

**SPEECH BY
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI
AT THE WORLD ETHICS AND INTEGRITY FORUM 2005 AT INSTITUT
INTEGRITI MALAYSIA, KUALA LUMPUR
29TH APRIL 2005**

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH AND GOOD MORNING

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EXCELLENCIES

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

1. IT IS A PLEASURE FOR ME TO BE HERE AT THE WORLD ETHICS AND INTEGRITY FORUM 2005 – THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL FORUM DEDICATED TO THE DISCUSSION AND PROMOTION OF ETHICS AND INTEGRITY WITHIN THE LARGER CONTEXT OF GOOD GOVERNANCE. IT IS HEARTENING TO SEE SO MANY EMINENT PERSONS FROM MALAYSIA AND ABROAD, REPRESENTING VARIOUS ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN ANTI-CORRUPTION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE, PRESENT HERE TODAY. YOUR ATTENDANCE IS PARTICULARLY MEANINGFUL BECAUSE IT SIGNALS THE IMPORTANCE THAT YOU, AS WELL AS THE COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS THAT YOU REPRESENT, HAVE ATTACHED TO THE ISSUES OF ETHICS AND INTEGRITY.

2. I BELIEVE THAT A GATHERING OF THE BEST MINDS AND WORLD LEADING EXPERTS ON ANTI-CORRUPTION, ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND INTEGRITY SYSTEMS SUCH AS THIS ONE, IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT WILL ENABLE THE SHARING OF EXPERIENCES AND BEST PRACTICES IN DEVELOPING GOOD GOVERNANCE AND COMBATING CORRUPTION. THROUGH FRANK AND OPEN DISCUSSION WE MAY IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES OF INEQUITIES AND INJUSTICES; WE MAY RAISE OUR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES' CAPACITIES TO COMBAT CORRUPTION AND ENHANCE VALUES, SO THAT ULTIMATELY, WE MAY REALISE OUR SHARED VISION OF A WORLD WHERE GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS AND RELATIONS – BE THEY BETWEEN COUNTRIES, ORGANISATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS – ARE BASED ON A STRONG FOUNDATION OF ETHICS AND INTEGRITY.

3. THEREFORE, ALLOW ME TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONGRATULATE THE JOINT-ORGANISERS OF THIS FORUM – THE INTEGRITY INSTITUTE OF MALAYSIA, THE ASIAN STRATEGY AND LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE (ASLI), THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ETHICS, AND THE ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENCY, MALAYSIA – FOR ORGANISING THIS IMPORTANT AND TIMELY EVENT.

4. THIS FORUM IS BEING HELD AT A PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT JUNCTURE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GLOBAL POLITICAL ECONOMY. AS A RESULT OF INCREASING ECONOMIC GLOBALISATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES, MANY ECONOMIES HAVE BEEN ABLE TO EXPERIENCE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND A HIGHER STANDARD OF LIVING FOR THEIR PEOPLE. YET, DESPITE MATERIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT, INEQUITIES CONTINUE TO PERSIST AND VARIOUS FORMS OF INJUSTICE CONTINUE TO BE COMMITTED. FOR EXAMPLE, GENDER AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION STILL EXIST IN MANY SOCIETIES AND ORGANISATIONS, WHETHER IN DEVELOPED OR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. ALSO, “WHITE-COLLAR” CRIMES WHICH INCLUDE FRAUD, BRIBERY AND EMBEZZLEMENT, ARE ON THE RISE WORLD-WIDE.

5. IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT BEHIND THESE ACTS OF CRIME AND INJUSTICE ARE PEOPLE, AND THE VALUES THAT THEY HOLD. SADLY, IN TODAY’S FAST-PACED AND DEMANDING WORLD, THE TEMPTATION TO SEEK THE EASY WAY OUT MAY BE VERY STRONG. THOSE WHO WIELD POWER AND INFLUENCE NEED TO BE PARTICULARLY MINDFUL OF THIS. WHOLE ECONOMIES CAN BE SHATTERED AND WHOLE SOCIETIES DESTROYED AS A RESULT OF GREED OR SELFISHNESS. THE SEVERE BLOW THAT SEVERAL ASIAN ECONOMIES INCLUDING MALAYSIA, EXPERIENCED DURING THE ASIAN FINANCIAL CRISIS IS A CASE IN POINT.

