

**SPEECH BY
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“MOVING FORWARD – TOWARDS EXCELLENCE”

Introduction

1. Praise be to Allah, for it is with His blessings that we are able to gather at another UMNO General Assembly. I would like to thank each UMNO member and each Branch, each Division, each Liaison Committee, Wanita, Pemuda and Puteri, and all my colleagues in the Supreme Council who have contributed to making our meeting today possible.

2. I congratulate all of you who have received the support and the trust to lead the party at branch and division level. I also congratulate the new leaders of Wanita, Youth and Puteri who were elected at their respective assemblies yesterday. Fulfill the expectations of those who elected you in a responsible and trustworthy manner.

3. We assemble today after having recently celebrated the 48th anniversary of our independence. We assemble at a time when UMNO is 58 years old. This is also the first time that I shoulder the responsibility of fulfilling the agenda and delivering the President's Policy Address.

4. UMNO is the largest political party in the country, with 3.2 million members. The party, founded under the leadership of Dato' Onn Jaafar, has been subsequently led by Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Abdul Razak Hussin, Tun Hussein Onn, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad and the torch of leadership now passes to me. In the course of its 58-year history, UMNO has become more secure and more mature.

5. We inherit a party that is strong and we are indebted to those who have passed it on to us in this condition. We pray that the souls of our predecessors who have now passed on will be blessed by Allah. Al-Fatihah.

6. We record our appreciation to former UMNO leaders who, although having chosen to withdraw from the front lines, remain active and committed in supporting our efforts. Their service and sacrifice are greatly valued and will always be remembered. We pray for the happiness for them and their families, especially for Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamed, who is here today with Tun Dr. Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali. Tun Mahathir is UMNO's longest serving President and in his 22 years as the leader of the party and government saw significant advances to the nation and its people.

His decision to retire at the pinnacle of his career demonstrates the sincerity of a statesman who did not want to cling to power.

7. We also appreciate the attendance of other former leaders from all levels. Their presence is evidence of their love and loyalty to UMNO. They are not only former leaders who can serve as role models, but party members who truly appreciate the spirit of "Unity, Loyalty and Service."

8. The 11th General Elections were held on 21 March 2004 and UMNO was very successful. UMNO won 109 from the 117 parliamentary seats that it was allocated and 303 from 338 state assembly seats. Collectively, Barisan Nasional captured 199 out of 219 seats in Parliament and 452 out of 505 state seats. As a result, Barisan Nasional once again succeeded in forming the Federal Government and the government in 12 states. Terengganu returned to the Barisan Nasional fold after we won 28 out of 32 seats in the state assembly – a magnificent victory. Barisan Nasional in Kelantan has become a dynamic political force after winning 21 out of 45 seats and is no longer deemed to be a marginal and inconsequential presence.

9. In the Kuala Berang by-election on 28 August 2004, Barisan Nasional succeeded in retaining its seat with an increased majority of 2,059 votes, compared to the majority of 1,695 during the 2004 General Elections. Barisan Nasional also retained the Ba'Kelalan state seat in a by-election last week.

10. I thank all party members who, with diligence and industry, with discipline and commitment, ensured the party's victory. I thank the fellow component parties that worked side by side, dedicated to the common struggle of building a Malaysia that is more peaceful, more united and more developed. UMNO and its allies in the Barisan Nasional will continue to speak with a single voice and act with a unity of purpose. I am also grateful to the Malaysian people, who have displayed political maturity and an ability to evaluate objectively and rationally. The Malaysian people have accepted the spirit of "Work with Me," and have entrusted us to take Malaysia towards excellence, glory and distinction.

11. The election results indicate that a progressive and moderate approach will defeat a conservative ideology and extremist ways. The election results gives us confidence that, in facing PAS, there is no need for us to alter our philosophy, we do not need to change our methods, we do not need to be alarmed. We must not fall into the trap of using religion for political gain. The light of truth cannot be obscured forever by the fog of falsity.

"And say: "Truth has (now) arrived, and Falsehood perished: for Falsehood is (by its nature) bound to perish." (Al Israa': 81)

12. UMNO's success is the success of moderation. It is the success of a struggle that gives priority to development and a realization that Muslims must become an advanced people. To succeed, Muslims must achieve success in this world as well as

equip themselves to face the Hereafter. UMNO has now proven to the world the success of a progressive approach to Islam. UMNO must therefore enhance its understanding of the concept of development that we propagate through Islam Hadhari.

ISLAM HADHARI

13. Islam is Allah's supreme guidance to mankind. As Allah's servants, humans must give thanks to their Creator and be prepared to muhasabah (be introspective) and evaluate their weaknesses. Humans have a responsibility to fulfil their duties and to give primacy to Islam. As citizens, they must be grateful to a leadership that builds a nation of peace and prosperity in a just and trustworthy manner; a nation that provides the facilities and an enabling environment for its people to continue achieving success.

