

**SPEECH BY
THE HONOURABLE ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI
AT THE OFFICIAL DINNER HOSTED BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF
INDIA, AT NEW DELHI, INDIA
20 DECEMBER 2004**

THE HONOURABLE DR. MANMOHAN SINGH, PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

AND MADAME GURSHARAN KAUR,

EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

MR. PRIME MINISTER, I THANK YOU AND MADAME FOR HOSTING THIS GRAND DINNER THIS EVENING IN HONOUR OF ME AND MY WIFE. THE WARM WELCOME EXTENDED TO BOTH OF US AS WELL AS TO THE MEMBERS OF MY DELEGATION SINCE OUR ARRIVAL IN THIS GREAT CITY OF NEW DELHI IS TESTIMONY OF THE LONG STANDING FRIENDSHIP AND GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND INDIA.

2. OUR TWO COUNTRIES ENJOY MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONS NOT ONLY AT THE BILATERAL LEVEL BUT INDIA HAS ALSO DEVELOPED VERY SUBSTANTIVE RELATIONS WITH ASEAN, A REGIONAL ORGANIZATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WHICH IS VERY IMPORTANT TO MALAYSIA. MALAYSIA AND INDIA ALSO HAVE MUCH IN COMMON IN MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS, ESPECIALLY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NON ALIGNED MOVEMENT, OF WHICH MALAYSIA IS NOW CHAIRMAN.

3. WE HAD JUST CONCLUDED A VERY GOOD MEETING BEFORE COMING TO DINNER, WHERE WE HAD A WIDE RANGING DISCUSSION COVERING NOT ONLY BILATERAL BUT ALSO REGIONAL AND MULTILATERAL ISSUES. ON MY PART, I SHALL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO IMPLEMENT, IN A SPEEDY MANNER, WHAT WE HAD AGREED UPON. WE NEED TO ACT FAST IF WE WISH TO CREATE THE NECESSARY MOMENTUM AND MOVE THE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES TO A HIGHER PLANE.

4. THERE IS DEFINITELY GREAT POTENTIAL FOR CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIA AND MALAYSIA IN VARIOUS FIELDS BECAUSE THERE ARE SOUND AND SOLID FOUNDATIONS TO SUPPORT SUCH COOPERATION. BOTH MALAYSIA AND INDIA ARE FAST GROWING ECONOMIES AND EMERGING MARKETS. BOTH BELIEVE IN FREE ENTERPRISE. THE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITIES ARE WIDE OPEN, ESPECIALLY FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR. I AM GRATIFIED TO NOTE THAT INDIA IS NOW MALAYSIA'S LARGEST TRADING PARTNER IN SOUTH ASIA. MALAYSIA IS ALSO INDIA'S BIGGEST TRADING PARTNER IN THE ASEAN REGION.

5. TO DEVELOP FURTHER THE TRADE BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, MR. PRIME MINISTER, WE NEED TO INCREASE AND DIVERSIFY THE RANGE OF PRODUCTS AND ITEMS OF SERVICES THAT ARE NOW BEING EXCHANGED BETWEEN OUR TWO ECONOMIES.

6. ANOTHER STRONG FOUNDATION IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS LIES IN THE AREA OF INVESTMENT. INDIA IS KNOWN FOR ITS STRENGTH IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY. MALAYSIA TOO IS FOCUSING ON I C T BECAUSE WE ARE DETERMINED TO BUILD A KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY OR K-ECONOMY. BOTH OUR PRIVATE SECTORS CAN WORK TOGETHER IN THIS AREA TO EXPAND OUR RESPECTIVE NATIONAL HORIZONS IN CYBER SPACE. THERE ARE ALREADY SOME POSITIVE SIGNS SUCH AS THE INCREASE OF INVESTMENTS IN GENERAL, BOTH WAYS.

7. MALAYSIA HAS EMERGED AS THE 10TH LARGEST INVESTOR IN INDIA. INDIA TOO HAS BECOME A MAJOR INVESTOR IN MALAYSIA. IN THIS RESPECT, I C T IS QUITE PROMINENT WHERE, AS OF OCTOBER 2004, THERE ARE SOME 45 INDIAN COMPANIES WITH M S C STATUS, WHICH IS THE GRANTING OF CERTAIN SPECIAL PRIVILEGES FOR I C T COMPANIES THAT INVEST AND SET UP RESEARCH OR MANUFACTURING FACILITIES IN MALAYSIA'S MULTIMEDIA SUPER CORRIDOR. MALAYSIA WISHES TO WELCOME FURTHER INVESTMENTS FROM INDIA ESPECIALLY IN THE AREA OF BIO-TECHNOLOGY.