6. THERE IS THEREFORE A COMPELLING NEED TO IMPROVE GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONS SO THAT ECONOMIES, ORGANISATIONS AND SOCIETIES MAY BE PROTECTED FROM SUCH INJUSTICES. THERE MUST ALSO BE AN EQUAL ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS THE UNDERLYING ISSUE, THAT IS, THE EROSION OF ETHICS AND INTEGRITY IN SOCIETY.

7. HOWEVER, BUILDING A SOCIETY OF INDIVIDUALS THAT HAVE A HIGH DEGREE OF CHARACTER AND MORAL FORTITUDE IS NO EASY TASK. AS I HAVE SAID, ETHICS AND INTEGRITY ARE BASICALLY VALUES. ETHICS AND INTEGRITY ARE IMPORTANT TO US AS INDIVIDUALS BECAUSE THEY DEFINE WHO WE ARE. YET, ETHICS AND INTEGRITY CANNOT BE THE SUBJECT OF LEGISLATION, NEITHER CAN THEY BE LEGISLATIVELY ENFORCED. MOREOVER, ETHICS AND INTEGRITY CANNOT BE TAUGHT PER SE, BUT INSTEAD THEY MUST EVOLVE IN OUR CULTURAL SETTING, IN OUR VALUE SYSTEM, AND IN THE WAY WE RELATE TO OTHERS IN SOCIETY. THIS MAKES THE PROMOTION OF ETHICS AND INTEGRITY INTANGIBLE AND DIFFICULT TO PURSUE, ALTHOUGH THEY REMAIN SOME OF THE MOST CRITICAL ATTRIBUTES THAT MUST BE IMBUED THROUGHOUT SOCIETY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

8. AS YOU MAY BE AWARE, I HAVE MADE THE PROMOTION OF GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ETHICAL VALUES, AS WELL AS THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION, CENTRAL PILLARS OF MY ADMINISTRATION. I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THIS DECISION HAS NOT BEEN MOTIVATED BY POLITICAL OR EVEN POPULARITY CONSIDERATIONS, AS SOME HAVE SUGGESTED. INSTEAD, IT HAS BEEN BASED ON FIRSTLY, AN AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE CURRENT DRIVERS OF GLOBAL ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS, AND SECONDLY, ON A DEEP PERSONAL DESIRE TO SEE A WORLD WHERE NOBLE VALUES FORM THE BASIS OF OUR RELATIONS WITH EACH OTHER.

9. ONE OF THE KEY DRIVERS OF THE GLOBAL POLITICAL ECONOMY IS THE PUSH TOWARDS INTRODUCING AND MAINTAINING A GOOD SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS. IT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED THROUGH NUMEROUS STUDIES AND COUNTRY EXPERIENCES THAT GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY – THE HALLMARKS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE – WILL HELP FACILITATE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND RAISE THE OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE.

10. MY DECISION TO PURSUE GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ANTI-CORRUPTION IS THUS STRONGLY LINKED TO THE NEED TO MAINTAIN MALAYSIA'S ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS IN THE FACE OF INCREASING GLOBAL PRESSURES. WITH THE INCREASING INTERNATIONALISATION OF TRADE AND BUSINESS AND THE LOWERING OF TRADE BARRIERS WORLD-WIDE, COMPANIES ARE FREE TO INVEST AND LOCATE THEIR BUSINESSES IN ANY COUNTRY THEY CHOOSE. COUNTRIES THAT OFFER A STABLE, EFFICIENT AND COST-EFFECTIVE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT ARE NATURALLY FAVOURED AS INVESTMENT DESTINATIONS. ALONG THE SAME LINES, A COUNTRY THAT HAS A HIGH LEVEL OF CORRUPTION, WHETHER REAL OR PERCEIVED, RUNS THE RISK OF LOSING CURRENT AND FUTURE INVESTMENTS. FOR A SMALL ECONOMY LIKE MALAYSIA, THE PERCEPTION OF CORRUPTION OR INEFFICIENCY IS SOMETHING THAT WE SIMPLY CANNOT AFFORD.

