

**SPEECH BY
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI
AT THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF "MALAYSIA: ACHIEVING THE MILLENNIUM
DEVELOPMENT GOALS; SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES"
AT LE MERIDIEN HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR
28 JANUARY 2005**

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH AND GOOD AFTERNOON;

YB DATO' MUSTAPA MOHAMED
MINISTER IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT;

MADAM ERNA WITOELAR
U.N. SPECIAL AMBASSADOR FOR M.D.G. ASIA PACIFIC;

DR. RICHARD LEETE
U.N. RESIDENT COORDINATOR FOR MALAYSIA
AND U.N.D.P. RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE;

EXCELLENCIES;

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS;

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

1. LET ME FIRST THANK THE ORGANISERS FOR INVITING ME TO LAUNCH THE DOCUMENT ENTITLED "MALAYSIA: ACHIEVING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS; SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES". IT IS CERTAINLY A PLEASURE FOR ME TO BE HERE TO WITNESS AN EVENT OF SOME GLOBAL SIGNIFICANCE.

2. THE ADOPTION OF THE MILLENNIUM DECLARATION AT THE U.N. MILLENNIUM SUMMIT IN SEPTEMBER 2000 WAS A DEFINING MOMENT FOR GLOBAL COOPERATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY. THE DECLARATION MARKED A SHIFT IN THE PARADIGM THAT GOVERNS RELATIONS AMONG COUNTRIES – FROM ONE EMPHASISING COMPETITION FOR THE WORLD'S RESOURCES, TO ONE THAT PLACES A HIGH PREMIUM ON COOPERATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL PEOPLE.

3. THE MILLENNIUM DECLARATION, AMONG OTHER THINGS, MADE A STRONG COMMITMENT TO THE RIGHT FOR DEVELOPMENT, TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN, TO THE ERADICATION OF THE MANY DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY, AS WELL AS TO SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. TOWARDS THIS END, THE SIGNATORIES OF THE DECLARATION HAD COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO A SERIES OF TARGETS, MOST OF WHICH ARE TO BE ACHIEVED BY 2015. THESE TARGETS, WHICH ARE CONTAINED IN THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS, REPRESENT A FRAMEWORK FOR ACHIEVING HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND BROADENING ITS BENEFITS.

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4. THE PUBLICATION BEING LAUNCHED TODAY, "MALAYSIA: ACHIEVING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS; SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES" TRACES IN DETAIL MALAYSIA'S PERFORMANCE AND ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 1970. INDEED, MALAYSIA HAD DETAILED OUT MANY ASPECTS OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN ITS POLICIES AND PLANS OF THE LAST FEW DECADES. IN ATTEMPTING TO DOCUMENT THE EXTENT OF MALAYSIA'S PROGRESS IN ATTAINING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS, I BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE UNDERLYING CONTEXT AS TO WHY CERTAIN POLICIES WERE FORMULATED AND STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED.

5. THE PHILOSOPHY UNDERLYING MALAYSIA'S DEVELOPMENT IS THAT GROWTH IS NOT TO BE PURSUED AS AN END IN ITSELF. ECONOMIC GROWTH ALONE CANNOT GUARANTEE NATIONAL UNITY AND SOCIAL HARMONY, WHICH ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT TENETS FOR A PLURAL SOCIETY LIKE MALAYSIA. IN OUR MULTI-ETHNIC, MULTI-RELIGIOUS AND MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIETY, IT IS CRUCIAL FOR NATIONAL UNITY TO BE THE OVERRIDING OBJECTIVE AND THE GOAL OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

6. GROWTH SHOULD ALWAYS BE ACCOMPANIED BY EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF THE NATION'S WEALTH, SO THAT ALL SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY CAN BENEFIT FROM THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS. I HAVE SAID THAT PEOPLE MUST BE PLACED AT THE CENTRE OF DEVELOPMENT, AND THAT ECONOMIC RESOURCES SHOULD BE HARNESSSED EFFECTIVELY AND SUSTAINABLY TO CATER TO THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE. AS SUCH, SOSIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THAT IS AIMED AT BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE AND ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF LIFE WILL CONTINUE TO BE AN IMPORTANT PART OF MALAYSIA'S DEVELOPMENT AGENDA.

7. BEFORE THE 1970'S, MALAYSIA'S FUTURE STABILITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH WERE BY NO MEANS CERTAIN. WITH THE GOVERNMENT HAVING IDENTIFIED SEVERAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC GOALS CONSISTENT WITH WHAT ARE NOW MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS, THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY (N.E.P.) WAS FORMULATED IN 1970, WHICH BECAME A KEY DOMESTIC ECONOMIC DRIVING FORCE OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS. THE TWO PRIMARY AIMS OF THE N.E.P. WERE TO REDUCE AND EVENTUALLY ERADICATE POVERTY BY RAISING INCOME LEVELS AS WELL AS INCREASING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AMONG ALL MALAYSIANS, IRRESPECTIVE OF RACE; AND TO RESTRUCTURE MALAYSIAN SOCIETY TO CORRECT ECONOMIC IMBALANCES, SO AS TO REDUCE AND EVENTUALLY ELIMINATE THE IDENTIFICATION OF RACE WITH ECONOMIC FUNCTION.

