

**SPEECH BY
THE HONOURABLE ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI
ACCEPTING THE HONORARY CITIZENSHIP OF SEOUL
24 AUGUST 2004**

I AM VERY PLEASED TO BE HERE IN DYNAMIC SEOUL, UNDENIABLY ONE OF THE MOST VIBRANT AND VITAL CAPITAL CITIES OF THE WORLD. I AM PARTICULARLY DELIGHTED TO BE INVITED TO THE SEAT OF THE SEOUL METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT.

2. THE CITY OF SEOUL IS NOT ONLY A MARVEL BUT AN APPARENT MIRACLE. IT HAS BEEN THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT FOR 600 YEARS. IT HAS COPEDED WITH A MYRIAD OF BREATHTAKING PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION, URBANIZATION PROCESSES AND POPULATION PRESSURES. IT HAS ALSO WITHSTOOD AND OVERCOME THE RAVAGES OF WAR, SYMBOLIZING AS IT WERE THE INDOMITABLE SPIRIT AND DETERMINATION OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE TO PROTECT, MAINTAIN AND ENRICH THEIR CULTURE AND WAY OF LIFE. THE ORGANIZATION, ORDER AND EFFICIENCY WITH WHICH SEOUL IS MANAGED ARE MOST REMARKABLE AND STRIKING.

3. HOUSING NEARLY A QUARTER OF THE POPULATION OF KOREA IN LESS THAN ONE PERCENT OF THE COUNTRY'S LAND AREA, SEOUL IS INDEED NOTABLE FOR ITS CONTINUING ABILITY TO ATTRACT THE CONFIDENCE FOR NEW GROWTH AND CONSTRUCTION. MOST LAUDABLY, THE PROCESS OF URBAN RENEWAL DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE TAKEN A TOLL ON THE HERITAGE VALUE AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF IMPORTANT LANDMARKS AROUND THE CITY.

4. I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT SEOUL IS SERVICED BY ONE OF THE WORLD'S BEST INTRA-CITY TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS. DESPITE ALL THE PRESSURES OF POPULATION GROWTH AND THE DEMANDS OF CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS, THIS CAPITAL CITY HAS BEEN ABLE TO RETAIN ITS UNIQUENESS AND FRIENDLINESS. THE LOVELY HILLS AND THE GRAND HAN RIVER COMBINE TO GIVE SEOUL A WHOLESOME CHARM, ADDING TO ITS BEAUTY AND CHARACTER. I WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE THE SEOUL METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT, MAYOR LEE AND THE PEOPLE OF SEOUL FOR BUILDING ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST IMPRESSIVE CITIES, AND MAKING A GREAT SUCCESS OF IT.

5. ABOUT 70,000 MALAYSIANS VISIT SEOUL ANNUALLY. I AM ENCOURAGED BY THE INCREASING NUMBER OF PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY YOUNG MALAYSIANS, VISITING THIS HISTORIC CITY. AN ALMOST EQUAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE FROM THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA VISIT MALAYSIA YEARLY. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THOSE NUMBERS GROW. A GREATER EXCHANGE OF VISITORS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO GREATER UNDERSTANDING, AMITY AND COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. SEOUL, ON ITS PART, CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROCESS BY SENDING AND RECEIVING MORE PERFORMING TROUPES AND BY HOLDING MORE EXHIBITIONS AND ROAD SHOWS. I WOULD ALSO

ENCOURAGE CITIES IN MALAYSIA TO HOLD CULTURAL EVENTS AND YOUTH EXCHANGES TOGETHER WITH SEOUL.

6. MAY I CONCLUDE BY EXPRESSING MY HEARTFELT APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE FOR THE DECISION OF THE SEOUL METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT TO CONFER UPON ME AN HONORARY CITIZENSHIP OF THE CITY OF SEOUL. I AM INDEED PROUD TO HAVE BEEN SELECTED FOR THIS SINGULAR HONOUR.

THANK YOU.