

**ADDRESS BY
THE HONOURABLE DATO' SERI ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI
AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME FOR OIC
COUNTRIES AT PICC, PUTRAJAYA
29 MARCH 2005**

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim.

YB Dato' Seri Syed Hamid Albar,
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia,

Honourable Ministers,

His Excellency Dr. Ahmad Mohamed Ali,
President of the IDB,

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and Good Morning to all of you,

Alhamdulillah, all praise be to Allah, by whose grace and blessings, we are able to meet here in Putrajaya to witness the Launching of the Capacity Building Programme for O I C Countries. This is an important event because it represents a new initiative in the context of economic cooperation among O I C member countries. Let us pray that this initiative will grow in scope and make a greater impact from the small beginnings that we make today in Putrajaya.

2. This initiative is novel in some fundamental respects. It is a project oriented programme which is not premised on the availability of grant aid or international funding. It is intended to be a self-help programme involving normally three parties, namely the country hosting the project, one or two O I C member countries volunteering assistance in the form of funds or expertise and private sector participating on a commercial basis. The Islamic Development Bank will be an important partner in this programme as the provider of financing for projects on easy terms.

3. I had, upon becoming Prime Minister of Malaysia and assuming the position of Chairman of the 10th. Summit of the O I C, conceived this idea of instituting a capacity building programme as a challenge, not only to our detractors but also to ourselves, that members of the O I C are indeed capable of undertaking concrete action outside of the realm of pure politics and diplomacy. I had discussions about the idea with the Secretary General of the O I C and the President of the Islamic Development Bank, both of whom were very supportive. The I D B has already taken the lead role in writing down an action plan and identifying projects for implementation.

4. I have said that the effort we are launching represents a very modest beginning because the issue at hand is so gigantic, and the problem to be dealt with is so monumental, that we cannot expect to make a big difference in any quick way. I am referring to the problem of global poverty, especially the problem of people suffering extreme poverty which is defined by the World Bank as those who live on less than one dollar a day. More than one billion people in the world get by on this meager basis, many of them in Muslim countries. Out of the 50 Least Developed Countries listed by the United Nations, 22 are member countries of the O I C.

5. In his new book entitled "The End of Poverty", Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the United Nations Millennium Project, has pointed out that the one billion "poorest of the poor" or the "extreme poor" make up one sixth of humanity. A few rungs up the development ladder is a group of another 1.5 billion of "the poor" who live above mere subsistence. All told, the extreme poor and the poor make up around 40 percent of humanity. Clearly, this problem of global poverty requires an international response on a global scale. However, regardless of the enormity of the problem, we must do something if only to demonstrate that we care and that we wish to show by example what needs to be done for the poor of the world. We need to break free from the inertia and benign neglect which seem to characterize the attitude of the rich one billion people, roughly one sixth of the population of the world, who live in the high-income countries. It is incumbent upon O I C member countries to contribute to the realization of the Millennium Development Goal target of reducing global poverty by half by the year 2015.

6. Alhamdulillah, in less than one year since I first tasked Malaysian officials to organize discussions on the idea, we are able to initiate seven projects involving seven host countries and today we are launching three pilot projects to begin the capacity building programme in three of the lowest income O I C member countries. In order to fast-track the project formulation, we had developed the project proposals through deliberations in an ad hoc Steering Committee of officials and experts from some 19 O I C member countries. Nevertheless, it is the decision of the Steering Committee that this programme be implemented now even with a small beginning. This programme must become a permanent feature of O I C economic cooperation.

7. This beginning is a pilot project and this approach has been adopted so that the success of the initial three projects could be replicated in other countries and in other projects. The success of these three projects will undoubtedly bring about an improvement in the lives of a few hundred individuals through the creation of employment for them and the increased income they are thus able to derive. But that is not the main point. The main point is to demonstrate by action what could realistically be done to break the shackles of poverty given political commitment and dedicated planning. It is to showcase, in a practical way, the path to social and economic development through self-help.

8. The three projects in Phase One of the Capacity Building Programme for O I C Countries are the following. First, Capacity Building in the Palm Oil Industry in SIERRA LEONE; Second, Exploitation of Oil and Mineral Resources and Capacity

Building in Administrative, Planning and Management Functions in MAURITANIA; and Third, Development of the Fisheries Sector in BANGLADESH.

