

**STATEMENT BY
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI
AT THE BOAO FORUM FOR ASIA AT HAINAN
23 APRIL 2005**

EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

LET ME BEGIN THIS MORNING BY SAYING THAT I AM VERY PRIVILEGED TO BE INVITED TO ADDRESS THIS FORUM. IT IS CLEAR FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE MANY LUMINARIES HERE THAT THE BOAO FORUM FOR ASIA HAS GROWN IN STATURE AND SIZE. IT HAS NOW BECOME AN IMPORTANT DATE ON THE ANNUAL CALENDAR. CHINA CAN BE RIGHTFULLY PROUD OF THIS EVENT. IT IS AN OCCASION WHERE WIDER ASIAN POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, BUSINESS AND SOCIAL TRENDS CAN BE CONSIDERED, AND WHERE CHINA CAN SHOWCASE THE BEST IT HAS TO OFFER.

2. I AM PARTICULARLY ATTRACTED TO THIS YEAR'S THEME - THAT OF SEARCHING FOR "WIN-WIN" SOLUTIONS. THIS IS APPROPRIATE GIVEN THE NUMBER OF ISSUES AFFECTING INTER-STATE RELATIONS, AND THE INCREASING NUMBER OF "WIN-LOSE" OR EVEN "LOSE-LOSE" OUTCOMES. THE FRAYING OF RELATIONS AMONG A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES IN OUR REGION RECENTLY ONLY SERVES TO MAKE THE THEME EVEN MORE TIMELY AND RELEVANT.

3. SEEKING "WIN-WIN" SOLUTIONS REQUIRES A SPECIFIC TYPE OF MINDSET. IT REQUIRES A MINDSET THAT RECOGNISES THAT THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE POWER-BASED, NO-HOLDS-BARRED, WINNER-TAKE-ALL APPROACH THAT IS SO COMMONLY EMPLOYED. THROUGHOUT HISTORY, THIS LATTER APPROACH HAS SERVED TO CREATE MUCH DISSATISFACTION, DISTRUST AND SUSPICION. IN EXTREME CASES IT HAS RESULTED IN CONFLICT AND WAR, AND BROUGHT ENORMOUS DESTRUCTION AND SUFFERING TO HUMANITY. YET WE PERSIST IN SEEKING RECOURSE TO SUCH METHODS AND SEEM UNABLE TO ADOPT NEW APPROACHES THAT COULD PROVE FAR MORE FRUITFUL TO MUTUAL PEACE AND SHARED WEALTH.

4. "WIN-WIN" APPROACHES TO PROBLEM SOLVING IN RELATIONS AMONG STATES RECOGNISE NATIONAL INTERESTS AND THE REALITY THAT NATIONAL INTERESTS DO DIFFER AND SOMETIMES COLLIDE. BUT THEY DO NOT SEEK TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES OR ADVANCE NATIONAL GOALS THROUGH THE EXERCISE OF POWER. THEY DO NOT EMPLOY THE INSTRUMENTS OF FORCE AND COERCION. THEY DO NOT LEVERAGE UPON MILITARY POWER EXCEPT IN DEFENCE. "WIN-WIN" APPROACHES ARE NOT FOUNDED UPON UNNECESSARY MILITARY ALLIANCES THAT SERVE TO INTIMIDATE OTHERS RATHER THAN REASSURE ONESELVES.

5. IN CONTRAST, "WIN-WIN" APPROACHES SEEK TO BUILD A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR PURSUING MUTUAL PEACE AND PROSPERITY BASED UPON COMMON INTERESTS AND SHARED VALUES. THEY EMPHASISE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COOPERATION. THEY SEEK TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES THROUGH DIALOGUE AND PEACEFUL NEGOTIATION. THEY DE-EMPHASISE THE MILITARY INSTRUMENT. THEY SHUN MILITARY ALLIANCES AND COALITIONS DIRECTED AT EACH OTHER, BECAUSE SUCH ALLIANCES STRIKE AT THE VERY HEART OF FRIENDSHIP AND MUTUAL TRUST.

6. IT IS IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS "WIN-WIN" APPROACH THAT I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME OF MY THOUGHTS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF EAST ASIAN COMMUNITY BUILDING, AS WELL AS THE ROLE OF THE ASEAN PLUS THREE AND THE EAST ASIAN SUMMIT PROCESSES.

