

**SPEECH BY
THE HONOURABLE ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI
AT THE 30th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE DINNER
AT BEIJING, CHINA
29 MAY 2004**

HIS EXCELLENCY VICE PREMIER HUANG JU,

EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IT IS INDEED A GREAT PLEASURE FOR ME AND MY WIFE TO BE WITH ALL OF YOU THIS EVENING IN BEIJING. IT IS DIFFICULT FOR ME TO FIND THE WORDS TO FULLY EXPRESS OUR APPRECIATION TO THE ORGANIZERS FOR STAGING THIS GRAND DINNER. HOWEVER, LET ME SAY "THANK YOU" ON BEHALF OF ALL THE GUESTS. I AM TOLD THE EMBASSY OF MALAYSIA TOOK THE LEAD, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE MALAYSIA - CHINA BUSINESS COUNCIL, THE MALAYSIA-CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY, THE ASSOCIATED CHINESE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, THE MALAY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND THE ASIAN STRATEGY AND LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE.

2. THIS DINNER IS A PART OF THE CELEBRATIONS TO MARK THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA. I AM VERY HAPPY TO BE IN THE COMPANY OF SO MANY FELLOW MALAYSIANS SO FAR AWAY FROM HOME. I WOULD LIKE TO PUT ON RECORD OUR SPECIAL APPRECIATION TO THE CHINESE OFFICIALS FROM VARIOUS GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WHO ARE ALSO HERE TONIGHT TO JOIN US IN CELEBRATING THIS AUSPICIOUS OCCASION, IN PARTICULAR HIS EXCELLENCY HUANG JU, VICE PREMIER OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA.

3. THREE DECADES AGO IN 1974, OUR SECOND PRIME MINISTER, TUN ABDUL RAZAK, CAME TO CHINA AND SIGNED THE JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ WHICH FORMALISED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THE CHINESE PREMIER AT THAT TIME, HIS EXCELLENCY CHOU EN-LAI, SIGNED ON BEHALF OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT. IT WAS A PERIOD IN HISTORY WHEN SOUTHEAST ASIA WAS IN TURMOIL BECAUSE THE REGION WAS A FOCAL POINT IN THE RIVALRIES OF THE COLD WAR. MALAYSIA'S DECISION TO EMBARK ON THAT IMPORTANT DIPLOMATIC JOURNEY TO CHINA AND TAKE THAT IMPORTANT DIPLOMATIC STEP TO FORMALISE RELATIONS, WAS INDEED A BOLD ONE. QUITE CLEARLY NOW, IT WAS ALSO A FAR SIGHTED DECISION.

4. FROM THE ASEAN REGION, MALAYSIA TOOK PRIDE IN LEADING THE WAY IN NORMALISING RELATIONS WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA. THE EXAMPLE SET BY MALAYSIA WAS SOON FOLLOWED BY OTHER ASEAN COUNTRIES. FOR OUR PART, WE HAD DECIDED THEN THAT THE BEST WAY TO ENGAGE CHINA WAS TO TREAT THIS GREAT COUNTRY AS A FRIEND, NOT AS AN ADVERSARY. WE WERE VERY CONSCIOUS IN THOSE DAYS THAT IT HAD TO BE A WELL CONSIDERED

STRATEGIC DECISION. WE KNOW NOW THAT IT WAS THE CORRECT DECISION. WE WERE AWARE EVEN THEN THAT WE NEEDED CHINA TO PLAY A ROLE IN BUILDING REGIONAL SECURITY, STABILITY AND PROSPERITY.

5. HOWEVER, THE HISTORY OF OUR TIES, ESPECIALLY IN THE FORM OF TRADE AND COMMERCE, STARTED MUCH, MUCH EARLIER. SIX HUNDRED YEARS AGO, THE FAMOUS CHINESE ADMIRAL OF THE MING COURT, ZHENG HO, MADE MANY VOYAGES TO MALACCA ON THE MALAYAN PENINSULAR. MALACCA WAS ALREADY THEN A THRIVING SEA PORT AND A REGIONAL COMMERCIAL HUB. LOOKING BACK, WE REALISE NOW THAT THE CHINESE HAD IN FACT COME IN PEACE, UNLIKE THE EUROPEANS WHO CAME LATER NOT ONLY TO TRADE BUT ALSO TO CONQUER. THUS, MALACCA CAME UNDER THE RULE OF THE PORTUGUESE, WHO WAS LATER DISPLACED BY THE DUTCH UNTIL THE ENGLISH TOOK OVER, FOR ONE HUNDRED YEARS. THEREFORE, THIS 30TH. ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND CHINA IS VERY MUCH A REAFFIRMATION OF A THIRTY-YEAR OLD FRIENDSHIP WHICH ACTUALLY BEGAN LONG, LONG AGO.