14. Since its inception - in its struggle against the Malayan Union, during the drive for independence, throughout the post-independence period, the introduction of the New Economic Policy, and in its other struggles - UMNO has always rejected the use of force. Conversely, UMNO's strength has been proven to be predicated on a more astute approach, based on reason and rationale.

15. Such an approach must be continued and acculturated within UMNO, consistent with the Quranic injunctions:

"Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious; for thy Lord knoweth best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance." (An Nahl: 125)

"The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel (the evil) with one which is better than verily he, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a close friend." (Fussilat: 34)

16. For this reason, Islam must be delivered in a judicious manner – through reminders and advice – through dialogue and the exchange of thoughts. The Hudaibiyah Agreement is a sterling lesson; the Muslims under the Prophet's leadership held fast to the principle that war and the use of force should not be used as a shortcut to success. The words of Allah within the Quran contain infinite wisdom to guide mankind to the path of righteousness, the path of peace, the path that receives Allah's acceptance.

17. Islam Hadhari is an approach that emphasises development, consistent with the tenets of Islam and focused on enhancing the quality of life. It aims to achieve this via the mastery of knowledge and the development of the individual and the nation; the implementation of a dynamic economic, trading and financial system; an integrated and balanced development that creates a knowledgeable and pious people who hold to noble values and are honest, trustworthy, and prepared to take on global challenges.

18. Islam Hadhari is not a new religion. It is not a new teaching nor is it a new mazhab (denomination). Islam Hadhari is an effort to bring the Ummah back to basics, back to the fundamentals, as prescribed in the Quran and the Hadith that form the foundation of Islamic civilization. If Islam Hadhari is interpreted sincerely and understood clearly, it will not cause Muslims to deviate from the true path. It is not UMNO's culture to trivialize religion. UMNO has never allowed religion to be used as a political tool. UMNO staunchly opposes the use of Islam as an instrument to manipulate people's beliefs. UMNO has always ensured that Islam and Muslims are protected from such abuse of religion. It was on this basis that UMNO, which was directly involved in formulating the Federal Constitution, inserted Articles that place Islam under the jurisdiction of the Heads of State.

19. As the party that is responsible for ensuring Muslims are able to meet current challenges without deviating from their faith, the doors of ijtihad must remain open, so that interpretations are suited to the developmental needs of the prevailing time and conditions. Policies must be balanced and broad-based development that encompasses the infrastructure and the economy; human resource development via a comprehensive education programme; the inculcation of noble values through spiritual development and assimilation of Islamic values.

20. Islam Hadhari aims to achieve ten main principles:

- I. Faith and piety in Allah
- II. A just and trustworthy government
- III. A free and independent People
- IV. Mastery of knowledge
- V. Balanced and comprehensive economic development
- VI. A good quality of life
- VII. Protection of the rights of minority groups and women
- VIII. Cultural and moral integrity
- IX. Safeguarding the environment
- X. Strong defenses

21. These principles have been formulated to ensure that the implementation and approach does not cause anxiety among any group in our multiracial and multireligious country. These principles have been devised to empower Muslims to face the global challenges of today.

22. Islam Hadhari is complete and comprehensive, with an emphasis on the development of the economy and civilization, capable of building Malay competitiveness. The glorious heritage of Islamic civilization in all aspects must be used as reference and become the source of inspiration for the Malay race to prosper.

23. A change in mindset among Malays requires action that is encompassing, drastic and systematic, irregardless of sector or partisan loyalty. It requires the Malays to change their *tasawwur* (worldview). Consistent with this, the concept of life as service to God and the concept of work as worship, humans as caliphs and the obligation to seek strength in every aspect of life must be accentuated, in particular, the objective of *maqasid al Syariah* which seeks to safeguard, dignify and empower religion, intellect, life, property and progeny.

24. A consistent effort to ensure lasting success must be prepared. Any thinking that confuses and is inconsistent with Islamic beliefs must be rejected in order to allow Malay resilience and thought to be built. A change in attitude and culture requires *ijtihad* and *jihad* (struggle). The concept of *jihad* must be given a broader interpretation, covering all aspects of life, including the pursuit of knowledge, the mastery of science and technology and economic activity. This improvement in quality (*itqan*) must become part of our culture. *Ijtihad* that can build the Ummah in the modern day must be acknowledged.

25. Malays must be given Islamic understanding that enables the appreciation and provides the ability to inherit a vision of a global civilization, in order for Malays to be more successful global players. As a strategy to improve Malay competitiveness, the spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood (*ukhuwah Islamiah*) must be inculcated and expanded to create a strong social network. Malays must appreciate self-sufficiency and reduce dependence on others. Negative traits and values must be changed to accommodate the values of the *tasawur*.

