

**SPEECH**  
**YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH HAJI AHMAD BADAWI**  
**AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT**  
**AT PUTRA WORLD TRADE CENTRE, KUALA LUMPUR**  
**7TH JULY 2005**

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ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH AND GOOD MORNING

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DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS AND GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

1. IT IS A PLEASURE AND AN HONOUR FOR ME TO BE HERE TO ADDRESS THIS ESTEEMED GATHERING OF ACADEMIC, TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRY LEADERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD AT THIS "INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT 2005" ORGANISED BY UNIVERSITY PUTRA MALAYSIA. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IS AN IMPORTANT EMERGING FIELD OF SCIENCE THAT HOLDS GREAT POTENTIAL FOR ENHANCING THE VALUE OF ORGANISATIONS, INDUSTRIES AND EVEN WHOLE ECONOMIES. THEREFORE, I BELIEVE THAT THIS CONFERENCE – WHICH AIMS TO BUILD AWARENESS OF THE MANY BENEFITS OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AS WELL AS THE MANY ADVANCES THAT HAVE BEEN MADE IN THIS FIELD – WILL BE EXTREMELY BENEFICIAL TO ALL.

2. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IS A FIELD OF SCIENCE THAT IS BECOMING VITALLY IMPORTANT. WE SHOULD BEGIN TO TAKE A LONG, HARD LOOK AT HOW THE EFFECTIVE UTILISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE HAS CREATED WEALTH IN OTHER MORE ADVANCED COUNTRIES AND, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, EMULATE THIS SUCCESS. INDEED, IN ORDER TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN TODAY'S WORLD, I WOULD ARGUE THAT IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO HAVE ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE, BUT WE MUST ALSO KNOW HOW TO UTILISE AND MANAGE THAT KNOWLEDGE SO THAT WE MAY GAIN AS MUCH VALUE FROM IT AS POSSIBLE.

3. NEVERTHELESS, WE MUST RECOGNISE THAT MANAGING KNOWLEDGE IN TODAY'S FAST-PACED, INTERCONNECTED AND GLOBALISED WORLD, IS NOT AN EASY TASK. THE PROCESS OF MANAGING KNOWLEDGE HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT AND COMPLEX GIVEN THE EVER GROWING BODY OF KNOWLEDGE IN EXISTENCE AS WELL AS THE INCREASINGLY NUMEROUS CHANNELS BY WHICH KNOWLEDGE IS TRANSMITTED. THE ADVENT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (I.C.T.) HAS ADDED TO THIS COMPLEXITY, BUT THANKFULLY, IT HAS ALSO PROVIDED SOLUTIONS TO MANAGE IT.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

4. I WOULD NOW LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU MY VIEWS ON WHAT I FEEL ARE THE MAIN BENEFITS OF ADOPTING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS TO US AS MANAGERS OF ORGANISATIONS, AND AS INDIVIDUALS.

5. LEADERS AND MANAGERS OFTEN HAVE VERY DIFFICULT TASKS TO PERFORM AND A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT INTERESTS TO SERVE SIMULTANEOUSLY. IT IS OFTEN A JUGGLING ACT THAT REQUIRES A GREAT DEAL OF PATIENCE; SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTISE; MANAGEMENT, DECISION-MAKING, COMMUNICATION AND PEOPLE-SKILLS; AND A STRONG FOUNDATION OF ETHICS AND INTEGRITY TO BOOT. BASED ON MY EXPERIENCE AS PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA, I CAN TELL YOU THAT LEADING AND MANAGING A COUNTRY IS PERHAPS SIMILAR TO LEADING AND MANAGING A COMPANY. THE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A PRIME MINISTER AND THAT OF A CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER MAY NOT DIFFER TO A SIGNIFICANT DEGREE. BOTH HAVE SPECIFIC GOALS AND TARGETS TO DELIVER, DEADLINES WITHIN WHICH TO DELIVER THEM, DIFFERENT INTERESTS TO SATISFY, AND ALMOST ALWAYS, LIMITED BUDGETS TO WORK WITH. AND THE MOST DIFFICULT PART OF ALL IS THAT WE HAVE TO GET THE BALANCE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT, OR WE RISK LOSING SO MUCH MORE THAN WHAT WE PUT IN.