8. LIKEWISE, MANY MALAYSIAN COMPANIES ARE VENTURING INTO VARIOUS PROJECTS IN INDIA INCLUDING INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, ALL OF WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO CEMENT FURTHER OUR GROWING ECONOMIC COLLABORATION. MALAYSIAN INVESTORS DO ENVISION MUCH PROSPECTS IN INDIA. WE DO HOPE THAT THE INDIAN SIDE, BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC, WILL RESPOND WITH EQUAL ENTHUSIASM.

9. WE VALUE INDIA'S INTEREST IN DEVELOPING RELATIONS WITH ASEAN AS A REGIONAL ORGANIZATION. WE HAD JUST CONCLUDED, IN LAOS, A VERY PRODUCTIVE ASEAN-INDIA SUMMIT MEETING, THE THIRD IN A ROW. ASEAN IS PARTICULARLY APPRECIATIVE OF INDIA'S ACCESSION TO THE TREATY OF AMITY AND COOPERATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA BECAUSE IT FORMALIZES AND SYMBOLIZES INDIA'S LONG TERM COMMITMENT AS A PARTNER FOR PEACE AND PROGRESS IN OUR REGION.

10. ON THE GLOBAL FRONT, BOTH INDIA AND MALAYSIA CAN TAKE PRIDE IN OUR RESPECTIVE TRACK RECORDS AS DEFENDERS AND PROMOTERS OF THE INTERESTS OF SOUTH COUNTRIES IN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC NEGOTIATIONS. OUR TWO COUNTRIES COULD DO MORE ON THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC FRONT AS WELL. FOR INSTANCE, INDIA CAN LEND ITS VOICE TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF PALESTINE AND IRAQ, TWO ISSUES WHICH ARE OF GREAT CONCERN TO MALAYSIA NOT ONLY AS A COUNTRY BUT ALSO IN OUR CAPACITY AS CHAIRMAN OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE. WE MUST ALSO COOPERATE TO INITIATE REFORMS OF THE UNITED NATIONS, A SYSTEM WHICH

HAS BEEN FUNCTIONING ON THE LOGIC OF AN ERA LONG GONE AND WHICH IS NO LONGER SUPPORTIVE OF THE INTERESTS OF THE VAST MAJORITY OF ITS MEMBERS. NON ALIGNED COUNTRIES SHOULD WORK CLOSELY IN THE UPCOMING CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE U N SECRETARY GENERAL'S HIGH LEVEL PANEL ON THREATS, CHALLENGES AND CHANGE, AS WELL AS THE UPCOMING REVIEW OF THE U N MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS.

11. MALAYSIA AS CHAIRMAN OF N A M AND OF THE O I C WOULD STRIVE TO RESTORE THE PRIMACY OF MULTILATERALISM IN GLOBAL AFFAIRS GENERALLY AND ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES PARTICULARLY. WE MUST WORK TO ESTABLISH GREATER DEMOCRACY IN THE WORKINGS OF THE UNITED NATIONS. THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO ENABLE THE WORLD BODY TO PLAY A MORE INFLUENTIAL AND DETERMINING ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS. WE CANNOT AFFORD TO LET THE U N TO CONTINUE TO BE SIDE-LINED ON ISSUES WHICH ARE CRUCIAL TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

12. THE PROCESS OF GLOBALIZATION MAY HAVE BROUGHT MANY NEW PLAYERS INTO THE CONDUCT OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS. BUT THE MAIN COMPONENT OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS WILL CONTINUE TO CONSIST OF BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN NATIONS. IN THIS REGARD, BOTH MALAYSIA AND INDIA ARE WELL PLACED TO COOPERATE - AS PARTNERS FOR STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE - TO TAKE CARE OF OUR MUTUAL INTERESTS WHILE CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATION AT THE REGIONAL AND MULTILATERAL LEVELS. WE ARE WELL PLACED TO DO SO BECAUSE BOTH OUR COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES ARE STRONG BELIEVERS IN THE POWER OF INNOVATION, CREATIVITY AND TECHNOLOGY.

MR. PRIME MINISTER,

13. I AM REALLY VERY PLEASED TO MEET YOU AGAIN SO SOON AFTER THE FORMAL AND INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS WE HAD IN LAOS DURING THE ASEAN-INDIA SUMMIT. I THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME AND FOR THE ELABORATE ARRANGEMENTS MADE TO ENABLE ME TO MEET WITH VARIOUS LEVELS OF THE INDIAN LEADERSHIP. I ALSO VALUE VERY MUCH THE OPPORTUNITY TO INTERACT WITH THE INDIAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND YOUR CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY.

14. I AM ALWAYS FOND OF BUSINESS PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY TRANSLATE IDEAS INTO SUBSTANCE AND GOVERNMENT POLICIES INTO PROJECTS. THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY ALSO PLAYS A GREAT PART IN BRINGING TOGETHER PEOPLES OF THE WORLD NOT ONLY FOR BUSINESS BUT ALSO FOR PLEASURE.

