

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY  
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI  
AT THE CONVENTION ON 'SELF RELIANCE IN VACCINE PRODUCTION  
IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD', AT MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR  
15 APRIL 2005**

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EXCELLENCIES

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

1. ALHAMDULILLAH, ALL PRAISE BE TO ALLAH, BY WHOSE GRACE AND BLESSINGS WE ARE GATHERED HERE TODAY. THIS CONVENTION PRESENTS US WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS AND ADDRESS SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN THE O.I.C., NAMELY, THE SURVIVAL AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF MUSLIMS, PARTICULARLY INFANTS AND CHILDREN IN THE O.I.C. WORLD.

2. INDEED, IT IS AN UNDER-APPRECIATED FACT THAT INFANTS AND CHILDREN WHO LIVE IN ISLAMIC NATIONS FACE THE HIGHEST RISK OF CATCHING EPIDEMIC AND ENDEMIC INFECTIOUS DISEASES, ONE OF THE LEADING CAUSES OF HIGH MORTALITY RATES. ACCORDING TO THE U.N. POPULATION REPORT (2004), SEVEN OF THE 10 NATIONS WITH THE HIGHEST INFANT MORTALITY RATES ARE MEMBERS OF THE O.I.C.. SOME AFRICAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN ISLAMIC NATIONS SHOW INFANT MORTALITY RATES EXCEEDING 100 PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS. VERY FEW ISLAMIC COUNTRIES REGISTER INFANT MORTALITY RATES LOWER THAN 10 PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS, COUNTRIES SUCH AS BRUNEI, BAHRAIN AND MALAYSIA.

3. O.I.C. MEMBER NATIONS ARE ALSO AMONG THE MOST SEVERELY AFFECTED IN THE CASE OF UNDER-AGE-FIVE CHILDHOOD MORTALITY RATES. ISLAMIC NATIONS MAKE UP THE MAJORITY OF COUNTRIES WITH UNDER-FIVE MORTALITY RATES EXCEEDING 200 DEATHS PER 1,000. MANY OF THESE CHILDREN SUFFER DISEASES SUCH AS MEASLES, MALARIA AND RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS – DISEASES THAT CAN LARGELY BE AVERTED AND PREVENTED.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

4. IT IS A TRAGEDY TO ALLOW MILLIONS OF OUR MEMBER NATIONS' INFANTS AND CHILDREN TO DIE OF SUCH PREVENTABLE CAUSES. THERE ARE MANY REASONS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS, BUT PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT IS THE DEPRIVATION OF CHILDHOOD VACCINATION. THE SERIOUSNESS OF THIS DEFICIENCY IS ALL THE MORE APPARENT WHEN WE CONSIDER DEVELOPMENTS IN WESTERN COUNTRIES, WHERE 'KILLER' DISEASES LIKE POLIO ARE CONSIDERED TO HAVE LONG BEEN ERADICATED. IN COMPARISON, THE COUNTRIES WHICH ARE SEEN AS STILL CIRCULATING THE POLIO VIRUS COMPRISE MOSTLY ISLAMIC NATIONS. THE SITUATION IS COMPOUNDED BY A FUNDING GAP IN IMMUNISATION AND A LACK OF MONITORING AND COOPERATION BETWEEN COUNTRIES OVER IMPORTATION OF THE VIRUS.

5. CLEARLY, WE HAVE MUCH TO DO. MANY OF THE WORLD'S MUSLIMS LIVE IN CONDITIONS THAT EXPOSE THEM TO THE MOST VIRULENT, YET MOST PREVENTABLE, INFECTIONS. WHILE IT IS IMPORTANT TO PROMOTE THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF O.I.C. MEMBER NATIONS, IT IS JUST AS IMPORTANT, IF NOT MORE, TO ATTEND TO THE MOST BASIC OF CONCERNS, SUCH AS HEALTH AND SANITATION. INDEED, TO MAKE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CHANGE SUSTAINABLE, MEASURES TO ENHANCE LIVELIHOODS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY MEASURES TO SUSTAIN LIVES.

6. CONSIDERING THE VITAL ROLE OF VACCINATION IN THIS SITUATION, THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK (I.D.B.) HAS IDENTIFIED SELF-RELIANCE IN VACCINE PRODUCTION AS A CRITICAL THRUST FOR THE FUTURE OF THE UMMAH. IN ITS FIFTH YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION, THIS PROGRAM WAS ESTABLISHED TO ENSURE THAT AFFORDABLE, SAFE AND EFFECTIVE VACCINES ARE PRODUCED AND MADE AVAILABLE TO THE ISLAMIC WORLD. VACCINE PRODUCERS IN O.I.C. MEMBER COUNTRIES CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PROGRAM FOR BUILDING CAPACITY IN TECHNOLOGY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE. THE ANNUAL MEETINGS, SUCH AS THIS ONE TODAY, PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR VACCINE PRODUCERS TO DISCUSS PRODUCTION AND MARKET ISSUES, AS WELL AS TO TAP THE I.D.B. FOR PROJECT SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE.