8. THE FOLLOWING TEN YEARS AFTER 1990 SAW THE ADOPTION OF THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY (N.D.P.), WHICH MAINTAINED THE BASIC STRATEGIES OF THE N.E.P. BUT INTRODUCED SEVERAL SIGNIFICANT SHIFTS IN SPECIFIC POLICIES TO ERADICATE HARD-CORE POVERTY; INCREASE THE PARTICIPATION OF BUMIPUTERA IN THE MODERN SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY; PLACE GREATER RELIANCE ON THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO GENERATE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND

INCOME; AND EMPHASISE HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AS A PRIMARY INSTRUMENT FOR ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVES OF GROWTH AND DISTRIBUTION. THE SUCCESSFUL POVERTY-REDUCING APPROACHES IN THESE EARLIER DECADES PLACED STRONG EMPHASIS ON AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT; LABOUR-INTENSIVE EXPORT INDUSTRIALISATION; AND THE CHANNELING OF PUBLIC INVESTMENT INTO EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

9. IT IS ENCOURAGING TO NOTE THAT BASED ON THE MALAYSIAN EXPERIENCE, THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS CAN LARGELY BE ACHIEVED. I WOULD LIKE TO STATE THAT SOME OF OUR SUCCESS IN MEETING THESE GOALS IS LIKELY DUE TO THE CONSISTENT POLICIES APPLIED BY THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT, WHICH CONTINUES TO PROMOTE EQUITABLE GROWTH AND INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL.

10. MANY OF THESE POLICIES ARE ENVISIONED IN THE OUTLINE PERSPECTIVE PLANS AND CONTINUE TO BE IMPLEMENTED THROUGH A SERIES OF FIVE-YEAR NATIONAL PLANS. IN ADDITION, SPECIFIC STRATEGIES HAVE ALSO BEEN SUCCESSFULLY ADOPTED TO REDUCE DISPARITIES ACROSS ETHNIC GROUPS, GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS, GENDER AS WELL AS INCOME CATEGORIES, WHICH FURTHER PROVIDE A ROAD MAP FOR OUR DEVELOPMENT. ALHAMDULILLAH, THE STEADY PROGRESS MALAYSIA HAS MADE IN BRINGING ABOUT SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE HAS ENABLED ALL MALAYSIANS TO IMPROVE MOST ASPECTS OF THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE. IN FACT, AS AN INDICATION, THE QUALITY OF LIFE BASED ON THE MALAYSIAN QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX HAS IMPROVED BY 9.8 POINTS BETWEEN 1990 AND 2002.

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11. IT IS MY SINCERE HOPE THAT MALAYSIA'S EXPERIENCE MAY PROVIDE SOME USEFUL LESSONS FOR OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY THOSE WITH SIMILAR ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS, AS THEY SEEK TO ACHIEVE THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS. GOING FORWARD, WE WILL COLLECTIVELY FACE CONTINUED CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING THE GOALS BY 2015. HENCE, THIS RAISES THE NEED FOR NEW AND MORE VIGOROUS STRATEGIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE.

12. TO ACHIEVE THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS, I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES – WHILE CONTINUING TO ENGAGE THE SUPPORT OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES – SHOULD ALSO LOOK AT INCREASING COOPERATION AMONG THEMSELVES. IN ADDITION, WE MUST REMEMBER THAT ONE SOLUTION MAY NOT NECESSARILY WORK FOR ALL. ULTIMATELY, EACH COUNTRY WILL NEED TO ADOPT SPECIFIC MEASURES THAT ARE BEST SUITED TO THEIR OWN NEEDS, PRIORITIES, CULTURE, CONTEXT AND ENVIRONMENT. ON OUR PART, MALAYSIA IS HAPPY TO ASSIST AND SHARE OUR EXPERIENCES WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.

13. IN THIS RESPECT, ALLOW ME TO SUGGEST A STRONGER AGENDA FOR SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION, AS AN IMPORTANT STEP TO ENABLE US TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS. THIS MODE OF COOPERATION HAS INCREASINGLY PROVEN TO BE AN

EFFECTIVE APPROACH IN STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIP AND COLLECTIVE SELF-RELIANCE AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THROUGH THE SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE, COUNTRIES ARE ABLE TO ADDRESS DEVELOPMENT ISSUES OF MUTUAL INTEREST, INCLUDING TRADE, INVESTMENT, I.C.T. DEVELOPMENT, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND H.I.V./AIDS PREVENTION. MOREOVER, SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION IS A COST EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION THAT CAN EFFECTIVELY UTILISE A COUNTRY'S LIMITED RESOURCES IN DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS.

