

**SPEECH BY  
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI  
AT THE LAUNCHING OF SHELL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
INTERNATIONAL (SITI) SDN. BHD., AT CYBERJAYA  
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Let me begin by saying how pleased I am to be invited to participate in this momentous occasion for shell in Malaysia. It is always a pleasure for me to be at Cyberjaya. Although I live not too far from here, I have never ceased to marvel at the buildings, the courtyards, the gardens, as well as the infrastructure that we have here. These are the very building blocks of Malaysia's own high-tech city. If you travel across Malaysia, you will see a semblance of our nation's transformation from agriculture- based to industrial-based, as you weave through plantations and padi fields, and come to large manufacturing plants and industrial estates. But here in Cyberjaya you witness something more - the bold stroke, the stark vision of our aspirations - to transform yet again and become a knowledge- based, information-led society.

2. The launch of shell I.T. international, or SITI, today marks another milestone in the progress and growth of Malaysia's I.T. landscape. Cyberjaya is here to stay, and will certainly flourish. The Multimedia Super Corridor (M.S.C.) has been through trying times - in the beginning, the Asian financial crisis, then the bursting of the dot com bubble, and more recently the global uncertainties - and yet the M.S.C. has survived all these trials and tribulations to emerge as an important technology hub. The numbers are ever impressive: there are now 644 M.S.C.- status companies, including 50 world class companies, one of which is SITI. investments in the M.S.C. Increased to RM 3.2 billion in 2001, up from RM 449 million in 1997. Total sales revenue of M.S.C.-status companies grew by ten times to RM 4.4 billion between 1997 and 2001, with export sales accounting for almost a quarter of all sales. There were more than 12,000 knowledge-workers in M.S.C. Companies in 2001, compared to less than 2,000 in 1997. Furthermore, M.S.C. Companies are performing favourably across a range of productivity and r&d indicators.

3. Malaysia is thus proud to officially welcome SITI here today, which will no doubt contribute further to the impressive figures I just quoted. I am made to understand that shell chose Cyberjaya over some eight other I.T. locations - including Hong Kong and Singapore - in which to base its regional infrastructure for the delivery of "24 by 7" I.T. business support services worldwide. In 1999, against a set of comprehensive selection criteria, such as labour costs, skilled I.T. resource pool, language proficiency, reliable I.T. infrastructure, economic security and political stability, as well as tax and investment incentives, I was told that the key differentiator for shell in choosing Cyberjaya was the promise of the M.S.C..

4. Today, we are all proud witnesses to this promise being fulfilled and literally cast in stone. On the strength of support from the royal dutch/shell group, Malaysia's reputation to deliver as an effective I.T. nucleus has been enhanced. indeed, YAB Prime Minister singled out SITI for mention when he recently spoke of the growing portfolio of business residents in the M.S.C.. it is hoped that SITI will thus act as a role model for other companies to emulate in further expanding their operations here. While we want Malaysian M.S.C. Companies to grow and become global, we believe there is every reason for most, if not all, world-class M.S.C. Companies to establish a sizeable presence in Cyberjaya.

5. The very existence of the M.S.C. has significantly increased the I.T. labour force in Malaysia, as more and more young people seek higher education in I.T. and related fields. It is estimated that between 2000 and 2005, about 180,000 graduates with diplomas, degrees and post-graduate degrees in I.T. And engineering will be produced by Malaysian institutes of higher learning. We will need to expand this number further, as the economy continues to grow and mature. More importantly, we will also need to improve the quality of our graduates, both in terms of technical proficiency as well as `soft' interpersonal skills. This task must be borne not only by the educational institutes, but by employers as well. Indeed, as the demand for talent intensifies world-wide, employers have to think of ways to attract, train and retain employees. Talent is also increasingly more expensive and more mobile, so employers, especially Malaysian companies, need to be aware of these trends in order to maintain their competitive advantage.

6. It is gratifying to note that within the last year alone, shell recruited over 300 I.T. professionals from the national labour force. I am sure that shell, as with other like-minded companies, will invest a significant proportion of their budget to sharpen the skills of this asset base. This will not only enrich the national human resource pool, but will reap rewards for shell and for the Malaysians in shell.

7. Fortunately, employees of SITI and other companies in the M.S.C. Are blessed with a conducive work environment to help them develop their full potential. Cyberjaya offers a good mix of technology and 'nature': the city's environmental ergonomics provide a healthy and peaceful environment for its cosmopolitan population, while a mature and reliable telecommunications infrastructure ensures the high speed connectivity that is critical to global service delivery.

8. The government's commitment to the M.S.C. has never changed despite the crises and detractors along the way. We remain mindful of meeting the needs and expectations of Cyberjaya's I.T. population. We look to Cyberjaya citizens, such as SITI, to add value to and assist in moving the M.S.C. global partnership concept further forward, in order that we may realise the full potential of Cyberjaya for mutual gain. I hope that members of the communications and multimedia industry will fully collaborate with the government to make this happen.

9. We take our offer of making the M.S.C. a "global testbed" very seriously. as such, we will endeavour to support all M.S.C.-status companies in every way we can. The success of any M.S.C. Company adds to the distinction of the M.S.C. Itself. for example, I understand that SITI aims to be a "world class, global I.T. delivery centre" within two years. With support from the M.D.C. and other government agencies, and given the high caliber and work ethic of your workforce, I am confident that SITI and other similar organisations have the means to meet their respective targets as planned.

10. The government is aware that shell has a long history of business and social investment in this country. We note with interest your pride in being a multinational with a Malaysian heart. SITI is a case in point - even though SITI Malaysia serves the global market, 90 per cent of its staff are Malaysians. I hope that other multinationals will take a leaf out of SITI's book. Combining international best practice with local knowledge and skills is a potent mix, and may well be a recipe for success in many markets.

11. With SITI in Cyberjaya as shell's strategic I.T. platform, I am confident that with god's grace, shell's presence in over 135 countries will be connected successfully for better and faster communications, as well as for greater knowledge- sharing, both within your organisation and externally, with your stakeholders.

12. Finally, ladies and gentlemen, my congratulations go to the management and staff of shell for the launch of shell I.T. international here in Cyberjaya. I am confident that your commitment to Malaysia will bear handsome dividends, and I offer you my best wishes for the company's continued growth and success.

Thank you.