7. THE EAST ASIAN COMMUNITY THAT I AM REFERRING TO IS NOT COMPOSED OF CAREFULLY DEFINED OBJECTIVES, RULES AND PROCEDURES, BUT BROADLY CONSTRUCTED NORMS, ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS. IT IS ALL ABOUT CREATING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CAPITAL, NOT MILITARY POWER HOUSES.

8. THIS, IN MY VIEW, IS THE KIND OF COMMUNITY WE ARE SEEKING TO CONSTRUCT IN EAST ASIA. WE MUST BUILD A COMMUNITY THAT IS BASED ON "WIN-WIN" FORMULAS WHERE EVERY ONE BENEFITS AND NO ONE LOSES. WE MUST BUILD A COMMUNITY WHOSE PRIMARY PURPOSE IS THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND CULTURAL ENRICHMENT OF ALL THE NATIONS AND PEOPLES THAT COMPRISE THAT COMMUNITY. WE MUST FOSTER A REGIONAL GROUPING THAT IS BOUND BY VALUES AND NORMS THAT PROMOTE PACIFIC AND COOPERATIVE BEHAVIOUR. WE MUST BUILD A REGIONAL PROCESS THAT CAN HELP BRIDGE DIVIDES AND NURTURE CONFIDENCE AMONG THE STATES AND THE PEOPLES OF THE REGION. WE NEED TO ENSURE THAT THE PEACE IN OUR REGION IS A WARM AND FLOURISHING, AND NOT A COLD AND UNPRODUCTIVE, ONE. THE INTENT OF EAST ASIAN COMMUNITY BUILDING SHOULD ALWAYS BE, POSITIVE, CONSTRUCTIVE AND FRIENDLY, NEVER NEGATIVE, DESTRUCTIVE AND UNFRIENDLY.

9. THE COMMUNITY WE WANT TO BUILD IS ONE WHERE LARGE NATIONS DO NOT IMPOSE THEIR WILL ON SMALL NATIONS. THERE CAN BE NO PLACE FOR HEGEMONY IN EAST ASIA. THE EAST ASIAN COMMUNITY MUST BE A COMMUNITY WHERE THE WEAK FEEL NO LESS SECURE AND COMFORTABLE THAN THE STRONG. IT MUST BE A COMMUNITY WHERE NO MEMBER SEEKS COMMON CAUSE AND CONSPIRES WITH POWERS OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY TO UNDERMINE THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF THE OTHER MEMBERS.

10. MEMBERS OF THE EAST ASIAN COMMUNITY HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY, AND STANDARDS TO UPHOLD, NOT ONLY WITHIN THEIR OWN COMMUNITY BUT ALSO WITH RESPECT TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT IN THE COMMUNITY. WE MUST SEEK TO BUILD OUR ECONOMIES AND PROSPER OUR PEOPLE THROUGH MAINTAINING THE STRONGEST OF TRADE, INVESTMENT AND FINANCIAL LINKS WITH THE OTHER

NATIONS AND REGIONS OF THE WORLD. WE SHOULD SEEK PEACE, PROSPERITY AND HARMONY NOT ONLY FOR OURSELVES BUT ALSO IN OUR RELATIONS WITH OTHER NATIONS AND REGIONS OF THE WORLD. INDEED, THERE IS NO OTHER CHOICE. IN A GLOBALISED WORLD OUR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SECURITY INTERESTS ARE SO CLOSELY INTERTWINED WITH ONE ANOTHER.

11. THIS IS WHY THE TREATY OF AMITY AND COOPERATION, WHICH ENJOINS PACIFIC APPROACHES TO THE RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS, IS SO FUNDAMENTAL TO THE INTERESTS AND WELL BEING OF THE EAST ASIAN COMMUNITY. IT IS ALSO WHY ASEAN INSISTS THAT ACCESSION TO THE TREATY IS ABSOLUTELY INDISPENSABLE FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE EAST ASIA SUMMIT. NO COUNTRY IN THE WORLD THAT DOES NOT WISH ANY HARM TO THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION SHOULD HAVE ANY DIFFICULTY IN ACCEDING TO THE TREATY. ALL THE TREATY OBLIGES OF THEM IS TO ADOPT PEACEFUL METHODS OF RESOLVING CONFLICTS, AND LIVE IN PEACE AND HARMONY WITH THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION. IT DOES NOT OBLIGE THEM TO RELINQUISH ANY DEFENCE TREATY OR TERMINATE ANY MILITARY ALLIANCE THAT THEY MAY HAVE WITH OTHER STATES.