6. AS SUCH, I AM DEEPLY AWARE THAT IN TODAY'S KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY, DEMANDS FOR BETTER, MORE EFFICIENT SERVICES AS WELL AS MORE ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS NEED TO BE MET WITHOUT DELAY; OR YOU RISK LOSING YOUR "CUSTOMERS" TO YOUR "COMPETITORS". INDEED, WHETHER IN GOVERNMENT, THE PRIVATE SECTOR, CIVIL SOCIETY, OR EVEN ACADEMIA, FOUR KEY WORDS SEEM TO DOMINATE AND DICTATE THE LANDSCAPE. THESE FOUR KEY WORDS ARE (1) EFFICIENCY; (2) ACCOUNTABILITY; (3) TRANSPARENCY, AND; (4) SUSTAINABILITY.

7. TODAY, PEOPLE WANT GOVERNMENTS, EMPLOYERS, POLICY MAKERS, PROFESSIONALS AND ACADEMICIANS – IN SHORT, THOSE WHO WIELD DECISION-MAKING POWER – TO BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE DECISIONS THEY MAKE. THEY WANT TO BE INFORMED OF HOW THOSE DECISIONS WERE MADE, AND AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, THEY WANT TO BE INCLUDED IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. THEY ALSO WANT TO BE ASSURED THAT THE RESULTS OF THE DECISIONS AND ACTIONS TAKEN WOULD NOT JEOPARDISE THEIR RIGHT TO ENJOY CURRENT AND FUTURE GROWTH. ESSENTIALLY, THE PEOPLE WANT A SYSTEM OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PLACE, ONE THAT IS EFFICIENT, ACCOUNTABLE, TRANSPARENT AND SUSTAINABLE.

8. THESE DEMANDS, ALMOST ALWAYS, REQUIRE THAT WE DO TWO THINGS. FIRSTLY, AS LEADERS AND MANAGERS, WE MUST IMPROVE OUR INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE BY INCREASING OUR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS SO THAT WE MAY LEAD OTHERS MORE EFFECTIVELY. SECONDLY, WE MUST ENSURE THAT THE SYSTEM OR TOOLS THAT WE NEED TO IMPROVE OUR PERFORMANCE ARE READILY

IN PLACE SO THAT WE ARE ABLE TO EXTRACT MAXIMUM VALUE FROM OUR EFFORTS. THIS INCLUDES BY PAYING ATTENTION TO MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, INCLUDING THE MANAGEMENT OF OUR EMPLOYEES, OUR BUDGET AND FINANCES, AS WELL AS OUR INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS.

9. FOR EXAMPLE, IN AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE, WE MUST HAVE THE ABILITY TO CAPTURE AND UTILISE THE RIGHT INFORMATION FOR THE RIGHT PURPOSE AT ANY SPECIFIED TIME. I AM PLEASED TO SAY THAT WITH THE GREATER USAGE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO RAISE OUR PERFORMANCE SOMEWHAT. WE ARE ABLE TO COLLABORATE, WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY IN ORDER TO ADD VALUE TO OUR STRATEGIC PLANNING, OUR WORK PROCESSES AND OUR WORK OUTCOMES. IN SO DOING, WE ARE BETTER EQUIPPED TO DELIVER QUALITY SERVICES AND MEET THE ASPIRATIONS OF ALL MALAYSIANS.

10. INDEED, ONE OF THE ADVANTAGES OF ADOPTING A MORE EFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IS THAT IT HAS ENABLED INTEGRATED WORK PROCESSES AMONG VARIOUS AGENCIES AND EXPERT COMMUNITIES TO BE CARRIED OUT. PUTRAJAYA, THE SEAT OF MALAYSIA'S MODERN ADMINISTRATION, IS AN EXAMPLE OF AN INTEGRATED WORK ENVIRONMENT THAT IS MOVING TOWARD THE INCREASED USAGE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS. THE GOAL OF DELIVERING A SEAMLESS SERVICE TO ALL MALAYSIANS, WHILE BREAKING DOWN INFORMATION SILOS THAT MAY EXIST BETWEEN MINISTRIES AND AGENCIES, IS BEING CARRIED OUT, ALBEIT IN STAGES. WHILE WE RECOGNISE THAT CONSTRAINTS EXIST, ESPECIALLY IN RELATION TO CONCERNS OVER CONFIDENTIALITY AND SECURITY, NEVERTHELESS, THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT THE EFFICIENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES IS IMPROVED FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