11. THAT IS WHY I WOULD LIKE TO SEE MALAYSIA IMPROVE ITS PERFORMANCE IN INTERNATIONAL CORRUPTION SURVEYS SUCH AS THE CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX SURVEY CONDUCTED BY TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL. IMPROVING MALAYSIA'S SCORE AND RANK WILL BE A CHALLENGE BECAUSE, ULTIMATELY, THESE ARE BASED ON PERCEPTIONS. NEVERTHELESS, MY ADMINISTRATION WILL CONTINUE TO DO WHAT IS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT PERCEPTIONS AND OPINIONS ARE CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVED.

12. BEYOND THE ECONOMIC AND COMPETITIVE FACTORS, I HAVE PURSUED GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ANTI-CORRUPTION BASED ON A DEEPLY INGRAINED BELIEF IN VALUES SUCH AS JUSTICE, INTEGRITY, EQUITY, AMANAH (CARRYING OUT TRUST REPOSED) AND ACCOUNTABILITY – ALL INJUNCTIONS OF ISLAM AND THE GREAT RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD. I BELIEVE IN THE IMPORTANCE OF NOBLE VALUES AS THE BASIS FOR HOW INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES SHOULD RELATE TO EACH

OTHER, AND INDEED HOW A GOVERNMENT SHOULD RELATE TO ITS CITIZENS AND VICE VERSA. I HAVE ESPOUSED THE CONCEPT OF ISLAM HADHARI – WHICH COMPRISES 10 UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES THAT MUSLIM COUNTRIES MUST DEMONSTRATE AND WHICH RELATE TO THE PRIMACY OF VALUES AND PRINCIPLES AS PRESCRIBED IN THE QURAN AND HADITH – AS AN IMPORTANT AGENDA OF MY ADMINISTRATION. I BELIEVE THAT GOOD GOVERNANCE IS AN INDISPENSABLE PART OF LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS, AND I BELIEVE THAT THERE IS NO GREATER HARM IN THE WORLD THAN THAT CAUSED BY IMMORAL AND UNSCRUPULOUS STEWARDSHIP.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

13. I HAVE TALKED AT LENGTH ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF VALUES IN THE CONTEXT OF GOOD GOVERNANCE. I WOULD NOW LIKE TO TALK MORE SPECIFICALLY ABOUT MY POLICIES TO PROMOTE GOOD GOVERNANCE AND TO FIGHT CORRUPTION.

14. THE BATTLE AGAINST CORRUPTION IS A LONG AND ARDUOUS ONE, FRAUGHT WITH MANY CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES. THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT THERE ARE MANY DIFFICULT CHOICES AND DECISIONS THAT HAVE TO BE MADE ALONG THE WAY. HOWEVER, MY GOVERNMENT AND I ARE FIRMLY RESOLVED TO CONTINUE THE FIGHT, AND TO UTILISE WHATEVER RESOURCES THAT MAY BE REQUIRED TO SUPPORT THAT FIGHT.

15. INDEED, MY RESOLVE TO PURSUE AN ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENDA HAS NEVER WAVED, EVEN FOR A MOMENT. THOSE WHO CLAIM TO SEE A LACK OF MOVEMENT IN THIS DIRECTION MAY BE LIMITING THEIR VIEW TO PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF THE ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENDA, NAMELY ARRESTS AND CONVICTIONS OF PEOPLE. PERHAPS THIS IS UNDERSTANDABLE GIVEN THAT IT IS, FOR MANY PEOPLE, THE MOST VISIBLE AND SENSATIONAL ASPECT OF AN ANTI-CORRUPTION DRIVE. HOWEVER, AS I AM SURE MANY OF YOU IN THE AUDIENCE CAN ATTEST TO, THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION IS NOT A QUICK AND SIMPLE PROCESS, BUT ONE THAT IS HIGHLY COMPLEX, ESPECIALLY IF IT IS TO BE EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE IN THE LONG-RUN.

