

**SPEECH BY
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AT MENARA KUALA LUMPUR
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First and foremost I would like to congratulate the APPF under the chairmanship of His Excellency Mr. Yasuhiro Nakasone on their wise decision for choosing Malaysia as the venue for the 11th annual meeting despite the negative perception of the west, linking Malaysia with terrorism. Malaysia is a safe place for everyone and we will not allow outsiders to disorientate and destabilise us.

2. The APPF is a loosely structured and non-exclusive forum of national parliamentarians who participate either as delegates of their parliaments or in their personal capacities.

3. I was made to understand that the APPF which was the "brain-child" and founded by the former Japanese Prime Minister His Excellency Mr. Yasuhiro Nakasone, seeks to provide opportunities for national parliamentarians of the Asia Pacific region to identify and discuss matters of common concern and interest and to highlight them in a global context; to deepen their understanding of the policy concerns, interests and experiences of the countries of the region; to examine the critical political, social and cultural developments resulting from the economic growth and integration; to encourage and promote regional cooperation at all levels on matters of common concern to the region and to play the roles of national parliamentarians in furthering in their respective countries a sense of regional cohesion, undertaking and cooperation.

4. I am glad to note that the APPF act to promote greater regional identification and cooperation with particular focus on cooperation for further advancement of peace, freedom, democracy and prosperity, open and exclusive cooperation for the expansion of free trade and investment and sustainable development and sound environment practices; and non-military cooperation, which gives due consideration to issues relating to regional peace and security.

5. Regional cooperation cannot be achieved overnight. Indeed, understanding comes from regular interaction between people at all levels. Close interaction breaks down barriers and welds people together. Understanding builds friendship and contributes to ease and harmony. It is my hope that through meetings like this close interaction with an open mind will help to dispel misconceived nations, and shift the paradigm towards constructive understanding.

Ladies and gentlemen,

6. Malaysia's development policies emphasise national unity, income redistribution, and the eradication of poverty. To become dynamic, vibrant and prosperous we have shape our policies and style of our administration to our local situation, that of a multi-racial developing country. That policy have paid off. I hope all of you present here tonight can help correct the distorted view of Malaysia painted by the western media.

7. Again, I would like to stress that Malaysia is a safe place for everyone, locals and tourists, residents and visitors alike. We do not tolerate any activities by any groups that can threaten our society nor do we condone anybody who ran away from the legal authorities in their home country. We do extend our cooperation to those who seek our assistance in combating terrorists' aggressions.

8. On that note once again on behalf of the people of Malaysia, I wish you all a pleasant and enjoyable stay in Malaysia.