15. INDEED, I AM VERY PLEASED WITH THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO INDIA PARTICULARLY AS YOU HAVE SHOWN THE WORLD THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO ADOPT A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IN A LAND OF ENORMOUS CULTURAL

AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY. YOU HAVE SHOWN THAT A COUNTRY NEED NOT COMPROMISE ON ITS MORAL VALUES AND SOCIAL TRADITIONS AS AT IT AIMS AT GREATER ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SOCIAL COHESION.

16. YOU HAVE SHOWN THE WORLD THAT NATIONHOOD IS MORE THAN A MATTER OF UNSHACKLED POLITICAL SYSTEMS, A FREE PRESS, OR EVEN UNRESTRICTED CIVIL LIBERTIES. YOU HAVE SHOWN THAT, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, NATION-BUILDING MUST MEAN RESPECTING THE RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND CREATING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE TO PURSUE PROSPERITY AND THEIR PERSONAL WELLBEING, REGARDLESS OF RACE OR CREED.

17. I BELIEVE THAT YOU AND I HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO RAISE THE LEVEL OF BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND MALAYSIA TO A NEW, HIGHER STAGE. I KNOW THAT BOTH OF US ARE RELATIVELY NEW IN OUR JOBS AND I AM JUST ONE YEAR OLDER THAN YOU IN AGE. LIKE IT OR, YOU AND I WILL FACE AT THE SAME TIME THE CHALLENGES OF THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE. WE CAN TAKE COMFORT, HOWEVER, THAT WE HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HISTORY OF OUR RELATIONS UPON WHICH WE CAN LOOK FOR GUIDANCE AND FROM WHICH WE CAN DRAW LESSONS.

18. WE HAVE NO OPTION BUT TO DEAL WITH THE CHALLENGES OF A NEW WORLD ORDER OF DIMINISHING BORDERS AND THE IRREVERSIBLE MOMENTUM OF GLOBALIZATION. WE NEED TO RECOGNIZE THE EMERGENCE OF REGIONALISM AS A FORCE THAT CAN INFLUENCE WORLD AFFAIRS. IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, WE HAVE ASEAN WHILE YOU HAVE THE SAARC IN YOUR REGION. OF COURSE, WE ARE ALL AWARE OF THE IMPACT ON WORLD AFFAIRS OF OTHER REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS SUCH AS THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE NAFTA.

19. WE ARE CONFRONTED BY UNILATERALISM EVEN IN MULTILATERAL BODIES SUCH AS THE UNITED NATIONS.

20. WE MUST EFFECTIVELY DEAL WITH NEW GLOBAL PROBLEMS LIKE TERRORISM. INDEED, WE MUST FIND SOLUTIONS TO NAGGING INTERNATIONAL ISSUES WHICH HAVE CAUSED POLARIZATIONS AMONG NATIONS AND WHICH MAKE THE PROBLEMS EVEN MORE INTRACTABLE.

21. BUT PERSEVERE AND MOVE AHEAD WE MUST. THIS IS BECAUSE BOTH YOU AND I ARE FACING THE PRESSURES OF HIGH EXPECTATIONS FROM OUR RESPECTIVE PEOPLES. IT ALL POINTS TO ONE DIRECTION, THAT IS WE NEED TO EXPAND AND DEEPEN OUR BILATERAL TIES. IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT I HAVE ASKED YOU TO CONSIDER POSITIVELY OUR PROPOSAL FOR A FREE TRADE ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. ON MY PART, I BELIEVE MALAYSIA'S RELATIONS WITH INDIA IS VERY STRATEGIC. I HOPE THAT YOU, ON YOUR PART, SHARE THE SAME SENTIMENT. I AM CERTAIN THAT THE STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP WHICH WE SHOULD FOSTER WILL BRING MANY BENEFITS AND ADVANTAGES TO BOTH SIDES. AS POLITICIANS, WE REQUIRE NO REMINDER ABOUT THE MEANING OF RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

22. LET ME CONCLUDE BY EXPRESSING ONCE AGAIN MY DELIGHT TO BE HERE IN INDIA. LET ME ALSO SAY HOW PLEASED AND ENCOURAGED I AM BY YOUR OWN COMMITMENT, MR. PRIME MINISTER, TO UPLIFTING OUR RELATIONS TO HIGHER LEVELS. AS FRIENDS BOUND BY HISTORICAL TIES, IT IS ONLY LOGICAL THAT WE CONTINUALLY STRIVE TO PUT MORE SUBSTANCE INTO THE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES.

EXCELLENCIES,

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

23. ON THAT NOTE, MAY I ASK YOU TO RISE AND JOIN ME IN A TOAST TO THE CONTINUED GOOD HEALTH OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA, TO THE PROSPERITY AND WELL BEING OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF INDIA, AND TO THE EVER GROWING FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIA AND MALAYSIA.

THANK YOU.