16. BEYOND MERE POLITICAL WILL, IT INVOLVES MAKING IMPROVEMENTS TO LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS, TO THE GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES IN BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS, TO THE CAPABILITIES OF ANTI-CORRUPTION SPECIALISTS, AND PERHAPS THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL AND CHALLENGING ASPECT OF ALL, TO THE CHANGING OF MIND-SETS OF PEOPLE. THESE EFFORTS TAKE TIME. EVEN TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL, WELL-KNOWN FOR ITS WORK IN PROMOTING GOOD GOVERNANCE AS WELL AS FOR FIGHTING CORRUPTION, HIGHLIGHTS THIS COMPLEXITY WHEN THEY REFER TO THE “NATIONAL INTEGRITY SYSTEM” AS NECESSARY TO ADVANCING ETHICS AND INTEGRITY.

17. THEREFORE, IN RECOGNITION OF THIS COMPLEXITY, AND COUPLED WITH MY DESIRE TO EFFECT REAL AND SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENTS, I HAVE PURSUED AN ANTI-CORRUPTION STRATEGY THAT CONSISTS OF TWO MAIN ELEMENTS, THAT IS WHAT I CALL THE "PREVENTIVE" AND THE "PUNITIVE" ASPECTS, RESPECTIVELY.

18. THE PREVENTIVE ASPECT OF MY STRATEGY CAN ITSELF BE BROKEN DOWN INTO TWO FUNDAMENTAL APPROACHES. THE FIRST APPROACH IS TO CLOSE THE GAPS OR OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORRUPT ACTIVITIES TO OCCUR. THIS HAS RELEVANCE IN A WIDE NUMBER OF CONTEXTS, BUT TO START WITH, I HAVE CHOSEN TO FOCUS ON A FEW KEY AREAS. FIRSTLY, MY GOVERNMENT IS WORKING HARD TO IMPROVE THE PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM SO THAT BUREAUCRACY AND RED TAPE CAN BE REDUCED. MY GOVERNMENT IS ALSO INSTITUTING VARIOUS MEASURES TO INCREASE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR. ONE MAJOR AREA WHERE THIS HAS HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT IS IN THE AREA OF PUBLIC SECTOR PROCUREMENT, THROUGH THE ENHANCED USE OF THE TENDER SYSTEM. GOING FORWARD, I HAVE ALSO DIRECTED THAT ALL GOVERNMENT-LINKED COMPANIES REVIEW THEIR PROCUREMENT SYSTEMS SO AS TO BE MORE TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE.

19. THE SECOND ELEMENT OF THE PREVENTIVE ASPECT OF MY STRATEGY IS TO INCULCATE IN INDIVIDUALS, AND MALAYSIAN SOCIETY AS A WHOLE, THE NOBLE VALUES OF HONESTY, ETHICS AND PERSONAL INTEGRITY. THE NATIONAL INTEGRITY PLAN, WHICH PROVIDES THE FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE ON THE DIRECTION AND STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS MALAYSIAN PRIORITIES AND CONCERNS RELATING TO CORRUPTION, PUBLIC SERVICES, CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS ETHICS, WAS LAUNCHED IN APRIL LAST YEAR. THE INTEGRITY INSTITUTE OF MALAYSIA, WHICH WAS CREATED TO OPERATIONALISE THE PLAN, HAS BEEN DILIGENTLY WORKING BEHIND-THE-SCENES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN.