26. Malay society must be a society that embraces knowledge, skills and expertise in order to build capacity. Islam makes it compulsory for Muslims to embrace knowledge in all fields. The misconception that there exists a difference between so-called secular knowledge and religious knowledge must be corrected. Islam demands the mastery of science and technology and the enhancement of skills and expertise. Many verses in the Quran that touch on the need to master science and technology should be studied. All Muslim students should be aware of Islam's contribution to science and technology that brought about the birth of the Renaissance in Europe. Initiatives to produce more Malay scientists who are capable of making new discoveries must be intensified.

27. Malays, UMNO and Islam in this country cannot be separated. Together, the elements form a distinct culture and identity. Through its words and actions, UMNO has the responsibility of building an Islamic culture that balances the needs of this world and the next, an Islam that balances *fardhu kifayah* and *fardhu ain*. Worldly affairs that are conducted with sincerity will, God willing, receive Allah's blessings and will be favourably looked upon in the Hereafter.

"But seek, with that (wealth) which Allah has bestowed upon you, the home of the Hereafter, and forget not your portion of lawful enjoyment in this world; and do good as Allah has been good to you, and seek not mischief in the land. Verily, Allah likes not the *Mufsidun* (those who commit great crimes and sins, oppressors, tyrants, mischief-makers, corrupters.)" (Al Qasas: 77)

28. UMNO must enable Muslims to engage the world in a positive manner. Life on this Earth is a journey that requires us to discharge our responsibilities to society in an honest, transparent and trustworthy manner. Mankind will not fully benefit from this life if their attitude and worldview is not as it should be; because Allah created Man to be leaders on Earth. It is therefore imperative for mankind to arm itself with knowledge and with skills, to enable them to succeed.

29. It is important for the Ummah to be guided in understanding and practicing Islam as a comprehensive way of life as a means to building a civilization. A wholesome way of life will create the balance between our responsibilities in this world and the Hereafter. Islam is not merely a ritual, because ritualism is meant solely for the Hereafter. UMNO, too, has never practiced secularism that rejects the Hereafter and focuses solely on worldly matters. Islam must be lived as a system that integrates the worldly life and preparations for the Day of Judgment.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

30. Malaysia is a country that is peaceful and stable. We are a democratic nation that has been able to have elections that are open and transparent. We have become a model Islamic nation that has achieved a balance between physical development and spiritual development. We are a multireligious and multiethnic nation that has succeeded in fostering national unity and implement political power sharing. We are an example of a nation of economic development and political stability among developing nations.

31. We have achieved in less than half a century what many other countries aspire to achieve. For this, we are thankful to Allah and we are grateful to the people of Malaysia who have always supported us. Everything that we have achieved, we have done so in the spirit of togetherness, based on the principles of humanitarianism, justice and truth and with the guidance of God. We hold and will continue to hold to the belief that Allah will continue to bestow providence and protection to his servants who are faithful, industrious and thankful.

32. Our accomplishments have enhanced the world's confidence in us and as a result, we have been given the responsibility of simultaneously chairing both the Organisation for Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) – an honour and a duty that we accept. High expectations have been placed on us to fulfill these roles.

33. We must work to foster more unity among the members of OIC. Collectively, the OIC must shatter the increasing prejudice against Muslims worldwide. The international community must stop equating Islam with violence, poverty and indignity. The OIC must address the issues that are contributing to the growing schism between the Muslim world and the West. At the same time, the level of progress and development among NAM countries must be enhanced and the

potential of cooperation among the members of the organization must be optimally utilized.

34. We aim to fulfill our responsibilities to the best of our ability, with the guidance of God and the support of member countries. We aspire to improve the cooperation in OIC and NAM, especially in the fields of economy, trade, education and culture. We will empower OIC and NAM to become organizations that are stronger in the global political arena. If the two organizations are united and developed, they can become a force to advocate for a world that is more peaceful, stable and prosperous. We will continue to raise the awareness and understanding of the world on the importance of an international agenda to eradicate poverty globally.

35. The unresolved Palestinian issue remains a central issue that must be addressed by the Ummah and the global community. We will persevere for and articulate on the need for a just and lasting solution for Palestine, consistent with the Quartet Roadmap that has been agreed upon. The international community must uphold the rights of the Palestinian people to the national independence and the exercise of sovereignty in their own State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

36. Malaysia will continue to support efforts to create a more peaceful world. A world order that is peaceful can only be created if it is based on the following principles:

- i. Respect for international law and institutions;
- ii. Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- iii. Settlement of dispute through negotiation;
- iv. Refraining from the use of force unless sanctioned by the United Nations; and
- v. Equitable distribution for the benefit of all mankind.

