

**SPEECH BY  
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI  
AT THE LAUNCH OF TPM ACADEMY  
AT TECHNOLOGY PARK MALAYSIA, BUKIT JALIL, KUALA LUMPUR  
24 APRIL 2003**

-----

1. Saya bersyukur kehadiran Allah S.W.T. kerana dengan limpah, kurnia dan izinNya maka dapat kita berkumpul di sini pada pagi ini. Saya ingin mengucapkan terima kasih kepada pihak penganjur kerana memberi penghormatan kepada saya untuk memberi ucapan, seterusnya merasmikan institusi pendidikan yang baru ini.

2. The government has always regarded education as central to national development. Not surprisingly, the issue of education consumes much of the government's time, effort and money - some would even go so far to say that education appears to be a pre-occupation for the government. But the government not only considers our commitment to education necessary, we think it has been more than worthwhile. Our nation's progress and development thus far owes much to the wisdom and foresight of our leaders in placing emphasis and priority in this area. The government, since the earliest days of independence, has always sought to provide quality opportunities to Malaysians to equip themselves with the right skills and knowledge to thrive and succeed. Let me assure you that this focus on education will continue. In fact, with the onslaught of globalisation, liberalisation and scientific progress, we will continue to increase and intensify our efforts in education as we attempt to join the league of developed nations by 2020.

3. The effort to educate our citizens, particularly the younger generation, must be borne by all quarters in the country. The government alone cannot produce the critical mass of knowledge workers needed to fuel the economy. We therefore appreciate and applaud the proactive approach of private education institutions like TPM Academy, which seek to offer high quality academic programmes and produce graduates equipped with the latest knowledge and skills.

4. Since the introduction of the private higher education institution act 1996 by the government, private higher education has flourished in the country. Statistics show that there were 156 private higher education institutions in the country in 1992. Within 10 years, that number has grown to 706 private higher education institutions. I am told that up to January of this year, about 36,000 international students have enrolled in our private higher education institutions. Our plans to develop Malaysia as a centre for educational excellence are bearing some fruit. But much more must be done about the range and quality of private higher education in Malaysia before we can proceed further.

5. We must recognise that innovation and creativity are now the core values of the new economy and that intellectual capital is the key source of competitive advantage. Mastery over science and technology will also shape our future progress and development. As such, private higher education in Malaysia must not only impart 'hard' knowledge, particularly in the sciences, but also inculcate positive values such as life-long learning, creativity and innovation, competitiveness, as well as the relentless pursuit of new knowledge. When knowledge is accompanied with the right values, then true advancement can take place.

6. The Malaysian government will continue to encourage private educational institutions here to enhance their capacity in tertiary education, particularly those institutions focusing on science and technology. The government's overall aim is to achieve 60 percent of enrollment in science and technology subjects across both public and private higher education institutions by 2005. Public universities and colleges are therefore giving science and technology greater emphasis, and I hope private sector institutions will rise up to this challenge and follow suit.

7. In addition, I hope Malaysian universities and colleges will intensify their work in research and development, take up the commercialisation of such research, as well as provide consultancy and advisory services to businesses and other organisations. In this regard, the linkages between local educational institutions and industry must continue to be strengthened so that pure theory and innovation can be developed into useful goods and services for sale in the local and international markets.

8. Given that developments currently occur at an astounding pace, particularly when it comes to new technology, I hope that all educational institutions would be nimble and responsive towards the changing needs of the market and community at large. All courses and programs should be industry-driven and be up-to-date with the latest information. Local institutions should also utilise the latest technology in educating students. Teaching facilities and lecturers should be of high quality to guarantee high performance and strong results. Furthermore, educational institutions should be managed effectively and efficiently to ensure that their objectives are accomplished. In this regard, the government, through the national accreditation board, will continue to enforce the highest standards to ensure that education in Malaysia continues to be credible and of high calibre.

9. I am pleased to note that TPM Academy will be providing training opportunities to not only school leavers, but also to industry professionals who need to sharpen their skills, particularly in advanced technology. As industries today have shifted towards activities utilising sophisticated and leading-edge technology, the demand for trained and competent personnel has risen tremendously. Indeed, the need for skilled manpower becomes even more urgent when local industries compete in the global market.

10. As such, I hope TPM Academy will play its part to enhance the nation's human resource base, particularly in the use of advanced technology in industry. Malaysian workers must always seek to increase their productivity and their capacity to add value through the use of the latest technology and techniques available on the market. Only when this is done can we hope to enhance the nation's competitiveness and continue to progress and develop.

11. On that note, it is my pleasure and privilege to officially launch the Technology Park Malaysia Academy.

Thank you.