

**SPEECH BY
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI
AT THE LAUNCH OF THE MULTIMEDIA SUPER CORRIDOR (M.S.C.) NEXT LEAP
AT KUALA LUMPUR CITY CENTRE (MAIN CONCOURSE)
3 JULY 2004**

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH DAN SALAM SEJAHTERA

YB DATO' DR. JAMALUDIN JARJIS
MENTERI SAINS, TEKNOLOGI DAN INOVASI

YB MENTERI-MENTERI KABINET

YBHG TAN SRI HALIM ALI
PENGERUSI, MULTIMEDIA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (M.D.C.)

DIF-DIF KEHORMAT

PARA HADIRIN YANG SAYA HORMATI SEKALIAN

1. ALHAMDULLILAH, SAYA BERSYUKUR KE HADRAT ALLAH S.W.T. KERANA DENGAN LIMPAH DAN KURNIANYA DAPAT KITA HADIR BERSAMA DI MAJLIS PELANCARAN "M.S.C. NEXT LEAP: MY MALAYSIA, MY M.S.C." YANG PENUH BERMAKNA INI. SAYA INGIN MENGUCAPKAN SYABAS DAN TERIMA KASIH KEPADA DATO' DR. JAMALUDIN JARJIS, PIHAK KEMENTERIAN DAN JUGA PIHAK MULTIMEDIA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (M.D.C.) KERANA BERJAYA MENGATUR MAJLIS INI, AGAR KITA SAMA-SAMA DAPAT MERAIKAN KEJAYAAN KORIDOR RAYA MULTIMEDIA SELAMA INI.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

2. MALAYSIA HAS MADE A FIRM COMMITMENT TO EMBRACE I.C.T. AS PART OF ITS STRATEGY TO TRANSFORM ITSELF INTO A KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY AND VALUES-BASED SOCIETY. NOWHERE IS THIS COMMITMENT MORE EVIDENT THAN IN THE MULTIMEDIA SUPER CORRIDOR (M.S.C.). THE FIRST SEVEN YEARS OF THE M.S.C. FOCUSED ON DEVELOPING THE FOUNDATION FOR A MALAYSIAN I.C.T. REVOLUTION. AS SUCH, THE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES THAT WERE ADOPTED FOCUSED ON BUILDING UP THE PHYSICAL, LEGAL, AS WELL AS THE BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS. ALTHOUGH THE M.S.C. HAD ITS FAIR SHARE OF SETBACKS, MANY OF THE ORIGINAL TARGETS THAT HAD BEEN SET WERE IN FACT SURPASSED. INDEED, I BELIEVE IT IS OUR ABILITY TO RESPOND TO MARKET DEMANDS AND OUR WILLINGNESS TO BE FLEXIBLE THAT HAS, AND WILL, CARRY US THROUGH IN REACHING OUR GOAL OF VISION 2020.

3. MOVING FORWARD, THE M.S.C. NEXT LEAP WILL CONTINUE TO BUILD UPON ITS DEMONSTRATED STRENGTHS IN KEY AREAS, WHILE SEEKING OUT NEW INVESTMENTS AND INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES, BOTH LOCAL AND FOREIGN.

OVER THE NEXT SEVEN YEARS, THE M.S.C.'S TARGETS AND INITIATIVES WILL FOCUS ON HARNESSING THE POWER OF I.C.T. AS A VITAL SOURCE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AS WELL AS AN ENABLER FOR OTHER CRITICAL AREAS SUCH AS EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND BIOTECHNOLOGY, AMONG OTHERS. EMPHASIS WILL ALSO BE GIVEN TO EMPOWERING THE PEOPLE THROUGH I.C.T.. AS I HAVE OFTEN SAID BEFORE, IN THE DIGITAL AND INFORMATION AGE, AWARENESS OF AND ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY ARE VITAL. CERTAINLY, INACCESSIBILITY TO TECHNOLOGY, BECAUSE OF DIGITAL DEVIDE, MAY PROVE TO BE A NEW FORM OF POVERTY IN THE DIGITAL AGE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

4. THE NEXT LEAP OF THE M.S.C. WILL SEE THE CREATION OF NEW M.S.C. CYBERCITIES AND CYBERCENTRES AS PART OF THE STRATEGY TO ROLL-OUT THE M.S.C. TO OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, AND NOT JUST CONFINED IN THE KLANG VALLEY. THIS WILL HELP BRING ECONOMIC GROWTH TO RURAL AREAS AS WELL AS REVITALISE OTHER INDUSTRIAL AREAS AROUND THE COUNTRY. I BELIEVE THAT THIS WILL ALSO HELP TO NARROW THE EXISTING REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND DIGITAL DIVIDE IN OUR COUNTRY.