37. Malaysia's foreign policy has always been and will continue to be the protection and promotion of national interest. Malaysia has no ideology to export. Malaysia has no secret agenda to carry out anywhere in the world. Malaysia will continue to implement a foreign policy that is independent and non-aligned. Malaysia will continue to work with other countries to promote a regional and international environment that is peaceful and stable. Malaysia cannot do this alone. We must do this in partnership with other countries. We must accelerate our economic diplomacy, not only at a bilateral level but also regionally and throughout the world.

38. We will continue to build relationships with other countries and will cooperate to achieve common goals. Malaysia is committed to enhance the understanding within ASEAN based on the original reasons for its inception in bringing peace, stability and neutrality to the region. Malaysia will strengthen ASEAN and enhance its standing in world affairs. We must support steps towards instituting higher political and economic integration with a view to establishing an ASEAN community. Malaysia will persevere in its diplomatic efforts to upgrade the dialogue relationship between ASEAN countries and the three countries East Asian countries, namely China, Japan and Korea.

39. We want East Asian to be prosperous. We want Asia to be peaceful and stable. We are open to establishing meaningful diplomatic relations covering politics, economics, trade and culture with all countries on the basis of mutual respect. The sovereignty and independence of each country must be respected. A nation's form of governance must be determined by its people.

40. The world needs a more conducive environment to enable an international order that is more just and equitable. There is unease around the world that a single country dominates all the military, economic, political and cultural dimensions of power. The world would be a more peaceful and prosperous place if wealth was distributed more equitably – if political, military, economic and trade threats are stopped. World trade must be conducted more fairly. Wealth must be used to develop education, healthcare and welfare for the world community. We want the world that provides justice for the weak, opportunities for the needy; hope for the poor that they may improve their socio-economic status. We must strive to close the gap between the rich nations and the developing world.

41. A world that is at peace will provide comfort to the developed nations, when there is equality from a social and economic perspective. The world should not be divided into the rich and the poor, North and South, East and West, Muslim and non-Muslim. The world is not a gallery for the instruments of war. The world is not a shooting gallery to test the potency of weapons. Allah did not create the world for it to be destroyed by man.

42. We must continue to play an active role in the mainstream of international affairs. We will work towards strengthening the role of the United Nations to be a global institution that remains neutral, free, just and equitable; accepted, respected and trusted by all nations. It is our wish that the United Nations functions in a more meaningful and effective capacity, more representative of current realities. The UN must be given the authority to secure world peace and security as well as ensure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations. The UN must be given a key role in fighting the war on terror.

43. We must reject violence that targets innocent civilians. Similarly, violence that is caused by any party, be it nations or militant groups, cannot be accepted. The term "jihad" should not be misused and should not be misinterpreted to justify terrorism. Such actions only serve to tarnish the teachings of Islam. Islam does not permit such violence. If unchecked, such cruelty will benefit no one.

44. In efforts to prevent terrorism, the root causes that affect the people must be resolved equitably. Malaysia will work to convince the countries of the West in particular, to reassess and change their policies in the Middle East. Their stand on the Palestinian issue and their actions in contravening international law, such as the invasion of Iraq are factors that fuel acts of terror.

45. We support that the post-invasion reconstruction of Iraq takes place under the supervision of the UN. We will actively assist effort undertaken by the UN to rehabilitate Iraq. Iraq is a country that has a special resonance for Muslims around the world. Iraq is not only a nation that was independent and sovereign, but one that possessed great wealth and technical expertise. Iraq was a civilization, a symbol of Islam's greatness. Baghdad was once a city that produced ulama and Muslim intellectuals in a variety of fields. Baghdad was a center of enlightenment – a warehouse of a civilisation's wealth and treasures. Everything is now destroyed. It is therefore our duty, together with other Islamic nations to play an active role in the reconstruction of Iraq. If other Muslim nations do not do so, Iraq will be rebuilt in the mould and under the influence of others.

THE STRUGGLE OF THE MALAYS

46. We are grateful for the blessings that we have been given. But our success will not endure if we do not face up to the continuously evolving challenges which require new and different approaches. We need to be resolute, determined, purposeful and strong to face up to these new challenges.

47. The Malays must have a global mindset, understand the global scenario and be able to face the challenges of the global environment. Malays need to be a people that is knowledgeable and skilled; that is able to master technology and compete; that can build up networks with the different communities around the world and stand tall as equals with them. They need to be a race that can communicate and interact through a global lingua franca, such as English; a language that facilitates trade and allows us to disseminate and acquire knowledge effectively.

