

**SPEECH BY
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Ladies and gentlemen:

Thank you to Technology Park Malaysia for inviting me to say a few words at this auspicious occasion. I should begin by saying that the role that is played by TPM, namely that of a technology incubator, is one that is important in the government's eyes.

2. Knowledge-based activity, such as information technology and biotechnology, is seen as a key driver in Malaysia's future economic growth. The Multimedia Super corridor project was initiated in 1996 to accelerate this shift and has achieved considerable progress. It is now home to almost 650 knowledge companies and approximately 12,000 knowledge workers. Equally important, the publicity surrounding the project has raised people's awareness of it and its importance for Malaysia's future.

3. The establishment of the MSC has also accelerated the rollout of high-speed infrastructure. Admittedly the rollout of high bandwidth ICT infrastructure, especially for companies in urban areas as well as for advanced users could be quickened. This is an issue that must be addressed urgently, as this deficiency can slow down growth for companies involved in it. Nonetheless, the scale and speed of development over the past six years has been significant and commendable.

4. However, the MSC is not merely a property development project with first class infrastructure. It is supposed to spearhead Malaysia's leap into the information age, by being the test bed for innovative solutions and cultivating technological entrepreneurship. To stress the importance of building up SME's, technopreneur development has been designated as the seventh and newest flagship application. In order for this to occur, the MSC must attract the right people because as with any initiative, it is the people that matter. We could put in place the best and most modern facilities imaginable, but our aspirations would not be met if we do not attract the talent to populate and utilise those facilities.

5. It is therefore critical to foster a sense of community. To create an environment that is conducive to creativity. To provide a space for people to congregate and converse. The technopreneurs who operate here should be at ease to invent and innovate.

For this reason, incubation centres, such as TPM are important, precisely because it provides these elements. These centres potentially provide a fertile space where innovators can meet to discuss developments and exchange ideas. Research and development work can often be esoteric and highly specialised. Being able to speak to like-minded peers about common areas of interest will, I believe, act as a stimulus to technopreneurs to think more creatively and work harder towards achieving their goals.

Ladies and gentlemen:

6. I have been informed that the upgraded network runs on solar power and is the largest solar array project, not only in Malaysia, but in the asia pacific.

7. This is a welcome development. Solar energy has yet to be harnessed to full potential. Its use in providing power for a building's entire network systems here in TPM illustrates how solar power can be used in new and exciting applications. The sun not only provides a dependable power source, but being able to harvest its rays productively reduces reliance on exhaustive energy sources, such as fossil fuels. After all, solar power is an energy source that is clean, environmentally friendly and maintenance free.

8. Too often, we pursue development to the detriment of our environment. We sometimes wholeheartedly pursue the benefits of modern life but pollute our air, destroy our forests and contaminate our rivers in the process. Malaysia is committed to the provisions of agenda 21, the agreement on sustainable development signed at the earth summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. If it is at all possible, we should find ways to protect our biodiversity, even as we seek to raise the standard of living. The two goals are should not be mutually exclusive. Although the eighth Malaysia plan recommends increased usage of renewable energy resources such as biomass, biogas, urban solid waste, solar energy and hydroelectricity, there is still much that can be done. At present, only about 11% of energy produced in Malaysia comes from such sources.

9. This is a pity because in many ways, Malaysia is well equipped to apply solar power. There is abundant raw material in the form of sunlight. We also have large quantities of sand that can be converted to the photovoltaic cells that store solar energy. The only remaining thing that is required is the knowledge and determination to find a workable method to harness this energy. This would entail some research and development work but I am sure, in the spirit of "Malaysia boleh" that this is achievable.

10. Successfully developing solar power would have many positive implications. For example, the quality of life for people living in the interior of the country can be improved by deploying energy storage cells in these remote parts, especially if the cost of installing power lines is prohibitive. Local industry could benefit through the manufacture of these storage cells and other equipment needed to convert solar power into electricity. There may even be opportunities for Malaysia to export its expertise and technology to neighbouring countries.

Ladies and gentlemen:

11. The internet age has been called the age of "faster, better, cheaper." Networks should not only be able to enable faster communication, but should be reliable 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In the world of technology, speed, availability and reliability are critical.

12. I understand that the network upgrade has been designed with these features in mind. It is my hope that the upgraded infrastructure backbone that you have provided will enable the technopreneurs who are housed within this park to achieve greater things, in line with Malaysia's broader ambitions.

13. I would therefore like to congratulate technology park Malaysia for taking steps to improve the quality of the services it provides to its customers.

14. With that, it gives me great pleasure to declare the solar powered network officially open.

Thank you.