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**Venue : KL HILTON, KUALA LUMPUR**  
**Date : 27-02-2006**  
**Title : THE OPENING OF INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON RADIATION PROCESSING**

A Very Good Morning,

Yang Berhormat Dato' Sri Dr Jamaluddin Jarjis,  
Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation;

Dr. Daud Mohamad,  
Director General of the Malaysian Institute of Nuclear Technology Research (MINT);

Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Dato' Thong Yaw Hong,  
Chairman of SterilGamma Technologies;

Tan Sri, Datuk-datuk, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am honoured to be invited to officiate the International Meeting on Radiation Processing 2006 (IMRP 2006) by the joint-organizers of today's event, SterilGamma Technologies and the Malaysian Institute for Nuclear Technology Research (MINT). On behalf of the Government of Malaysia, please allow us to extend our warmest welcome and "Selamat Datang" to our international guests and participants. I am sure you will find your stay in multicultural Malaysia quite an interesting and a memorable one.

2. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI), Malaysian Institute for Nuclear Technology (MINT) and SterilGamma Technologies for their collective effort in bringing IMRP 2006 to Kuala Lumpur. I understand it is the first time IMRP has been hosted by an ASEAN country. I am glad to note that the elite from the radiation processing industry from over 39 countries are here, attending IMRP 2006 Kuala Lumpur.

Ladies and gentlemen,

3. Today, science, technology and innovation are major drivers of economic growth. Positive advancements in science and technology will lead to improvements in the quality of life for all. Technologies which hardly existed 50 years ago are now present in all facets of our mundane lives. As one international author has put it, technologies such as wireless communication, the power of the personal computer and the software revolution has made the world flat. These new technologies are among the many technologies that have changed the way we live and enhanced the quality of our lives in many ways.

4. In Malaysia, we have always placed the advancement of science and technology as one of our priorities. From a largely agriculture-based country, we have managed to transform our country into an industrial economy, exporting many products from plastic resins to air conditioning units to IC chips. The successful transformation of Malaysia's economy is achieved only through a clear vision, good management and well-planned human resource development as well as the judicious application of science and technology in our industries.

5. Malaysia is by most measures, a small country. Despite our size, we are ambitious and have managed to integrate into the global economy. Currently, as one of the few trading nations where total trade is larger than GDP, we have proven that Malaysia is capable of finding its spot in the international market place.

6. Being a player in the global economy does subject us to some pressures. Among them is the constant drive to innovate at the risk of losing our competitive advantage. A country with limited resources like Malaysia cannot pursue excellence in all areas but will have to be much more strategic in its focus areas such as ICT, biotechnology advanced materials, advanced manufacturing, renewal energy and nanotechnology. I was made to understand that radiation processing technology supports the advancement of these priority areas.

7. The radiation processing industry is a niche industry and is relatively an unknown industry to the public. However, this industry is critical as it has linkages to and supports many other industries, from medical device manufacturing, to polymer manufacturing, to biotechnology and food, and, herbal and cosmetics processing. The country recognizes the strategic importance of the radiation processing industry, and hence, various Government incentives are offered for investments in this industry.

8. The radiation processing industry is a success story in Malaysia. This industry has helped Malaysia sustain its position as a leading surgical glove and catheter exporter worldwide despite intense competition from other producing nations. Now, more opportunities have been created for the use of radiation processing with the imposition of new phytosanitary measures by Malaysia's trade partners. The international community in general has agreed to use irradiation as a broad spectrum treatment for phytosanitary purposes.

9. From a policy viewpoint, Malaysia supports the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies for the benefit of industry and the public at large. The use of radiation processing technologies fits very well with our country's renewed focus on agriculture – especially in order to meet the phytosanitary standards of major importing countries. Currently, tropical fruits from Malaysia such as papaya, banana and jackfruit are not exported to the largest and most profitable markets due to phytosanitary constraints. In this regard, Malaysia is working closely with its trade partners to explore this avenue.

10. Thus, it is hoped that, the presence of participants from our trading partners, industrialist and scientists could provide some feedback to the government. Malaysia is pragmatic in recognizing the value of the radiation processing industry and advanced technologies such as gamma, electron beam and x-ray irradiation to help support our export-driven agro-industries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

11. The availability of radiation processing facilities should also be a key consideration in Malaysia's plans to position herself as a "Halal" manufacturing hub. In a practical sense, "Halal" should not only mean that the food is spiritually acceptable for Muslim consumption. However, "Halal" should also mean clean, hygienic, safe and healthy for human consumption. Radiation processing technology has unique advantages for food processing of which the most outstanding is its ability to treat any food in frozen form.

12. For instance, food irradiation is fast becoming a critical tool in helping the food industry meet sanitary standards imposed by multinationals as well as importing countries. Although, food irradiation often conjures negative emotions from the public, once rationalized logically, food irradiation is in fact a useful tool to the consumers and industry. I was made to understand that radiation processing is a chemical-free technology which is flexible enough to be applied across a broad range of foods. This is recognized by United Nations (UN) agencies such as the Food & Agriculture Organization, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In Malaysia, legislation is being harmonized in the area of food irradiation in line with the recommendations of the United Nation's Codex Alimentarius.

Ladies and gentlemen,

13. Malaysia will continue to support peaceful uses of nuclear technology applications. It is hoped that industries and scientists in this sector will exploit the peaceful applications of nuclear technologies to the benefit of mankind. We must always bear in mind that what is considered as esoteric technology today may well be the economy of tomorrow. We will evaluate each technology on its own merits, not on the pre-conceived notion of the masses. Malaysia understands that as technologies mature, those that may not have been practical in the last decade could be the solution for problems this decade and beyond.

14. It is the Government's duty to provide a conducive climate which enables the researchers, industrialists and manufacturers to develop, identify and commercialise useful technologies for the benefit of the Malaysian public and the world at large. Our Government fully appreciates and understands the benefits of a vibrant radiation processing industry for national and economic development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

15. Let us reflect back that only one generation ago, television pictures were black and white, telephones were plugged to the wall and offices had fans instead of air conditioning. It is through the courageous efforts of the innovators and industrialists that we continue to enjoy a higher and better standard of living. We have to continue to innovate and embrace innovations which will help us enhance the standard of living of our people.

16. With that note, ladies and gentlemen, and in the name of Allah, Most Beneficent, Most Merciful, Bismillahirrahmannirahim, I officially declare the International Meeting on Radiation Processing 2006 Kuala Lumpur open. Thank you.