48. It is necessary for UMNO members to understand the impact of the global economy on the Malay race. We want to become an advanced people and we want to become an advanced nation. We cannot avoid competing with developed nations as well ones that are rapidly developing. We must understand that at the global level, it is unlikely that a policy will be formulated with the purpose of helping bumiputeras. The global economy does not recognise quotas; it will not allocate special projects for Bumiputeras. The global economic lexicon only acknowledges terms such as competition, competitiveness, productivity, innovation, creativity, originality, excellence and efficiency.

49. Globalisation and liberalisation have created challenges for the nation and even greater challenges for the bumiputeras. Today, market forces play a crucial and decisive role. Those who cannot compete will fail. The only protection against these pressures is the competitiveness inherent in an organization. The global economy has shifted from a production-based economy to a knowledge-based economy. Profits are not made merely through producing goods but from ideas, from inventions and creativity, from intellectual proprietary rights. The new global economy uses global benchmarks. Manufacturers from Kangar to Johor Baru and from Klang to Tawau have to compete with producers in Shanghai, Tokyo, Bangalore, Los Angeles, Johannesburg, Milan and Sydney.

50. In facing these challenges, the Government's policies, besides identifying new sources of growth, are aimed at increasing Bumiputera competitiveness in the services sector and other high value-add sectors. We have to employ high technology, not only in the services and manufacturing sectors, but also in agriculture and other primary sectors of the economy. Many rural Malays are involved in the agriculture sector. However, this is limited to basic harvesting of crops. A more productive and radical approach must be taken as a step towards turning agriculture into a higher value-added activity.

51. In helping the Bumiputeras under the implementation of the New Economic Policy, we focused on quantity and tried to help as many Bumiputeras as possible by restructuring the economy and society to ensure a more equitable distribution amongst the different races. Our efforts showed positive results in the beginning. The efforts to raise Bumiputera equity and wealth showed results. When the NEP was launched in 1970, Bumiputera equity holdings stood at 2.4 per cent. But by 1990, it had increased to 19.3 per cent. In value terms, Bumiputera equity holdings increased from RM477 million in 1970 to RM20.9 billion in 1990 and by 2002, it was RM73.2 billion. This increase in Bumiputera equity holdings was a direct result of the establishment of investment holding companies such as Permodalan Nasional and Lembaga Urusan Tabung Haji. However, 20 years was not enough to raise the level of Bumiputera equity to the desired 30 per cent. Conversely, it became a source of concern when the Bumiputera equity share fell to 18.7 per cent in 2002, a drop of 0.6 per cent from 1990, twelve years earlier.

52. The New Economic Policy, which was followed by the National Development Policy (NDP), succeeded in creating a class of Bumiputera professionals, scientists and technologists. The number of Bumiputera professionals increased from 21 per cent in 1990 to 30 per cent in 2002. Since the NEP was introduced, the overall poverty rate decreased from 52 per cent in 1970 to 5 per cent in 2002. The rural poverty rate decreased from 59 per cent to 11 per cent during this same period. The household income increased from RM660 to RM2,996 in that period.

53. But while we have raised the economic status of Bumiputeras, we have not achieved complete success. The overall achievement is still measured in absolute terms and not in relation to other ethnic groups. Bumiputera household income is still lower than Chinese household income. The Bumiputera professional class has grown but the non-Bumiputera professionals are still far ahead.

54. In our eagerness to implement policies to help the Bumiputeras, we did not give adequate attention to quality. Priority was given to producing numbers and less on capacity building and value-add. Bumiputeras, thenceforth, were perceived as lacking competitiveness and durability. Many are advocating that there be a quantum leap in attitude, a mental revolution for Bumiputeras. Bumiputeras have been urged to be more independent, to give greater priority to knowledge and to be more industrious.

55. A mental revolution is crucial in facing an increasingly competitive world. The national economy now faces external pressures, such as WTO and AFTA; our products and services face competition from other countries. If we are slow in changing attitudes, if we do not raise our competitiveness, we will lose investments, lose jobs and lose business opportunities to nations that are more cost efficient and more competitive.

56. The fact that Bumiputeras are lagging is not a new realisation; neither is it a radical statement. The majority of Bumiputeras are aware of the situation and are concerned at the existence of such a gap. Many feel that the Bumiputera problem is due to mindset and attitude. Bumiputeras themselves do not reject this perception. In fact, there are differences in views. Many Bumiputeras want us to change our attitude to allow ourselves to be more independent and more competitive, but, in the same breath, they ask for increased aid and extra protection. Bumiputeras are deemed to be still weak and not yet ready to face the open market.

57. Bumiputeras realise that they are relying on crutches and want to do away with the crutches; but they are afraid to discard them. Because of this fear, they revert to old habits, looking for quick fixes and blaming others. If such attitudes are allowed to flourish, then Bumiputeras will get even weaker. A continuing reliance on crutches will further enfeeble, and we may eventually end up in wheelchairs.