14. ALTHOUGH MALAYSIA IS NOT CATEGORISED AS A DONOR COUNTRY, I AM PLEASED TO NOTE THAT WE ARE FULLY COMMITTED TO ASSIST OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, ALBEIT ON A MODEST SCALE THROUGH THE MALAYSIAN TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME (M.T.C.P.). THE M.T.C.P. WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1980, AS A BILATERAL PROGRAMME OF COOPERATION TO ASSIST OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES – ESPECIALLY THE LEAST DEVELOPED ONES – THROUGH THE SHARING OF MALAYSIA'S EXPERIENCES AND EXPERTISE IN AREAS OF COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE.

15. WITH THE PREMISE THAT A COUNTRY'S ABILITY TO DEVELOP IS HIGHLY DEPENDENT ON THE QUALITY OF ITS HUMAN CAPITAL, THE M.T.C.P. FOCUSES PRIMARILY ON CAPACITY-BUILDING AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT. AT PRESENT, THE M.T.C.P.'S COVERAGE HAS EXPANDED TO 135 COUNTRIES IN 10 REGIONS, WHICH INCLUDE COUNTRIES IN ASEAN, SOUTH ASIA, THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES (C.I.S.), AFRICA, WEST ASIA, EAST AND CENTRAL EUROPE, THE PACIFIC ISLANDS AS WELL AS THE CARIBBEAN.

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16. TODAY, MANY COUNTRIES ARE STILL FACED WITH VARIOUS DEVELOPMENT CONCERNS THAT AFFECT THE WELL-BEING OF THE PEOPLE. AT THE SAME TIME, DOMESTIC ECONOMIES ARE INCREASINGLY INTERWOVEN WITH THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM. INDEED, GLOBALISATION PRESENTS COUNTRIES WITH A NEW SET OF OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES. IN THIS RESPECT, I BELIEVE THAT NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS NEED TO BE SUPPORTED BY AN ENABLING INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL OF US TO MOVE FORWARD.

17. MALAYSIA BELIEVES THAT GLOBALISATION IS A MEANS TO GREATER WELFARE AND IMPROVED STANDARDS OF LIVING IF – AND ONLY IF – IT IS WELL MANAGED. SADLY, GLOBALISATION HAS RESULTED IN MANY IMBALANCES, WHICH ARE FAR REMOVED FROM THE TRUE SPIRIT OF MULTI-LATERALISM AND MUTUAL BENEFIT. FOR EXAMPLE, POLICIES FACILITATING THE EXPANSION OF GLOBAL MARKETS HAVE FOCUSED LARGELY ON ECONOMIC GAINS, WHILE THOSE FOR EQUALLY VALID SOCIAL OBJECTIVES, SUCH AS THE ENVIRONMENT, EMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION, HAVE LAGGED BEHIND. THUS, IT MAY WELL BE THAT CURRENT PATTERNS OF GLOBALISATION HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO INCREASING MARGINALISATION AS WELL AS THE WIDENING OF THE DIVIDE BETWEEN THE POOR AND THE WEALTHY WITHIN AND AMONG NATIONS.

18. WHILE MALAYSIA HAS SUCCEEDED IN ACHIEVING MOST OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS, THERE REMAIN MANY NEW AND EMERGING CHALLENGES THAT CONTINUE TO THREATEN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO HALT AND REVERSE THE SPREAD OF H.I.V./AIDS, WHICH IS ESPECIALLY DISTURBING GIVEN THAT REPORTED CASES CONTINUE TO INCREASE. IN ADDITION, THERE IS MORE WORK TO BE DONE IN ENSURING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF OUR ENVIRONMENT, AND IN ITS CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION.

19. LET ME STATE THAT MY GOVERNMENT IS FULLY COMMITTED TOWARDS ADDRESSING THESE ISSUES. MOREOVER, WE ARE AWARE OF THE CHALLENGING TASKS AHEAD, WHICH REQUIRES THE COMMITMENT OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS – THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS, N.G.O.'S, INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND SOCIETY, AS A WHOLE. THESE OUTSTANDING CHALLENGES WILL BE ADDRESSED ON A CONSULTATIVE BASIS, AS WE CONTINUE TO SHARPEN OUR FOCUS AND BE MORE INCLUSIVE IN OUR DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS. THE NINTH MALAYSIA PLAN 2006-2010, DUE TO BE LAUNCHED NEXT YEAR, WILL BE AN IMPORTANT PLATFORM TO TAKE US CLOSER TOWARDS VISION 2020. WE SHOULD USE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS MALAYSIA PLAN, AND COMMIT TO ATTAINING ALL THE OBJECTIVES SET FORTH.

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20. PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT THAT WE ASPIRE TO CAN ONLY COME ABOUT FROM WITHIN OURSELVES. WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY, NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY, TO WORK FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL PEOPLE AND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. COLLECTIVELY, WE HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE WHEN WE ENDEAVOUR TO PROMOTE A MORE HUMANE AND JUST WORLD. LET US ALL UNITE AND COMMIT TO ADOPT THE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES SET IN THE MILLENNIUM DECLARATION – FREEDOM, EQUALITY, SOLIDARITY, TOLERANCE, RESPECT FOR NATURE AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY.

21. ON THAT NOTE, IT IS MY PLEASURE TO LAUNCH THE DOCUMENT ENTITLED "MALAYSIA: ACHIEVING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS; SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES".

THANK YOU.