6. PRIOR TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IN 1974, FOR NEARLY TWENTY YEARS BEFORE THAT, CONTACTS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND CHINA WERE MINIMAL AND RELATIONS GENERALLY WERE LOW KEY. THAT WAS AN ERA WHEN ASIAN COUNTRIES LOOKED AT EACH OTHER THROUGH SUSPICIOUS EYES. IT WAS ALSO A TIME WHEN THERE WAS UNEASINESS IN REGIONAL AFFAIRS. IDEOLOGY AND SYSTEMS KEPT US APART. FORTUNATELY FOR MALAYSIA AND CHINA, THE LEADERS OF BOTH COUNTRIES WERE ABLE TO PUT ASIDE THEIR FEARS AND DOUBTS, AND THEY LOOKED FOR THE BRIGHT SIDE IN MATTERS AFFECTING THE TWO COUNTRIES. THEY DECIDED THEN THAT DIFFERENCES OF VIEWS IN SOME AREAS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO OBSTRUCT THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS IN OTHER AREAS. MALAYSIA AND CHINA AGREED TO FOCUS INSTEAD ON THOSE MATTERS WHICH CAN BRING THE TWO COUNTRIES CLOSER TOGETHER, FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT.

7. SPEARHEADING THIS CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING BILATERAL RELATIONS WAS TRADE AND INVESTMENT COOPERATION. IN THE FUTURE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT TOGETHER WITH TOURISM ARE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO REPRESENT IMPORTANT COMPONENTS OF THE SUBSTANCE IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. I HAVE SPOKEN ABOUT THESE MATTERS IN SOME DETAIL YESTERDAY, AT THE "SHOWCASE MALAYSIA IN CHINA" EXHIBITION AND AT THE "MALAYSIA-CHINA BUSINESS DIALOGUE" SESSION.

8. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 1990S, AFTER THE STATE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND CHINA HAD SUFFICIENTLY GAINED MOMENTUM AND DEVELOPED STRENGTH, MALAYSIA PROCEEDED TO ENCOURAGE ITS ASEAN NEIGHBOURS TO SIMILARLY VIEW CHINA IN A POSITIVE LIGHT. MALAYSIA PERSUADED THEM TO AGREE TO ENGAGE CHINA AND ACCEPT CHINA AS A PARTNER ESPECIALLY FOR FOSTERING REGIONAL STABILITY AND SECURITY. THUS, WHEN WE HOSTED THE ANNUAL ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING IN 1991, MALAYSIA INVITED THE CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER TO BE ITS GUEST AT THAT MEETING IN KUALA LUMPUR. AFTER THAT, MALAYSIA TOOK THE LEAD IN PROPOSING THAT

CHINA BE ACCEPTED AS AN OFFICIAL DIALOGUE PARTNER OF ASEAN AND THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED IN 1996, FOLLOWING WHICH CHINA BECAME PART OF THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM (A.R.F) PROCESS AS WELL. IT WAS MALAYSIA'S TURN TO HOST THE ASEAN SUMMIT MEETING IN 1997. ONCE AGAIN, MALAYSIA TOOK STEPS TO BRING CHINA EVEN CLOSER TO SOUTHEAST ASIA. IN THAT YEAR, MALAYSIA SUCCEEDED IN CONVENING THE FIRST EVER ASEAN PLUS THREE SUMMIT MEETING IN WHICH THE LEADERS OF CHINA, JAPAN AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA SAT TOGETHER TO DISCUSS NOT ONLY REGIONAL ISSUES WITH ASEAN AS A WHOLE, BUT ALSO BILATERAL COOPERATION BETWEEN ASEAN AND EACH OF THEM.

9. IN THIS ERA OF GLOBALISATION, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY HAS ACQUIRED NEW MEANINGS AS A RESULT OF BEING CONFRONTED BY NEW CHALLENGES. MALAYSIA, CHINA AND OTHER REGIONAL COUNTRIES SHOULD ADDRESS THE IMPACT OF THESE NEW CHALLENGES AND TAKE COMMON POSITIONS IN ORDER TO PROTECT REGIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS. THIS COULD BE CARRIED OUT IN APPROPRIATE FORUMS SUCH AS THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM.

