

**SPEECH BY
THE HONOURABLE DATO' SERI ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI,
AT THE OFFICIAL LUNCHEON IN HONOUR OF HIS EXCELLENCY WEN JIABAO
PREMIER OF THE STATE COUNCIL THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA,
AT PALACE OF THE GOLDEN HORSES, SERI KEMBANGAN
15 DECEMBER 2005**

HIS EXCELLENCY MR. WEN JIABAO
PREMIER OF THE STATE COUNCIL OF
THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

EXCELLENCIES
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO EXTEND TO MY FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE,
PREMIER WEN JIABAO, AND TO HIS DISTINGUISHED DELEGATION, A VERY WARM
AND CORDIAL WELCOME TO MALAYSIA.

2. YOUR EXCELLENCY, I AM PARTICULARLY DELIGHTED THAT YOU ARE FINALLY
ABLE TO MAKE YOUR FIRST, OFFICIAL VISIT TO MALAYSIA. THE FACT THAT THIS
TAKES PLACE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE HISTORIC AND
SUCCESSFUL FIRST EAST ASIA SUMMIT, MAKES THIS VISIT OF YOURS EVEN MORE
MEMORABLE. INDEED, IT IS HAPPENING AT AN AUSPICIOUS TIME, THIS YEAR
BEING THE 600TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST OF FIVE VOYAGES TO MELAKA
MADE BY ADMIRAL CHENG HO OF THE MING DYNASTY. THE VOYAGES OF THE
ADMIRAL WERE WITHOUT DOUBT AMAZING FEATS. I AM RECALLING THE STORY OF
THE LEGENDARY ADMIRAL CHENG HO BECAUSE, SYMBOLICALLY AND
SUBSTANTIVELY, YOUR EXCELLENCY'S VISIT TO OUR COUNTRY AT THIS TIME
MARKS YET ANOTHER HIGH POINT IN THE LONG-STANDING HISTORY OF GOOD
RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

3. ALTHOUGH YOUR VISIT PROGRAMME IS VERY BRIEF, I SINCERELY HOPE THE
FEW DAYS YOU HAD ALREADY SPENT IN MALAYSIA HAD BEEN PLEASANT. I KNOW
THE VARIOUS SUMMIT MEETINGS HAD KEPT YOU TO A VERY TIGHT SCHEDULE, BUT
I DO HOPE THAT YOU HAD BEEN ABLE TO SEE A LITTLE BIT OF KUALA LUMPUR. WE
ARE VERY PROUD AND KEEN TO SHOWCASE OUR CAPITAL CITY AS AN EXCELLENT
TOURIST DESTINATION, ESPECIALLY FOR TRAVELLERS FROM CHINA. YOUR
EXCELLENCY, I WOULD LIKE YOU TO KNOW THAT CHINESE TOURISTS ARE VERY
WELCOMED IN MALAYSIA.

4. I AM PARTICULARLY PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO WELCOME YOUR EXCELLENCY ON A
BILATERAL BASIS BECAUSE IT GIVES ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO RECIPROCATATE THE
VERY WARM WELCOME AND HOSPITALITY YOU EXTENDED TO ME WHEN I VISITED
BEIJING LAST YEAR. THAT VISIT OF MINE ALSO HAD A SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE
BECAUSE THE YEAR 2004 WAS THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT

OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND CHINA. I HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT EXCHANGES OF VISITS ARE IMPORTANT EVENTS IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN NATIONS. IT IS A FACT THAT REGULAR CONTACTS AND INTERACTION BETWEEN LEADERS, OFFICIALS AND ORDINARY PEOPLES, HAVE BEEN AND SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRODUCTIVE AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

5. IN FACT, I VISITED CHINA NOT ONLY IN 2004 BUT ALSO IN THE YEAR BEFORE THAT WHEN I WAS DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER. THOSE TWO RECENT VISITS OF MINE HAVE LEFT ME DEEPLY IMPRESSED WITH THE HIGH LEVEL OF ECONOMIC PROGRESS THAT CHINA HAS ACHIEVED. THE WHOLE WORLD IS AWARE THAT EVER SINCE THE INITIATION OF ECONOMIC REFORMS IN 1979, CHINA HAS BECOME ONE OF THE WORLD'S FASTEST GROWING ECONOMIES. IN FACT, THE WORLD HAS NEVER SEEN A NATION, AS BIG AS CHINA, RISE AS FAR AND AS FAST, AS CHINA HAD DONE IN THE LAST 20 YEARS. THERE IS NO DOUBT IN MY MIND THAT CHINA IS HEADED TOWARDS GREATER ACCOMPLISHMENTS. I WOULD THEREFORE LIKE TO CONGRATULATE YOUR EXCELLENCY FOR YOUR ASTUTE LEADERSHIP. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO COMMEND THE DYNAMIC AND SOUND POLICIES THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT HAVE PUT IN PLACE.