9. The Steering Committee has identified four other projects for implementation under Phase Two of the Programme, namely: (i) Capacity Building in the Processing and Export of Mango Products in GUINEA; (ii) Capacity Building Project in COMOROS; (iii) Capacity Building Assistance Project to victims of Tsunami in INDONESIA; and (iv) Post-Tsunami Redevelopment in MALDIVES. We hope Phase Two can be launched before too long.

10. The Introduction to Chapter 37 of "Agenda 21" describes the concept of capacity building in the following terms. It says, "The ability of a country to follow sustainable development paths is determined to a large extent by the capacity of its people and its institutions as well as its ecological and geographical conditions. Specifically, capacity-building encompasses the country's human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional and resource capabilities. A fundamental goal of capacity building is to enhance the ability to evaluate and address the crucial questions related to policy choices and modes of implementation... ". Quite clearly, the concept encompasses a wide scope. But we do hope that the selection, planning and execution of the pilot projects which we are embarking upon in the current programme will serve to impart some, if not all of the knowledge and skills that constitute capacity building.

11. As a philosophy, this initiative, this capacity building programme is also intended as an exercise in reform and renewal with the purpose of creating a better life for the population through good governance. We need to erase the image that a large part of the Muslim world is a world of backwardness, ignorance and violence. We need to change ourselves and institute a process of change from within. The time for lament, and blaming others for our misfortunes, is over. We need to get back to basics and find inspiration in the true teachings of our great religion, Islam. We need to act now.

12. In Malaysia, we have decided to take the approach of Islam Hadhari, which we have translated into the English Language as Civilizational Islam. It is our approach to good governance and success, that is to say the way the Government intends to administer to the wellbeing of the country and the welfare of its multi-racial and multi-religious population. The teachings of Islam serve as the foundation and inspiration for our actions but the benefits are intended for equitable sharing by all Malaysians, Muslims as well as non Muslims alike.

13. Islam Hadhari is not any secret agenda but an open approach seeking to provide the best for the country and its citizens. We wish to do good not only in the eyes of our people but also in the sight of God Almighty. As Prophet Mohammad had said "The best of men are those who bring good to other people". My colleagues and I in the Government in Malaysia do aspire to be the best of men - and women.

14. We need to place a very high premium on our abilities to provide educational opportunities and on the capability of the people to have access to education. This is because the acquisition of knowledge is key to elevating the poor from poverty. Furthermore science and technology, research and development, are also key to uplifting countries and nation states to become developed and modern entities. Education and the power of knowledge is the greatest equalizer among individuals in a society and the greatest leveler which can bridge the prosperity gap among the nation states in this globalized world.

15. As part of good governance, we must definitely give the highest priority to the eradication of poverty. In order to rid the Muslim communities of poverty and underdevelopment, and to enable them to take the high road to progress, it is quite clear that the more prosperous among us must get together and help the others. The developed countries of the world must, of course, also do their part. But I would like to call upon the Muslim countries to take the lead because I believe in the dictum of leadership by example.

16. I would therefore use this opportunity, here and now, to call upon the more able among the O I C member countries to come forward and take part in this Capacity Building Programme for O I C Countries. We have made many declarations about helping the needy amongst us. Without implementation, these declarations will ring hollow. We have made many promises to cooperate with each other. These promises will remain meaningless unless we act upon them. The time has come for us to mean what we say, and show leadership by example. We certainly cannot expect others to come to our aid if we do not begin by helping ourselves.

17. In our country, we have applied Islam Hadhari as an approach taking into account that the Islamic religion does enjoin us to find success not only in the hereafter but also in this world, giving equal emphasis to fardu kifayah and fardu ain. Islam Hadhari is not a new religion. Islam Hadhari is not a new mazhab or denomination. Islam Hadhari is merely an approach to foster a progressive Islamic civilization, built upon the noble values and ideals of Islam. It emphasizes development that is consistent with the tenets of Islam and which focuses on enhancing the quality of life of every citizen, regardless of his or her religion.