10. AS IMPORTANT REGIONAL PLAYERS, MALAYSIA AND CHINA SHOULD ALSO COOPERATE IN SETTING THE AGENDA FOR A REALLY NEW ERA OF REGIONAL COOPERATION, NOT ONLY IN MATTERS OF SECURITY BUT ALSO IN OTHER AREAS FOR THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC WELLBEING OF THE PEOPLE OF THE EAST ASIAN REGION. THE DISCUSSIONS ON THESE IMPORTANT ISSUES CAN BE INTENSIFIED IN A MORE COHESIVE FORMAT SUCH AS AN EAST ASIA SUMMIT MEETING. WE CAN BUILD UPON THE EXISTING ASEAN PLUS THREE PROCESS TO RAISE THE REGIONAL DIALOGUE TO THIS HIGHER PLANE.

11. AT THE SAME TIME, ALTHOUGH WE CAN CONFIDENTLY SAY THAT BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND CHINA HAVE MATURED, WE MUST CONTINUE TO BUILD UPON OUR ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PAST THIRTY YEARS. THE 1999 JOINT STATEMENT BETWEEN BOTH GOVERNMENTS, ON THE FRAMEWORK OF FUTURE BILATERAL COOPERATION, RIGHTLY CALLED FOR A MULTI-DIRECTIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. DURING MY OFFICIAL VISIT THIS TIME, WE HAVE AGREED TO ISSUE A JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ WHICH IS INTENDED TO PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR BRINGING MALAYSIA-CHINA RELATIONS TO A NEW STAGE, WHICH IS ALSO MULTI-LAYERED AND MULTI-FACETED.

12. MALAYSIA AND CHINA HAVE DECIDED THAT THE TASK OF BROADENING AND DEEPENING THE SCOPE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND CHINA SHOULD NOT BE LEFT MERELY TO THE LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNMENTS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES. WE HAVE AGREED THAT LOWER AUTHORITIES AS WELL AS OTHER LEVELS OF THE SOCIETY SHOULD ALSO BECOME INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING THE RELATIONS. THEREFORE THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WILL FOSTER CONTACTS AT THE LEVEL OF THE RULING PARTIES, LEGISLATIVE BODIES, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS, THE PRIVATE SECTOR AS WELL AS THE ORDINARY PEOPLES OF MALAYSIA AND CHINA.

13. MALAYSIA AND CHINA AGREED THAT THE AREAS FOR COOPERATION WOULD BE WIDE RANGING. THE OBJECTIVE IS TO DIVERSIFY AND ADD VALUE TO THE COOPERATION IN VARIOUS AREAS. THE JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ OF 2004 HIGHLIGHTS THE UNDERTAKING OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS TO CONTINUE COOPERATING IN AREAS THAT WILL BRING MUTUAL BENEFITS TO THE ECONOMIES OF BOTH COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY WITH THE ATTAINMENT OF FULL MARKET ECONOMY STATUS BY CHINA. THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE' IDENTIFIES IN PARTICULAR THE DESIRE OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS TO INTENSIFY COOPERATION IN CERTAIN SECTORS SUCH AS AGRICULTURE, AVIATION, SHIPPING, ENERGY, FINANCE, LABOUR, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, OUTER SPACE, CULTURE, EDUCATION, PUBLIC HEALTH. THIS LIST IS NEITHER EXHAUSTIVE NOR EXCLUSIVE.

14. TRULY, MALAYSIA AND CHINA HAVE COME A LONG WAY SINCE THE MODEST BEGINNINGS. AS I HAVE DESCRIBED, THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS WAS NOT DONE OVER-NIGHT NOR WITHOUT EFFORT. ONE OF THE UNDERLYING EXPLANATIONS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND CHINA WAS THE AGREEMENT BY BOTH SIDES TO START AND PROCEED ON THE CORRECT FOUNDATIONS. WE AGREED, WHEN WE ESTABLISHED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IN 1974, TO ABIDE BY CERTAIN FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF NEIGHBOURLY RELATIONS, IN PARTICULAR THE PRINCIPLE OF MUTUAL RESPECT FOR SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, AND THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-INTERFERENCE IN EACH OTHER'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. THIS INCLUDES THE UNWAVERING ADHERENCE BY MALAYSIA TO THE ONE-CHINA POLICY. THESE PRINCIPLES HAVE PROVEN THEIR WORTH AND WE SHALL CONTINUE TO ABIDE BY THEM.

15. THIS CELEBRATION OF THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, I HOPE, WILL MARK THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW CHAPTER IN BILATERAL COOPERATION AND AMITY BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA.

THANK YOU