58. I understand the apprehension of the Bumiputeras. I strongly uphold the objectives behind the formation of UMNO. UMNO was formed to fight for the rights of the Malays. I strongly uphold the nationalist agenda of the Malays. It is important that we think critically and develop strategies to face global challenges. UMNO must not allow Malays to be defeatists; we must not allow Malays to believe that they are fated to be weak in perpetuity.

59. UMNO has a duty to help the Malays become stronger, more able, more confident and more courageous. UMNO will strive to help Malay children achieve higher level of academic success in schools and in institutions of higher learning. UMNO will continue to support Malay workers and professionals to advance based on their capability. UMNO will assist in the progress of Bumiputera industrialists and businessmen. But in undertaking all these efforts, UMNO should also prepare Malay minds to face the realities of this world.

60. If we are honest with ourselves, we will accept the fact that those who get something too easily have no real, no intrinsic strength. There can be no self worth for those who obtain positions, business opportunities and scholarships without real effort and qualification. If we fail to hone the competitive skills of the race, we will eventually become a defeated race. Malays will always be looked down upon; Malays will always feel insecure and lack confidence; Malays will always be seen as a burden by others.

61. The strength of the Malays should not be limited to political strength alone. Political strength cannot endure if it is not rooted strongly in the mastery of knowledge, skills, economy, and science and technology. Malay political strength can easily be defeated if it does not possess strong foundations; it can easily be sold to the highest bidder. Malay strength has to be based on self worth. The political strength that we have today should be used wisely to galvanize and motivate our race; only then will UMNO not be viewed as a mouthpiece and facilitator for a weak race.

62. Statistics show that the economic performance of the non-Bumiputeras has grown at a faster rate. Therefore, when the economy grew at 8 per cent in the early 1990s, the non-Bumiputeras benefited from that growth efficiently and skillfully. The relative percentage decline in Bumiputera achievement was due to two reasons. Firstly, other races had a clearer and sharper focus that allowed them to move forward faster. They also had more stamina and were therefore more resilient in the business world. Secondly, which is more worrying, is that Bumiputeras did not have the staying power, which exacerbated the erosion of Bumiputera holdings that was already taking place.

63. Malays have to be reminded to return to the noble values that are a part of their culture; a culture that has produced our strength and built our civilisation. Enrich the Malay race with knowledge so that Malays will become a wiser people.

64. The Malays are an industrious people. The Malays know that comfort does not come easy; that wealth must be earned. We are a people that realise how important it is to be vigilant to ensure our survival; how important it is to be prepared to face any eventuality.

65. But when there are Malays who are inclined towards adopting negative values, then the Malay race is in grave danger. Then we will have Malays who would sacrifice substance for style; Malays who will betray their own in the name of short-term gain.

66. It is because there are these Malays who adopt negative values that we have a developed a work culture that is aberrant. They expect lavish returns without toil. This aberration is the cause for the erosion of the economic opportunities that have been allocated to them. All our efforts end up being a futile exercise, akin to pouring water onto the ground; no matter how much we pour, the earth will absorb it. This fraction of Malays has stained the image of the whole Malay race.

67. If we are genuine in our efforts to develop the Malays to become a respected people, we have no choice but to work hard. Now is the time to build up the capabilities and competitiveness of the Malays. UMNO has to work towards creating more Malay leading lights, whose thoughts and skills are on par with anyone around the world; we have to build up the critical mass that will be an honest and genuine reflection of the success of the Malay race.

UMNO

68. UMNO is the country's largest political party. The policies on which it decides have an impact on all Malaysians and will also receive the attention of neighbouring countries and the international community. The reality of a multi racial society is that it requires all races to have a culture of mutual respect and understanding. Racial unity is a determining factor in ensuring political stability, peace and harmony. UMNO and its leadership have to be insightful and perceptive to sensitive issues that touch on religion, race, culture and language. All along, UMNO has shown a good example and as a result, Barisan Nasional component parties and the people accept UMNO's leadership of the country.

69. UMNO plays the role of, and, is accepted as the moving force for the country's political leadership. Simultaneously, we become the prime mover of the Government that has been entrusted to rule the country. Besides leading the Malay struggle, UMNO is also the leader of all Malaysians. The people have once again given their trust to UMNO to again lead them and form the Government. The people have placed their trust in us to ensure we bring progress and maintain and enhance peace, prosperity and unity in Malaysia.

70. Therefore, UMNO has to observe ethics and discipline to ensure it remains a genuinely respected party. UMNO large membership base cannot be a source of pride if these members cannot safeguard the party's reputation. UMNO must be firm – it cannot compromise with members who blight and tarnish UMNO's good name. It cannot compromise with those who have disparaged, smeared, attacked the dignity of UMNO and been treacherous to the party. UMNO cannot allow anyone to use itself as a stepping-stone for personal gain.