5. AS I MENTIONED BEFORE, THE INITIAL STAGE OF THIS ROLL-OUT WILL BE THE CONFERMENT OF M.S.C. CYBERCITY STATUS TO PENANG, SPECIFICALLY THE BAYAN LEPAS AREA, AND TO KULIM HIGH TECH PARK IN KEDAH. THESE LOCATIONS HAVE BEEN CHOSEN IN VIEW OF THEIR ADVANCED STATE OF READINESS TO BECOME INTELLIGENT CITIES. OTHER CYBERCITIES AND CYBERCENTRES WILL BE CONSIDERED AT A LATER STAGE, BASED ON DEMAND AND READINESS AS WELL.

6. EVENTUALLY, IT IS ENVISIONED THAT ALL NEW AND EXISTING CYBERCITIES AND CYBERCENTRES WILL WORK AS A SYNERGISTIC NETWORK WITH CYBERJAYA AS ITS HUB. HAVING A NETWORK OF CYBERCITIES AND CYBERCENTRES AROUND THE COUNTRY, INCLUDING SABAH AND SARAWAK, WILL MAKE IT MORE CONVENIENT FOR M.S.C. STATUS COMPANIES, AND GIVE THEM MORE OPTIONS AS TO WHERE TO LOCATE THEIR OPERATIONS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

7. AMONG THE MANY STRENGTHS OF THE M.S.C. IS THE STRONG RECORD OF OUR FLAGSHIP APPLICATIONS. THE NEXT LEAP WILL SEE THE CONTINUED ROLL-OUT AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE CURRENT FLAGSHIPS, WHICH WILL BE MORE PEOPLE-CENTRIC. SPECIFICALLY, MORE EMPHASIS WILL BE GIVEN TO REDUCING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE AS WELL AS ENHANCING TRANSPARENCY AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE COUNTRY. I.C.T. WILL BE BROUGHT TO WITHIN THE REACH OF ALL MALAYSIANS REGARDLESS OF THEIR RACIAL, SOCIAL, CULTURAL OR ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS.

8. IN FACT, THIS "MY M.S.C. CAMPAIGN" BEING LAUNCHED TODAY IS PART OF OUR

EFFORT TO CREATE GREATER AWARENESS AND USAGE OF I.C.T. BY MALAYSIANS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE. THE SHOWCASE AREA AROUND US HAS EXHIBITS THAT HIGHLIGHT HOW TECHNOLOGY AND I.C.T. ARE CHANGING OUR LIVES; I WOULD ENCOURAGE ALL OF YOU HERE TO TAKE THE TIME TO VISIT THIS SHOWCASE.

9. INDEED, LEARNING IS A CRITICAL PART OF OUR LIVES. I BELIEVE THAT TECHNOLOGY CAN BE USED TO IMPROVE THE DELIVERY OF EDUCATION SO THAT HOW WE LEARN IS MORE EFFICIENT, AND WHAT WE LEARN IS MORE RELEVANT AND TIMELY. THE INTERNET ALSO EXPOSES US TO A RANGE OF KNOWLEDGE AND VIEWPOINTS. THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR OUR TRANSITION TO BECOME A KNOWLEDGE-BASED SOCIETY.

10. AS SUCH, THE SMART SCHOOL PROGRAM WILL BE RE-MODELLED AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION FAST-TRACKED TO ENABLE MORE SCHOOLS TO BENEFIT, AT LOWER COST TO THE GOVERNMENT. SMART SCHOOLS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET THROUGH THE SCHOOLNET PROGRAM, WHICH IS ALREADY AT AN ADVANCED STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION. ADVANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS DEVELOPED THROUGH THE SMART SCHOOL PILOT PROGRAM WILL BE UTILISED FOR TEACHING, WHILE THE SMART SCHOOL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM WILL BE USED TO IMPROVE ADMINISTRATION PROCESSES.