18. We like to view Islam Hadhari as an effort not only to bring the faithful back to basics, but also to give primacy to good values and adherence to certain fundamentals. Islam Hadhari posits ten fundamental principles which Muslim nations and communities must demonstrate, namely:

18.1 First, faith and piety in Allah;

18.2 Second, a just and trustworthy government;

18.3 Third, a free and independent people;

18.4 Fourth, vigorous pursuit and mastery of knowledge;

18.5 Fifth, balanced and comprehensive economic development;

18.6 Sixth, a good quality of life for the people;

18.7 Seventh, protection of the rights of minority groups and women;

18.8 Eighth, cultural and moral integrity;

18.9 Ninth, safeguarding natural resources and the environment; and
18.10 Tenth, strong defence capabilities.

19. We are confident that Islam Hadhari can help bring Muslims into the modern world and integrate them in the modern economy. It promotes tolerance and understanding, moderation and peace, certainly enlightenment. We are also confident that good governance, healthy democratic practices, empowerment of the citizenry through education and equitable sharing of the benefits of economic growth will also eliminate radicalism and eradicate extremism.

20. As I have said earlier, Malaysia is a multi-religious and a multi-racial country. I would like to reemphasize that Islam Hadhari is meant for the benefit of all in Malaysia, regardless of their religious or racial identities. It is certainly an exhortation to the Muslims to treat well and fairly their non Muslim fellow citizens in all their dealings. I have always stated that the approach of Islam Hadhari would bring excellence, distinction and glory to all Malaysians, Muslims and non Muslims alike.

21. As a small nation still grappling with problems of maintaining economic growth, Malaysia's ability to contribute directly to other Muslim countries in terms of cash or kind is limited indeed. But Malaysia is ever ready and willing to share its ideas, experiences and expertise in social engineering and economic development. It would indeed be our contribution if our humble experience in creating and sustaining a peaceful multi-religious and multi-cultural nation, founded upon Islam Hadhari, could provide inspiration to other Muslim countries in finding solutions to their own socio-economic and other developmental problems.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

22. Later this year, in September, world leaders will gather at a summit in New York to review progress in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, or M.D.Gs, adopted in the year 2000. The Report of the U.N Secretary General to the summit, quoting the compact made by member states in 2000, will remind us that each developing country has primary responsibility for its own development, and that this includes strengthening governance, combating corruption and putting in place the policies and investments to drive private-sector-led growth and maximize domestic resources available to fund national development strategies. The same compact also contained commitments on the part of the developed countries that they would give full support in the form of increased development assistance, a more development-oriented trade system and wider and deeper debt relief. However, developing countries must be prepared to face some realities because we know very well the actual extent of the delivery of these commitments thus far. I have recalled all these in some detail in order to remind ourselves, and to make the point, that developing countries must indeed rely primarily upon their own efforts for their development.

23. The capacity building programme which we are launching today is an independent O.I.C initiative but we need not view it in isolation from the M.D.Gs of

the United Nations. If the programme succeeds, and we must exert all efforts to make it succeed, it would indeed be O.I.C's contribution towards fulfilling the targets of the Millennium Development Goals.

24. Let me reiterate that this Capacity Building Programme for O.I.C Countries is meant to carry a philosophical message just as much as it concerns the actual creation and implementation of several development projects. It is to prove correct the maxim that "there is definitely a way when there exists the necessary will". This message is directed at all members of the O.I.C, to those countries which need assistance as well as those countries capable of providing assistance in one form or another.

25. In fact, it is also the hope of the Steering Committee that this programme will enable hitherto unknown potentials in O. I. C countries to be discovered and thereby increase the level of economic exchanges between O. I. C members. This programme is open for participation by all member countries of the O. I. C on a voluntary basis. It does not call for the creation of a new Fund or the establishment of new institutional structures. It is, however, a call for greater solidarity and coordination among ourselves and for better use of the untapped resources which do exist in some O. I. C countries.

26. On that note, and with the recitation of Bismillahir Rahmananir Rahim, I have now the pleasure and honour to launch The Capacity Building Program for OIC Countries, and pray to Allah Subhanallah that it will be a success.

Thank you.