6. THE STRONG AND DEEP ROOTED RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND CHINA HAVE INDEED BEEN GROWING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH, WITH BENEFICIAL UNDERTAKINGS IN MANY AREAS, CONDUCTED IN A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION AND MUTUAL RESPECT. WE NOTE WITH APPROVAL THAT CONTACTS AND EXCHANGES OF VISITS AT ALL LEVELS ARE TAKING PLACE FREQUENTLY. SUCH CONTACTS AND EXCHANGES ARE NOT ONLY GOOD FOR BUSINESS BUT THEY ALSO REFLECT THE CLOSE BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO PEOPLES. THEY FURTHERMORE PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR USEFUL EXCHANGES OF VIEWS, THUS FURTHER ENHANCING OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. IN THIS CONNECTION, I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SPECIALLY THANK THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT FOR THE WARM WELCOME AND EXCELLENT ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR THE STATE VISIT TO CHINA BY MALAYSIA'S KING, HIS MAJESTY THE YANG DI-PERTUAN AGONG, IN MARCH THIS YEAR.

7. I WOULD LIKE YOUR EXCELLENCY TO TAKE NOTE THAT WE IN MALAYSIA VIEW CHINA'S PHENOMENAL GROWTH NOT ONLY AS A CHALLENGE BUT ALSO AS AN OPPORTUNITY. WE BELIEVE THAT MALAYSIA, AS WELL AS OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION AND BEYOND, CAN BENEFIT FROM CHINA'S PROSPERITY. MALAYSIA THEREFORE WISHES TO WORK WITH CHINA IN A COMPLEMENTARY MANNER, IN VARIOUS AREAS, FOR THE MUTUAL BENEFIT OF OUR COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

8. BOTH YOU AND I SHOULD BE PLEASED TO TAKE NOTE THAT TRADE, INVESTMENTS AND TOURISM FEATURE SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE SUBSTANCE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND CHINA.

9. BILATERAL TRADE, FOR INSTANCE, HAS SEEN SIGNIFICANT GROWTH IN THE LAST FEW YEARS. GIVEN THE CONTINUING ECONOMIC GROWTH IN BOTH COUNTRIES, I AM CONFIDENT THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE THE TARGET OF USD 50 BILLION IN TOTAL BILATERAL TRADE BY THE YEAR 2010.

10. ON THE INVESTMENT SIDE, MALAYSIANS HAD BEEN AMONG THE FIRST TO INVEST IN CHINA. OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, MALAYSIAN INVESTMENTS IN CHINA HAVE ALSO SEEN A RISING TREND. MY GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO ENCOURAGE MALAYSIANS TO LOOK FOR BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES ABROAD, INCLUDING IN CHINA. AT THE SAME TIME WE WELCOME MORE CHINESE INVESTORS TO COME TO MALAYSIA WHERE THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT IS CONDUCIVE TO INVESTMENT AND FRIENDLY FOR BUSINESS.

11. HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF CHINESE TOURISTS HAVE COME TO MALAYSIA OVER THE YEARS. WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE MORE OF THEM COME TO VISIT US. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT OUR COUNTRY IS NOT ONLY BUSINESS-FRIENDLY BUT ALSO VISITOR-FRIENDLY. CHINESE TOURISTS CAN FEEL AT HOME IN MALAYSIA. AFTER ALL, OUR WINNING MOTTO FOR TOURISM - "MALAYSIA TRULY ASIA" - IS NOT MERE PROPAGANDA BUT THE TRUTH.

12. MR. PRIME MINISTER, I WOULD LIKE YOU TO KNOW ALSO THAT WE VALUE OUR RELATIONS WITH CHINA NOT ONLY FOR ECONOMIC GAINS. WE WOULD ALSO LIKE THE RELATIONS TO FLOURISH AS WELL IN AREAS OTHER THAN ECONOMICS AND POLITICS. FOR INSTANCE, AS PART OF THE EFFORT TO ENHANCE CULTURAL COOPERATION, OUR TWO COUNTRIES HAVE COOPERATED AND ESTABLISHED, LAST SEPTEMBER, A MALAY STUDIES CENTRE AT THE BEIJING FOREIGN STUDIES UNIVERSITY. I AM CONVINCED THAT THIS CENTRE WOULD EVENTUALLY SERVE AS AN IMPORTANT REFERENCE POINT FOR CHINESE NATIONALS AND SCHOLARS WHO WISH TO ACQUIRE A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF MALAYSIA AND MALAYSIAN CULTURE.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

13. THIS MORNING, IN OUR DISCUSSIONS, WE HAD A FRANK AND USEFUL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS IN A SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION. I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING CLOSELY WITH YOU ON ALL THE AREAS THAT WE HAVE IDENTIFIED TOGETHER. OUR DISCUSSION HAS REAFFIRMED MY BELIEF THAT CHINA IS A FRIEND AND PARTNER WITH WHOM WE CAN WORK IN THE SPIRIT OF MUTUAL TRUST AND MUTUAL RESPECT. WE SHOULD DEFINITELY WORK TOGETHER TO BRING PEACE, PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY TO OUR PEOPLES.