11. UNDER THE NEXT LEAP, THE TELE-HEALTH FLAGSHIP PROGRAM WILL BE FINE-TUNED AND ACCELERATED. PARTICULAR EMPHASIS WILL BE PAID TO THE TELE-CONSULTATION PROGRAM THAT LINKS RURAL MEDICAL CENTRES TO MORE ADVANCED MEDICAL FACILITIES. IN THIS WAY, BETTER HEALTHCARE FOR ALL MALAYSIANS CAN BE ACHIEVED COST-EFFECTIVELY AND IN A TIMELY MANNER. TO AN EXTENT, TELE-CONSULTATION CAN ALSO HELP TO AMELIORATE THE SHORTAGE OF DOCTORS AND MEDICAL SPECIALISTS IN THE COUNTRY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

12. THE M.S.C. NEXT LEAP WILL CONTINUE TO WELCOME AND NURTURE FOREIGN TECHNOLOGY-BASED COMPANIES WISHING TO SET UP THEIR BUSINESS IN THE M.S.C.. IN FACT, THE M.S.C. WILL CONTINUE TO PROMOTE ITSELF AGGRESSIVELY AS A CENTRE FOR SHARED SERVICES AND OUTSOURCING ACTIVITIES. NEVERTHELESS, THE NEXT LEAP WILL ALSO FOCUS ON ACCELERATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR LOCAL I.C.T. INDUSTRY.

13. TO DEVELOP THE LOCAL I.C.T. INDUSTRY FURTHER, THERE WILL BE GREATER CLUSTERING OF LOCAL TECHNOLOGY-BASED S.M.E.'S AND MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES (M.N.C.'S) AROUND THE ON-GOING FLAGSHIP APPLICATION PROGRAMS. THE USAGE AND ADOPTION OF INNOVATIVE DOMESTIC I.C.T. PRODUCTS AND SERVICES WILL ALSO BE ENCOURAGED. IN THIS REGARD, I WOULD LIKE TO ENCOURAGE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND GOVERNMENT-LINKED CORPORATIONS (G.L.C.'S) TO ADOPT POLICIES TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL I.C.T. INDUSTRY. THIS COULD INCLUDE, BUT CERTAINLY NOT BE LIMITED TO, THE AREA

OF PROCUREMENT WHEREBY COMPANIES COULD SPECIFY A CERTAIN PERCENTAGE OF I.C.T. PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TO BE LOCALLY-SOURCED.

14. APART FROM TARGETED POLICIES, MY GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO TAKE STEPS TO CREATE A CONDUCTIVE BUSINESS CLIMATE FOR ALL I.C.T. COMPANIES TO FLOURISH. THIS WOULD INCLUDE MEASURES TO REDUCE THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS, ENHANCING INCENTIVES, AS WELL AS SIMPLIFYING AND SPEEDING UP GOVERNMENT PROCESSES AND APPROVALS. MY GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO TRY TO ENSURE THE SUPPLY OF SKILLED KNOWLEDGE-WORKERS BY IMPROVING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM SO THAT SKILLS AND INDUSTRY CAPABILITIES CAN BE UPGRADED CONTINUOUSLY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

15. I HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT TO COMMEMORATE THE LAUNCH OF M.S.C.'S NEXT LEAP, POS MALAYSIA IS LAUNCHING A SET OF STAMPS AND FIRST DAY COVERS. I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION TO POS MALAYSIA FOR THIS GESTURE. IN THE SPIRIT OF TODAY'S THEME OF "MY MALAYSIA, MY M.S.C.", I WOULD LIKE TO ENCOURAGE ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY TO COME TOGETHER AND SUPPORT THE M.S.C..

16. I BELIEVE THE NEXT SEVEN YEARS WILL SEE I.C.T. BECOMING MORE RELEVANT TO THE LIVES OF ALL MALAYSIANS. IN OUR ECONOMIC SYSTEM, OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM, HEALTH SYSTEM, AND EVEN IN OUR DAY-TO-DAY TRANSACTIONS, TECHNOLOGY WILL BE THERE TO HELP US ACHIEVE MANY OF OUR ASPIRATIONS. IT IS THEREFORE MY FERVENT HOPE THAT TOGETHER, WE CAN HELP MAKE THE M.S.C.'S NEXT LEAP AS SUCCESSFUL, IF NOT MORE SO, THAN THE FIRST PHASE. ON THAT NOTE, IT IS NOW MY HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE TO OFFICIALLY LAUNCH THE "M.S.C. NEXT LEAP", THE M.S.C. STAMPS AND THE "MY M.S.C. CAMPAIGN".

THANK YOU.