11. KNOWLEDGE CONTINUES TO BE VALUED FOR ITS OWN SAKE AS WELL AS FOR ITS ABILITY TO PROVIDE ENLIGHTENMENT AND GUIDANCE. INCREASINGLY, KNOWLEDGE IS ALSO BEING SEEN AS A COMMODITY THAT HAS ECONOMIC VALUE. ACCORDING TO SOME ESTIMATES, THE CONTRIBUTION OF KNOWLEDGE-BASED PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TO THE WORLD'S ECONOMY HAS INCREASED FROM 24 PER CENT IN THE 1940'S TO JUST BELOW 60 PER CENT IN THE EARLY 1980'S, BASED ON THE NUMBER OF PATENTED PRODUCTS REGISTERED ANNUALLY IN THE WORLD. THIS FIGURE CONTINUES TO ESCALATE. INDEED, THE ABILITY TO PACKAGE AND COMMODITISE KNOWLEDGE AND EXTRACT ECONOMIC VALUE OUT OF DISCRETE PIECES OF INFORMATION OWES MUCH TO THE ADVANCEMENTS MADE IN I.C.T. IN RECENT TIMES.

12. INCREASINGLY, COMPANIES, ORGANISATIONS, AND EVEN WHOLE ECONOMIES, HAVE BEGUN TO REALISE THAT THE ABILITY TO UTILISE MORE MEANINGFULLY EXISTING KNOWLEDGE AND TO CREATE NEW KNOWLEDGE IS THE SUREST WAY TO

DEVELOP AND TO MOVE UP THE VALUE-CHAIN. MALAYSIA, FOR EXAMPLE, IS PURSUING AN EXPLICIT POLICY OF TECHNOLOGICAL UPGRADING – ENCOMPASSING PEOPLE AND INFRASTRUCTURE – IN ORDER TO MAKE THE TRANSITION TO A KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY. BUT OUR PROGRESS HAS NOT BEEN AS FAST AS WE WOULD LIKE IT TO BE. TO SOME EXTENT, OUR PROGRESS HAS BEEN HAMPERED BY OUR LACK OF APPRECIATION AND INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (R&D) AND IN INNOVATION ACTIVITIES. WE ALSO DO NOT INVEST AS MUCH AS WE SHOULD IN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND OTHER TECHNOLOGY-BASED TOOLS THAT ALLOW US TO CREATE MORE MEANING AND VALUE IN DISPARATE PIECES OF INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE, AND TO EXTRACT ECONOMIC VALUE FROM THESE ELEMENTS.

13. THIS LACK OF ATTENTION AND INVESTMENT MEANS THAT WE RISK LOSING OUT ON MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO CREATE ADDITIONAL VALUE FOR OURSELVES. FOR EXAMPLE, THE SYSTEMATIC PROCESSES IN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS HAVE MADE THEM INVALUABLE TOOLS TO TRACK AND MEASURE THE INDEX OF HUMAN CAPITAL – SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND OUTPUT – THAT ARE AVAILABLE IN AN ORGANISATION OR COMMUNITY. BESIDES THIS, KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS HAVE ALSO MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR ORGANISATIONS TO KEEP THEIR INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY INTACT. DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS SERVE AS IMPORTANT REMINDERS OF AN ORGANISATION'S CONTRIBUTION AND LEGACY. BUT IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, THESE RECORDS WILL REMAIN JUST MERE ARTIFACTS UNLESS SOME EFFORT IS MADE TO DOCUMENT AND MOBILISE THE INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE WITHIN. THIS CAN BE DONE THROUGH CATEGORISING INFORMATION SO THAT THE HISTORY OF OUR DECISION MAKING PROCESS REMAINS IN CURRENT CIRCULATION IN AS MANY FIELDS OF APPLIED OR RESEARCHABLE KNOWLEDGE. WHEN WE ARE SUCCESSFUL AT THIS, ONLY THEN CAN WE SAY THAT WE ARE EFFECTIVELY LEARNING FROM HISTORY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