7. THE I.D.B. AND O.I.C. VACCINE PRODUCERS SHOULD BE CONGRATULATED AND SUPPORTED FOR TAKING UP THE CHALLENGE OF IMPROVING THE HEALTH AND SURVIVAL OF THE UMMAH. AFTER ALL, THERE IS A RISK OF VACCINE PRODUCTION BECOMING MARGINALISED, AS MORE AND MORE PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES CHASE HIGHER PROFITS IN MANUFACTURING OTHER PRODUCTS, SUCH AS 'BLOCKBUSTER' DRUGS. GIVEN THE DECLINE OF VACCINE PRODUCTION IN THE WESTERN COUNTRIES, IT IS VITAL THAT WE IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD BUILD OUR SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN THIS AREA. IN THIS WAY, WE CAN ENSURE NOT ONLY ADEQUATE SUPPLY BUT ALSO BETTER DEVELOPMENT OF HALAL VACCINES. WE CAN ALSO ENSURE THAT VACCINE DEVELOPMENT FOR DISEASES PREVALENT IN OUR RESPECTIVE REGIONS, SUCH AS MALARIA, WILL RECEIVE THE ATTENTION THAT IT DESERVES.

8. I AM PLEASED TO SAY THAT THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT IS CURRENTLY EMBARKING ON A PROJECT FOR NATIONAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN VACCINE PRODUCTION, TO ENSURE THE ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF SAFE AND EFFECTIVE VACCINES FOR OUR POPULATION. AS PART OF THIS PROJECT, THE MALAYSIAN NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR NATURAL PRODUCTS, VACCINES AND BIOLOGICALS IS BEING ESTABLISHED, WHICH WILL ACT AS THE FOCAL POINT FOR R&D IN VACCINE PRODUCTION FOR THE COUNTRY. THIS INSTITUTE, TOGETHER WITH MALAYSIA'S MINISTRY OF HEALTH, WILL ALSO ACT AS COORDINATOR OF VACCINE R&D FOR THE O.I.C., AS DECIDED IN THE FIRST ANNUAL MEETING OF O.I.C. VACCINE PRODUCERS LAST MARCH.

9. AS MEMBERS OF THE O.I.C., WE RECOGNISE THE URGENT NEED FOR O.I.C. COUNTRIES TO ENHANCE COOPERATION AMONG THEMSELVES, ESPECIALLY TO BRIDGE THE DEFICIT OF GLOBAL VACCINE SUPPLIES FOR USE WITHIN O.I.C. COUNTRIES. IT IS OUR ASPIRATION THAT MALAYSIA WILL BE SELF-RELIANT IN VACCINE PRODUCTION IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE AND IN DOING SO, BE ABLE TO SHARE OUR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE IN HALAL VACCINES WITH THE MUSLIM WORLD. THE JOINT ORGANISATION OF THIS ANNUAL MEETING BY THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, MALAYSIA AND THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK IS TESTIMONY TO THIS COMMITMENT.

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10. THE PUTRAJAYA DECLARATION DURING THE 10TH SESSION OF THE ISLAMIC SUMMIT CONFERENCE IN OCTOBER 2003 STATED THAT WE MUST RECOGNISE THE LEADING ROLE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE UMMAH AND THE NEED TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN THE ISLAMIC AND THE INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES. IN THIS REGARD, WE ALSO RECOGNISED THE URGENT NEED FOR MUSLIM COUNTRIES TO ENHANCE COOPERATION AMONG THEMSELVES BY CREATING LINKAGES AND ESTABLISHING A CONDUCIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR PARTNERSHIP. I HOPE THAT WE WILL UNDERTAKE MORE COORDINATED, FOCUSED AND REGULAR INTERACTIONS BETWEEN O.I.C. MEMBER COUNTRIES, SUCH AS IN TODAY'S EVENT, ON IMPORTANT ISSUES OF CONCERN TO THE UMMAH.

11. THERE ARE MANY CHALLENGES FACING THE O.I.C., BUT THERE ALSO MANY OPPORTUNITIES. WE NEED TO POOL OUR STRENGTHS AND WORK TOGETHER TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT THE WORLD HAS TO OFFER, FOR THE GOOD OF OUR NATIONS, AND FOR THE GOOD OF THE UMMAH. WE MUST ALWAYS BE READY TO SHARE OUR EXPERTISE AND OUR RESOURCES, PARTICULARLY WITH COUNTRIES THAT REQUIRE ASSISTANCE.

12. MAY ALLAH S.W.T. SHOWER US WITH HIS BLESSINGS AND GUIDE US IN THIS MOST NOBLE ENDEAVOUR TO ENHANCE THE HEALTH OF MUSLIMS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, PARTICULARLY FOR INFANTS AND CHILDREN. ON THAT NOTE, WITH THE RECITATION OF "BISMILLAHIR RAHMANIR RAHIM", IT GIVES ME GREAT

PLEASURE TO DECLARE OPEN THIS SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PROGRAM  
FOR SELF RELIANCE IN VACCINE PRODUCTION IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD.

THANK YOU.