12. MALAYSIA, ASEAN AND ASEAN PLUS THREE RESPECT THE WISHES OF OTHER STATES TO FORM THEIR OWN REGIONAL PROCESSES, PROCESSES THAT THEY RIGHTLY CONFINE ONLY TO THEMSELVES. IT IS NO MORE, NO LESS, THAN THEIR DEMOCRATIC RIGHT. THIS DEMOCRATIC RIGHT SHOULD ALSO BE ENJOYED BY THE COUNTRIES OF EAST ASIA. THEIR RIGHT MUST BE EQUALLY RESPECTED.

13. EAST ASIA STILL HAS A LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE WE CAN BECOME THE KIND OF REGIONAL COMMUNITY THAT I JUST DESCRIBED. THE PROCESS OF COMMUNITY BUILDING IN THE REGION HAS JUST BEGUN. MUCH WORK REMAINS TO BE DONE BEFORE WE CAN EMERGE AS A COMMUNITY OF "MUTUAL SYMPATHIES, TRUST, CONFIDENCE AND MUTUAL CONSIDERATION". MAJOR CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES REMAIN.

14. AS A REGION, EAST ASIA IS A STUDY IN CONTRASTS. SOME COUNTRIES LIKE CHINA ARE VERY LARGE, WHILE OTHERS ARE MINISCULE. A FEW ARE VERY RICH, A HANDFUL MODERATELY SO, AND STILL OTHERS ARE DESPERATELY POOR. SEVERAL ARE YOUNG DEMOCRACIES, BUT OTHERS ARE NOT DEMOCRACIES AT ALL. THERE ARE OUTWARD-LOOKING COUNTRIES, AS WELL AS INWARD LOOKING ONES. MANY HAVE HAD A HISTORY OF CONFLICT, COLONISATION, OCCUPATION, MUTUAL SUSPICION AND RIVALRY WITH ANOTHER. EVEN AS WE TRY TO BURY OUR PAST AND BUILD A NEW FUTURE, NEW VEXATIONS EMERGE, AND OUR RELATIONS BECOME TENSE AGAIN. WE ONLY NEED TO OPEN THE NEWSPAPERS OR SWITCH ON THE TELEVISION TO SEE REAL LIFE EXAMPLES.

15. GIVEN SUCH GREAT CONTRADICTIONS AND STRESSES, HOW CAN WE ENSURE THAT THE REGION IS NOT, AND WILL NOT, BECOME A TINDERBOX OR A POWDER KEG? WE SIMPLY CANNOT AFFORD TO TAKE THE PEACE AND SECURITY OF THIS REGION FOR GRANTED.

16. GEOGRAPHIC PROXIMITY MAY INDEED BE A DISADVANTAGE RATHER THAN A BOON FOR COUNTRIES IN EAST ASIA. MOST OF THE WORLD'S WARS WERE AMONG NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES. MANY OF TODAY'S MOST STRAINED RELATIONSHIPS ARE ALSO AMONG CONTIGUOUS STATES. EAST ASIA IS NO DIFFERENT. THE ANSWER DOES NOT EVEN LIE IN MORE FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS AND MORE INVESTMENTS. DEEPENING ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS ARE IMPORTANT IN CREATING INTERDEPENDENCE AND SHARED INTERESTS BUT THE HARD POLITICAL REALITY IS THAT EVEN DEEPLY INTERTWINED ECONOMIES CAN BEHAVE COLDLY, CALCULATINGLY AND UNCARINGLY TOWARDS EACH OTHER. WE HAVE AMPLE EVIDENCE OF THIS IN OUR REGION AS WELL AS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD.

