government agencies to procure goods and services electronically in an efficient and transparent manner. As of April 2005, nearly 95,000 were registered suppliers under e-Procurement. Of this number, 28,231 are now e-Procurement enabled suppliers who can transact electronically with the Government. During this period, close to 50,000 transactions valued at more than RM340 million under Central Contract and Direct Purchase were recorded.

9. Public-private sector collaborations are vital in ensuring the integrity and reliability of the network to provide information security. Comprehensive frameworks and mechanisms are necessary to address issues of security in the communications network and its components without compromising the privacy of network users.

10. In international trade, Malaysia is a global leader and we are rapidly growing our services too, especially in outsourcing. The government recognizes that the shared-services and outsourcing sector can be a major boost to the country, particularly through the creation of high-value jobs in the ICT and related sectors. In a recent benchmarking study conducted by Deloitte Consulting on outsourcing locations in the Asia Pacific region, it has placed Kuala Lumpur as a "clear favourite" for locating off-shore shared service operations. The study also described Malaysia as a "credible challenger" to traditional outsourcing/off shoring locations such as India, China and the Philippines.

11. Statistics point to the fact that Malaysia is poised to become a key player in the market. More than 11,200 jobs were created with 48 world class Shared Services & Outsourcing companies based in the MSC. Successful home-grown companies have created as many as 2,000 knowledge-based jobs.

12. The government has indeed intensified efforts to continuously provide ICT facilities and infrastructure to the underserved group. Facilities such as Community-based Internet centres or commonly known as Internet Desa/Info Desa centres have been set up at villages and rural areas. Services such as Tele-health and Smart School projects are also extended to these underserved areas to enhance connectivity and people development. Computer laboratories were established at 2,226 schools comprising personal computers equipped with teaching courseware for Mathematics, Science, Bahasa Malaysia and English.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

13. The term "borderless world" has been with us for some time now, but the borderless world has now become more real with recent advents and usage of ICT to truly build "Connected Communities". Technological innovation such as cellular telephones, broadband, wi-fi, wi-max, 3G, grid computing, pervasive computing, workflow software and open source software have revolutionized connectedness, sharing and collaboration between communities.

14. One challenge of building connected communities is removing the disparity of connectedness of different communities. This is also known as "Bridging the Digital Divide" which Malaysia recognizes, and now prefers to call in a more positive light as "Creating Digital Dividends". To this end, Malaysia has taken various initiatives, especially by building infrastructure projects such as Rural Internet Centres, School Net and MYREN, or "Malaysian Research and Education Network". Other than accessibility, Malaysia's public policies to create digital dividends are also now focused on affordability, content, education and publicity.

15. Technological innovation contributes greatly to building connected communities, but Malaysia recognizes that innovation does not mean invention alone. Malaysia sees technology as an important enabler, but emphasizes that true innovation, at all levels, needs to be enhanced to accelerate economic growth and create digital dividends for the wider community.

16. Another challenge of building connectedness through technology is the need for easier collaboration through processes and systems that are integrated. For example, Malaysia's e-Government policy direction is to build a true single gateway towards citizen-centric public services delivery. While there is a need to strike a

balance between proprietary and open innovation, we recognize the currently changing Intellectual Property Rights regime that moves towards openness and collaboration.

17. Let me reiterate here again that in the final analysis, connectedness and technology will only be meaningful if they bring value to society. For Malaysia, the public policy direction is not only to work towards a knowledge-based society, but also towards an innovation society. To achieve this, one of Malaysia's areas of focus will be to review our teaching and learning methods, so as to change mindsets based on positive values and to encourage and challenge people to think creatively.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

18. In public policy, the government will continue to play a very important role. We are very focused on ensuring service excellence or delivering the promise of e-government as this is the very basis of public service.

19. Public policy, to be both relevant and effective has to be a true partnership between the government and private sector, but which also takes into account the needs of citizens.

20. In closing, I note that GPPC 2005 is an international highlight of the Malaysia ICT Month which includes of course the recently concluded 9th MSC-International Advisory Panel (IAP) Meeting in Penang. I understand that our friends in the Asian-Oceanian Computing Industry Organization (ASOCIO) are also holding their annual meeting here in Kuala Lumpur in order to be with us.

21. Malaysia is proud to have also been selected to be the host of the World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) in 2008, and look forward to long term partnerships with both WITSA and ASOCIO through both PIKOM and the Multimedia Development Corporation (MDC) to continue to play leading roles in organizing and participating in major international industry events.

22. On that note, I declare the Global Public Policy Conference 2005, officially open. I trust that you will have a productive discussion ahead.

Thank you.