14. CLEARLY, THERE ARE MANY ADVANTAGES TO UTILISING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN GOVERNMENTS, ORGANISATIONS AND COMPANIES. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE TAKE THIS AWARENESS TO NEW HEIGHTS BY ACTUALLY ADOPTING AND FULLY UTILISING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN OUR RESPECTIVE ORGANISATIONS. BUT I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO CAUTION THAT HAVING THE RIGHT STRATEGY, TOOLS AND SUPPORTING ENVIRONMENT, NO MATTER HOW IMPORTANT, CAN ONLY TAKE YOU SO FAR. AT THE END OF THE DAY, PEOPLE ARE THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR THAT WILL DETERMINE THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF AN ORGANISATION. AND SO, IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT THAT EVEN WHILE WE PURSUE MORE SOPHISTICATED, TECHNOLOGY-INTENSIVE TOOLS TO MANAGE KNOWLEDGE FLOWS, WE SHOULD ALSO PAY ATTENTION TO HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

15. WE HAVE TO REALISE THAT WHILE KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION MAY BE MORE EASILY ACCESSIBLE NOW, MOST PEOPLE REQUIRE FURTHER TRAINING TO BE ABLE TO TRANSFORM THIS KNOWLEDGE INTO SOMETHING THAT IS VALUABLE AND MEANINGFUL. IN THAT SENSE, PEOPLE NEED TO BE EDUCATED ON HOW TO USE KNOWLEDGE TO THEIR ADVANTAGE, TO CREATE VALUE IN THEIR PERSONAL LIVES

AND IN THEIR WORK. THEREFORE, THE PURSUIT OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING MUST BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF ANY INITIATIVE TO ENHANCE AND MANAGE KNOWLEDGE. THAT IS WHY MY GOVERNMENT REMAINS COMMITTED TO ENHANCING ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION THAT IS BEING DELIVERED, BEGINNING AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL RIGHT UP TO THE TERTIARY LEVEL.

16. I BELIEVE THAT WE MUST BEGIN TO REASSESS WHAT WE TEACH AND HOW WE TEACH OUR STUDENTS, OUR EMPLOYEES AND OUR CITIZENS AS A WHOLE. INDEED, AS WE ENTER THE AGE OF "KNOWLEDGE BORDERLESSNESS", WHERE KNOWLEDGE FLOWS ARE INCREASINGLY COMPLEX AND MULTI-DISCIPLINARY, EFFORTS MUST BE MADE TO ENSURE THAT OUR STUDENTS, OUR EMPLOYEES AND OUR CITIZENS AS A WHOLE ARE ABLE TO COPE WITH COMPLEX KNOWLEDGE FLOWS AND, INDEED, TO MANAGE AND THRIVE AS A RESULT.

17. OF COURSE, THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE EDUCATION AND TRAINING IS NOT JUST THE GOVERNMENT'S. THE PRIVATE SECTOR, AS A MAJOR SOURCE OF EMPLOYMENT, MUST ALSO PLAY THEIR ROLE TO TRAIN AND VALUE-ADD THEIR EMPLOYEES. THE COST OF EDUCATING AND TRAINING SHOULD BE SEEN NOT AS AN ADDITIONAL EXPENSE TO BE BORNE, BUT AS AN INVESTMENT FOR THE FUTURE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

18. I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE ORGANISERS FOR INVITING ME TO THIS CONFERENCE, AND TO THANK ALL OF YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS IMPORTANT EVENT. YOUR IDEAS, VIEWS AND COMMENTS ON HOW TO MOVE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT FORWARD, BOTH AS A SCIENCE AND AS AN INDUSTRY, ARE CRUCIAL TO ITS DEVELOPMENT, AND THEREFORE, VERY MUCH APPRECIATED. I WOULD ENCOURAGE ALL OF YOU TO USE THIS OPORTUNITY TO HAVE FRANK AND OPEN DISCUSSIONS, AND TO GIVE CONSTRUCTIVE INPUT AND CRITICISM WHEN NECESSARY, SO THAT WE MAY IMPROVE OUR OVERALL PERFORMANCE.

19. ON THAT NOTE, IT IS MY PLEASURE TO DECLARE THE "INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT 2005" OFFICIALLY OPEN.

THANK YOU.