17. IF WE ARE TO BUILD A REAL COMMUNITY OF NATIONS, WE WILL NEED BEHAVIOURAL NORMS TO ENSURE THAT THERE ARE INCENTIVES TO PARTICIPATE, AND THAT EVERYONE CAN BE ACCOMMODATED WITHIN IT. BASIC AMONG THESE IS RESPECT FOR THE SOVEREIGNTY AND EQUALITY OF STATES, FROM THE LARGEST TO THE SMALLEST. EAST ASIA CANNOT AND MUST NOT COME UNDER THE HEGEMONIC CONTROL OF STATES, EITHER FROM OUTSIDE THE REGION OR INSIDE THE REGION. BOTH ARE TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE. FEW COUNTRIES WOULD WILLINGLY PARTICIPATE IN A VENTURE THAT ALLOWS THIS TO HAPPEN. THIS IS WHY THE PRINCIPLES OF EQUALITY, SOVEREIGNTY AND MUTUAL RESPECT MUST BE INSISTED UPON. THEY MEAN MORE THAN JUST NON-INTERFERENCE IN ONE ANOTHER'S AFFAIRS. THE IDEAS AND OPINIONS, THE HOPES AND FEARS, OF ALL COUNTRIES MUST MATTER, AND THEIR VIEWS MUST BE GIVEN FULL CONSIDERATION. ONLY IN SUCH A SETTING WILL ALL COUNTRIES FEEL COMFORTABLE IN BEING PART OF THE REGIONAL COMMUNITY.

18. LARGE AND POWERFUL COUNTRIES WILL HAVE TO VOLUNTARILY RESTRAIN THEMSELVES AND ACT IN LESS DOMINANT WAYS. IN ORDER TO FACILITATE CONSENSUS BUILDING, COUNTRIES MUST BE PREPARED TO BE FLEXIBLE AND ACCOMMODATIVE OF THE MAJORITY VIEW. SENSITIVE ISSUES WILL NEED TO BE DEALT WITH IN DELICATE AND HELPFUL WAYS. ENCOURAGEMENT AND MORAL SUASION SHOULD BE THE PREFERRED OPTION, AND THE USE OF THREATS AND SANCTIONS SHOULD BE REJECTED. AGREEMENT MUST NOT BE THE RESULT OF DIRECT, HARBALL "WIN-LOSE" CONFRONTATIONS. THEY MUST BE BUILT ON UNDERSTANDINGS REACHED THROUGH FRIENDLY INTERACTIONS, NOT ONLY IN MEETING ROOMS, BUT ALSO ON GOLF COURSES AND AROUND DINNER TABLES. WE MUST SET OURSELVES CLEAR AND PRAGMATIC GOALS, AND WORK HARD TO ACCOMPLISH THEM. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE ALSO CANNOT BE AN OVER-EMPHASIS ON RESULTS, TASKS AND KEEPING TIME WITHOUT REGARD TO CAPACITY AND AT THE EXPENSE OF GOODWILL. FOR ALL THE CRITICISMS AND DERISION THAT IS HEAPED UPON IT, THERE NEEDS TO BE AN APPRECIATION OF THE TIMES WHEN FORM NEEDS TO BE PREFERRED OVER PURPOSE, AND STYLE OVER SUBSTANCE. ON SUCH OCCASIONS FORM IS PURPOSE, AND STYLE IS SUBSTANCE.

19. FOR THE PAST 38 YEARS, ASEAN HAS STOOD TESTIMONY TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN COMMUNITY BUILDING. BUT, I WOULD BE THE FIRST TO ADMIT THAT THE ORGANISATION IS FAR FROM PERFECT AND THAT COMMUNITY BUILDING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA STILL HAS A LONG WAY TO GO. BUT THE ASEAN WAY HAS PROVED TO BE ACCOMMODATIVE, RESILIENT AND

ADAPTABLE. IT HAS SUCCEEDED IN BRINGING TOGETHER COUNTRIES OF VASTLY DIFFERENT POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND ECONOMIC WEIGHT IN A FRAMEWORK OF COMPREHENSIVE COOPERATION BASED ON SHARED VALUES AND COMMON PURPOSE. IN A REGION THAT WAS ONCE SEETHING WITH CONFLICT AND HOSTILITY IT HAS SERVED TO MODERATE TENSIONS, PROMOTE TRUST AND FACILITATE CONFLICT RESOLUTION.