71. UMNO's strength is the collective strength of the Malay race. It is an amalgamation of the energy and spirit of loyal party members, no matter how much they may differ in their views; members who have committed themselves to our struggle and serve the party, for the party, whether they hold a high position in the party or none at all. UMNO derives its strength through continuity. It does not depend on a single individual, because no leader lives forever. UMNO remains. Its leaders empower the party and the party strengthens its leaders.

72. It is with this realisation that we have to build a culture of discipline. On the request of the majority of members, the Supreme Council is striving towards drawing up measures to monitor the party election process, from branch level to Supreme Council level. Each time an election is held, delegates are vociferous in their opposition to money politics and the Supreme Council is asked to take action against those who are involved in this practice.

73. The Supreme Council has taken many approaches to address the problem. Nevertheless, the reality is that discipline comes from within. Greed and avarice can only be restrained by rational thinking and sincere motives. The party will lose terribly if the enormous strength and unity it displayed during the general elections

is destroyed because of the party election process. The poison pen letters are again circulating and slander is rife. Repent! In five years from now, we will face the people again. We will be opposed in every constituency by those who are against us. The leaders and members of UMNO whom we attack and hurt will bear the scars of our actions and some may be irreparably harmed. Our acts today can be the source of our weakness five years from now.

74. How easily we forget the dangerous moments we faced in the 1999 general election. We have only recently redeemed our dignity in the recent polls. It is too soon for us to start fighting each other. As Muslims, we are joined in brotherhood and sisterhood. As members of UMNO, we are comrades in arms.

75. Look into your hearts and think rationally, make your decision with the interests of the party at heart, in the interests of our struggle. Choose leaders who can work together and strengthen the party; leaders who will strive for our people, religion, party and country; leaders who can guide us to the pinnacle.

76. Choose a Supreme Council from among those who have credibility, are trustworthy, and can provide good leadership. Those that we choose must have the capacity to become respected national leaders who are valued by UMNO, respected by the Barisan Nasional component parties and accepted by the rakyat. The results of this election must give victory to UMNO. We do not want a situation where the individual wins but UMNO loses.

77. The President and Deputy President need the support of a hardworking and principled Supreme Council which holds dear to the party struggle; we need the support from those who are strong and resilient and have proven that they are willing to sacrifice for the party, race, religion and country.

78. Heavy is the responsibility that leadership has to bear. The responsibility of leadership is a trust that will be evaluated both in this world and in the Hereafter. Man was intrepid enough to accept the mantle of leadership although others had rejected it, as stated in the Quran:

“Truly, we did give Al-Amanah (the trust or moral responsibility or honesty and all the duties that Allah has ordained) to the heavens and earth, and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and were afraid of it (Allah’s torment). But man bore it. Verily, he was unjust (to himself) and ignorant (of its results).” (Al Ahzab: 72)

79. Today, each one of you holds a trust from members of UMNO and the members of the Malay community. Your decision will determine the type of leadership that will assist me and the deputy president of the party. Fulfill that trust responsibly and honestly. May Allah give you guidance to ensure that we will be led by the best leaders who, with His blessings can advance our struggle.

STRATEGY

80. We are a democratic country. We value the people's right to choose and their right to elect the type of Government they want. There are no grounds for anyone or any group to act beyond this democratic process or outside the confines of the country's laws. Malaysia has remained a secure and peaceful oasis at a time when many countries are threatened with instability. We have developed the country and savoured success because we have been blessed with peace and political stability. We must be appreciative and grateful for this good fortune.

81. We still have a long journey ahead. Much of our agenda to develop our people and our nation lies before us. We will continue to be together with the people to bring development. We will bring the full force of the law against anyone or any group which tries to obstruct us from fulfilling this development agenda through violence and rioting.

82. The Malay agenda is the thrust of our struggle. It is an agenda that needs to be continued. Independence has to be meaningful to the Malays. A balanced and equitable achievement among the Malays and other races is a deciding factor in ensuring a peaceful and stable Malaysia. The Malays and Bumiputeras will become more open and tolerant if their social and economic status is on par with the other groups in the country.

83. We must continue to think of measures that can strengthen the position of the Malays but we need to approach this task in a manner that will build up our strength to face global challenges. The agenda to develop the people has to be targeted towards building capacity to produce a competitive Bumiputera; a Bumiputera who appreciates and understands the meaning of meritocracy; a Bumiputera who is determined to strive to reach a level where he will be respected based on merit.

84. We have to strategise steps that will ensure the capacity building of Bumiputeras is lasting and continuous. We can no longer adopt the approach of handing out fish; we have to provide the hooks and the boats, the nets, the compasses and the maps so that they will dare to go out and brave the waves to fish in deep waters.