14. WE NEED TO COOPERATE AND COLLABORATE BECAUSE THE CHANGING INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND THE COMPLEXITIES OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS DEMAND THAT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WORK TOGETHER MORE CLOSELY. FOR EXAMPLE, WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER TO REMOVE THE THREAT OF

INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM. NO ONE COUNTRY CAN FIGHT THIS EVIL ALONE. WE HAVE TO COLLABORATE CLOSELY TO ERADICATE THIS SCOURGE BECAUSE WE MUST MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER, AND SAFER, PLACE TO LIVE IN.

15. SIMILARLY, WE NEED TO COOPERATE CLOSELY TO MANAGE OTHER TRANS-BOUNDARY ISSUES SUCH AS THE SPREAD OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES. FOR EXAMPLE, THE SARS OUTBREAK IN OUR REGION THREATENED THE HEALTH OF OUR PEOPLES AND THE ECONOMIES OF OUR COUNTRIES. WE CAN CONGRATULATE OURSELVES FOR SUCCEEDING IN CONTAINING THE SPREAD OF THE SARS. BY JOINT AND COORDINATED ACTION, WE WERE ABLE THEN TO CONTAIN, IN A TIMELY MANNER, THE SPREAD OF THE DEADLY VIRUS.

16. WE SHOULD REMAIN ALERT AND BE READY TO UNDERTAKE SIMILAR JOINT AND COORDINATED ACTION TO COMBAT NEW THREATS SUCH AS AN OUTBREAK OF AVIAN FLU. IN FACT, AVIAN FLU IS POSING A SERIOUS NEW THREAT TO PEOPLE'S HEALTH ALL OVER THE WORLD. IN THIS REGARD, WE ARE PLEASED TO NOTE THE ACTIVE ROLE THAT CHINA IS UNDERTAKING IN BRINGING TOGETHER COUNTRIES TO ADDRESS THIS NEW PROBLEM. THE MINISTERIAL MEETING FOR THE ASIA HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA (HPAI) CONTROL COOPERATION, HELD IN KUNMING LAST WEEK, INITIATED BY YOUR GOVERNMENT, IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF WHAT CAN BE DONE. WE TAKE NOTE THAT CHINA, TOGETHER WITH THE E.U COMMISSION AND THE WORLD BANK, WILL BE HOSTING THE GLOBAL DONOR PLEDGING CONFERENCE ON H.P.A.I IN BEIJING IN JANUARY 2006. I AM SURE WE HAD GAINED VALUABLE AND VAST KNOWLEDGE, AND EXPERIENCE, WHEN WE WERE COMBATING THE SARS. MY GOVERNMENT WILL SPARE NO EFFORT IN THIS REGARD, AND WOULD BE WILLING TO COOPERATE WITH CHINA AND OTHER COUNTRIES, TO ERADICATE THIS MENACE FROM OUR MIDST.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

17. OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF DAYS, WE HAVE HAD A SERIES OF VERY FRUITFUL MEETINGS AT THE LEVEL OF ASEAN, ASEAN PLUS ONE, ASEAN PLUS THREE AND THE EAST ASIA SUMMIT. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO RECORD MY WARMEST APPRECIATION FOR THE SUPPORT THAT YOU AND YOUR DELEGATION HAVE RENDERED TO MALAYSIA AS HOST OF THESE MEETINGS. YOUR SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING HAVE BEEN CRUCIAL IN ENSURING THE SUCCESS OF ALL THE MEETINGS. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE FRANKNESS, WHICH MARKED OUR DISCUSSIONS DURING THE SUMMITS, WILL BE TRANSLATED INTO STRONG POLITICAL WILL TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON THE DECISIONS THAT WE HAVE TAKEN TOGETHER.

18. LET ME CONCLUDE BY REITERATING MALAYSIA'S COMMITMENT TO FORGING CLOSER BILATERAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION WITH CHINA, NOT ONLY AT THE GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT LEVEL, BUT ALSO AT THE LEVEL OF PEOPLE TO PEOPLE INCLUDING THOSE WHO DO BUSINESS AND UNDERTAKE INVESTMENTS. MALAYSIA WOULD ALSO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE ENHANCEMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN ASEAN AND CHINA, THROUGH THE ASEAN +1, ASEAN+3, AND THE EAST ASIA SUMMIT PROCESS.

19. FINALLY, ALLOW ME, YOUR EXCELLENCY, TO ONCE AGAIN SAY WELCOME TO YOU. I DO HOPE THAT YOUR VISIT HERE WILL BE A MEMORABLE ONE FOR YOU AND MEMBERS OF YOUR DELEGATION. I AM CONFIDENT THAT IT WILL FURTHER ENHANCE THE BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP THAT HAPPILY EXIST BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

THANK YOU.