20. THE HIGHEST TESTIMONY TO ASEAN'S USEFULNESS AND EFFECTIVENESS IS THE FACT THAT IT HAS BECOME THE ANCHOR OF WIDER COOPERATION IN THE EAST ASIAN AND ASIA PACIFIC REGIONS. THE ASEAN PLUS THREE PROCESS, THE EAST ASIAN ENTERPRISE AND THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM ARE ALL BUILT AROUND ASEAN. THROUGH THE COMMON EFFORT OF ALL PARTIES, THE PLUS THREE COUNTRIES NAMELY CHINA, JAPAN AND KOREA HAVE MANAGED TO BE ACCOMMODATED INTO 46 ASEAN MEETINGS ALMOST WITHOUT MISSING A BEAT. THE PLUS THREE FRAMEWORK AND AGENDA HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY USEFUL IN MOVING THE EAST ASIAN COMMUNITY PROCESS ALONG. THESE INCLUDE THE FORMATION OF THE EAST ASIAN VISION GROUP, THE EAST ASIAN STUDY GROUP, THE CHIANG MAI INITIATIVE, THE ASIAN BOND MARKET INITIATIVE AND MANY OTHER COOPERATIVE VENTURES. THEY HAVE ALL MANAGED TO GET OFF THE DRAWING BOARD AND ON TO THE GROUND WITH A MINIMUM OF COMPLICATION.

21. INDEED, THE NINE ASEAN PLUS THREE SUMMITS THAT HAVE BEEN HELD SO FAR HAVE SOLIDIFIED THE COMMUNITY SPIRIT, THAT SO-CALLED "WE-FEELING", SO MUCH THAT IN VIENTIANE, LAOS LAST YEAR, THE LEADERS DECIDED TO TAKE ANOTHER STEP FORWARD THROUGH THE HOLDING OF THE FIRST EAST ASIAN SUMMIT. LET ME EMPHASISE THAT THIS FIRST EAST ASIAN SUMMIT WILL NOT REPLACE THE ASEAN AND PLUS THREE INSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES THAT HAVE BEEN SO METICULOUSLY CONSTRUCTED THESE LONG YEARS. THAT WOULD BE AN ACT OF INEXCUSABLE RECKLESSNESS. IT WOULD BE EXACTLY THE KIND OF PROPOSAL THAT WOULD BE MADE BY THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO UNDERMINE THE COMMUNITY BUILDING PROCESS NOT JUST IN EAST ASIA BUT ALSO IN ASEAN. WHAT THE INITIATION OF THE EAST ASIAN SUMMIT WILL DO, HOWEVER, IS TO GIVE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNTRIES IN EAST ASIA THAT ARE INVOLVED IN THE ASEAN PLUS THREE PROCESS TO ENGAGE CLOSELY AND PRODUCTIVELY WITH OTHER COUNTRIES THAT ARE NOT PART OF THE PROCESS.

22. THE EAST ASIAN COMMUNITY WILL BE BUILT BY ALL THE COUNTRIES THAT ARE PARTY TO THE PROCESS. EACH AND EVERY COUNTRY HAS AN EQUAL RESPONSIBILITY. BUT ASEAN WILL HAVE A SPECIAL ROLE TO PLAY. ASEAN IS THE ONLY INOFFENSIVE ENTITY IN THE REGION THAT CAN PROVIDE THE REQUISITE LEADERSHIP. IT IS BIG ENOUGH COLLECTIVELY TO EXERT AN IMPORTANT INFLUENCE, YET SMALL ENOUGH NOT TO BE PERCEIVED AS THREATENING. IT IS VIEWED AS A FORCE FOR PEACE AND STABILITY, AND A VEHICLE FOR DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION IN ALL FIELDS. THUS IT IS ACCEPTABLE TO ALL.

23. IN CLOSING, LET ME REITERATE THAT WE ARE IN THE INCIPIENT STAGE OF COMMUNITY BUILDING IN EAST ASIA. WE ARE BEGINNING MUCH LATER THAN EUROPE AND LATER THAN MANY OTHER REGIONAL VENTURES INCLUDING ASEAN. HOW QUICKLY, SMOOTHLY AND EFFECTIVELY WE PROGRESS DEPENDS VERY MUCH

UPON OURSELVES. THREE FACTORS WILL BE CRUCIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF EAST ASIAN COMMUNITY BUILDING: RESOLVE, ATTITUDE AND ENERGY. EACH AND EVERY COUNTRY MUST BE FULLY COMMITTED TO THE ENTERPRISE. EACH AND EVERY COUNTRY MUST HAVE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARDS EACH OTHER. THEY MUST SEEK TO BUILD TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN ONE ANOTHER, AND NOT ACT IN A MANNER THAT PROVOKES AND GIVES CAUSE FOR SUSPICION AND HOSTILITY. FINALLY, WE MUST INVEST ENOUGH ENERGY AND RESOURCES INTO THE ARDUOUS TASK OF COMMUNITY BUILDING.

THANK YOU