85. There has to be value add to Bumiputera human resources. Knowledge and skills are very important. Efforts have to be redoubled to enhance bumiputera capacity to master knowledge and skills. Therefore, the efforts to create a larger Bumiputera class of quality professionals, technocrats and industrialists are a responsibility that we have to undertake promptly. We have to give greater focus on developing a Bumiputera Science and Technology Community to ensure the parity in achievement among Bumiputeras and non-Bumiputeras.

86. We have to redouble efforts to eradicate absolute or relative poverty. The agriculture sector can be the engine of growth for the national economy. A successful and progressive agriculture sector will provide a positive impact on development in rural areas, where Malays form the majority of the population. Agriculture has always been the traditional domain of Malays and it is a field in which they are adept. Rural Malays need to be looked after to ensure that their lives will improve. We will intensify efforts to assist the agricultural community to increase productivity and add value to their products. The agricultural sector needs to be expanded and strengthened. We need to increase productivity and introduce more downstream value-added activities. We have to ensure the success of agro-based small and medium industries and involve as many Bumiputeras as possible in this sector.

87. We have to do more to restructure Bumiputera professional human resources. We need more focused programmes to increase the Bumiputera middle class, so that they may catalyse the enlargement of the Bumiputera Commercial and Industrial Community (BCIC). Bumiputera-owned private companies should give more significant roles to Bumiputera professionals and businessmen and not solely look at Government-controlled companies to play that role. I would also like to remind non-Bumiputera owned companies that they should support national aspirations and show confidence by appointing Bumiputera professionals to senior managerial positions.

88. I appeal to Bumiputeras who are successful to step forward and support our efforts in increasing and enhancing the numbers of the BCIC, Bumiputera businessmen, professionals, technocrats and the Bumiputera science and technology community. Let us make it our joint goal and objective to help the Malays.

89. There is a critical need to create a Bumiputera Science and Technology community. Therefore, we should encourage an education system that encourages and prioritises creativity and research. We have to have an education system that emphasises quality. We have to tailor our vocational and skills education programmes to meet the latest changes in technology.

90. Education programmes have to be holistic. It has to provide knowledge and skills and develop intellect; but it also has to provide spiritual, physical, social and moral development. The young Malaysian must be taught to believe in God, be of good character, uphold family values, be confident and be patriotic.

91. More than 70 per cent of our population are aged below 40 years and almost 50 per cent are women. The young and the women are an invaluable asset with tremendous potential. Their views are very important in formulating national policies. Women and the young have to be consulted and brought into our discussions at planning and implementation level. They are influential and they are crucial to our success. Therefore, we must never sideline or marginalise them when formulating policies for the country. We must include them in all aspects to ensure they understand and involve themselves in our struggle. We must also empathise with their ideals and their aspirations.

92. All parties must be resolute, unwavering and committed in ensuring the success of the agenda to strengthen the Malay race. It is a long-term effort that requires strength, patience, determination and sacrifice. It involves mental development.

93. The Government cannot be expected to work alone towards reinforcing this agenda. The agenda and the efforts to strengthen the people are the responsibility of each and every one who loves his race. Private Bumiputera-owned institutions and individuals who have been the early beneficiaries, who have achieved wealth should become the catalysts to give rise to more successful Bumiputeras. Surely, the Malay economy can only strengthen if those who have been helped before, since the NEP was implemented, could in turn help others to achieve success. Surely if they (successful Bumiputeras) play their part, we could geometrically increase the ranks of the BCIC.

94. There is much yet to be done to strengthen our people; and to do this, we have to exercise introspection. We should not only seek to find the Government's weaknesses; we should also look within ourselves and find our own. While we expect the Government to play a role, we, too, must accept responsibility. We, too, must be ready to change and to bring about a transformation; and we have to begin from within ourselves, begin from within the party.

95. Therefore, we have to strengthen our faith, our mental resilience, and our physical strength. By making Islam Hadhari succeed, we will reinforce the struggle of our people, both in this world and in the Hereafter.

CONCLUSION

96. We must fully utilise our political power to effect change and bring about transformation. By the year 2020, in line with our objective to be a developed nation, the Malays must be a people who possess the positive qualities that can enable them to be the prime movers of a developed nation. In 2020, the Malays must be a people who are respected, highly educated, skilled, a people who can stand tall with others. Let us make this our pledge. Arise, my people – go forth and become Malays of strong character, enlightened Malays, a skilled Malays, independent Malays, successful Malays, whether as a farmer, teacher or poet, a trader or a businessman, a writer or a producer, an administrator or a manager. Arise, my people. This land and its resources are our heritage. It is us who can add value to it. It is us who will determine its dignity and its sovereignty. Remember, my people. We must not lose the battle; and we must also win the war.

97. We seek guidance and hidayah from Allah in taking us down the path that has received his blessings.