20. WITH REGARDS TO THE "PUNITIVE" ASPECT OF MY ANTI-CORRUPTION STRATEGY, I HAVE GIVEN FIRM DIRECTIONS TO THE ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENCY TO CARRY OUT THEIR INVESTIGATIONS "WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR". RECENT STATISTICS OBTAINED FROM THE A.C.A. INDICATE THAT THE ANTI-CORRUPTION DRIVE IS ACTUALLY GAINING MOMENTUM. THERE HAS BEEN A 17 PER CENT RISE IN THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS FILED WITH THE A.C.A. BETWEEN 2003 AND 2004, SUGGESTING THAT PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE ANTI-CORRUPTION PROGRAMME IS ALSO INCREASING. CORRUPTION-RELATED ARRESTS HAVE SHOWN A MARKED INCREASE OF 47 PER CENT, WITH 497 ARRESTS MADE LAST YEAR COMPARED TO 339 ARRESTS IN 2003.

21. THERE ARE ALSO MORE CASES THAT ARE BEING BROUGHT TO THE TRIAL STAGE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE NUMBER OF NEW CASES REGISTERED FOR TRIAL HAS INCREASED SLIGHTLY WITH 179 NEW CASES REGISTERED LAST YEAR COMPARED TO 171 IN 2003. IN ADDITION, 471 CASES WERE IN THE TRIAL PROCESS LAST YEAR, WHICH REPRESENTS A 22 PER CENT INCREASE COMPARED TO THE YEAR BEFORE. DUE TO THE HIGHER QUALITY OF PRE-TRIAL INVESTIGATIVE WORK AND

EVIDENCE COLLECTED, 7 PER CENT MORE CASES WERE SOLVED/CLOSED IN 2004 COMPARED TO 2003.

22. IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED TO ME THAT HIGHER ARREST AND PROSECUTION FIGURES WILL RAISE MY POPULARITY LEVELS. HOWEVER, I WOULD LIKE TO RAISE A CAUTIONARY HAND AGAINST THOSE WHO WOULD ADVISE ME TO MAKE MORE CORRUPTION-RELATED ARRESTS JUST SO THAT I MAY BE SEEN TO BE "DOING SOMETHING" ABOUT CORRUPTION. FIRSTLY, IT IS NOT ME, BUT THE A.C.A. AND THE POLICE WHO MAKE SUCH ARRESTS. SECONDLY, I SUBSCRIBE VERY FIRMLY TO THE DOCTRINE OF "INNOCENT UNTIL PROVEN GUILTY". THIS MEANS THAT EVERY CORRUPTION-RELATED CASE THAT IS BROUGHT UP MUST BE BACKED BY HARD EVIDENCE THAT IS ABLE TO STAND THE SCRUTINY OF A COURT OF LAW. MANY A TIME, THE MEDIA, QUICK TO CAPITALISE ON THE PUBLIC'S CURIOSITY AND FASCINATION FOR SUCH THINGS, HAVE PRESUMED A PERSON'S GUILT AND RUN THEIR OWN "TRIAL-BY-MEDIA". EVEN IF THE PERSON IS LATER FOUND TO BE INNOCENT, HIS OR HER REPUTATION WOULD HAVE ALREADY BEEN RUINED. THIS I WOULD CONSIDER TO BE A TRAGEDY AND AN INJUSTICE. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE SHOULD BE PROSECUTED FOR CORRUPTION ON THE PRETEXT OF SUSPICION OR PERCEPTION ALONE, HOWEVER STRONG THAT SUSPICION OR PERCEPTION MAY BE. AT THE END OF THE DAY, IT CAN ONLY BE HARD, COLD EVIDENCE THAT HOLDS SWAY.

23. ABOVE ALL, WHILE I BELIEVE THAT JUSTICE MUST BE DONE, IT MUST BE DONE JUSTLY. IN ORDER TO AVOID INJUSTICES BEING COMMITTED UNDER THE GUISE OF ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES, IT IS IMPORTANT TO ENSURE THAT CORRUPTION-RELATED INVESTIGATIONS AND EVIDENCE-GATHERING ARE CONDUCTED ACCORDING TO PROCEDURE. THIS WILL ALSO ENSURE THAT FIRSTLY, ONLY THE GUILTY GET CAUGHT; AND SECONDLY, THAT WHEN THEY ARE CAUGHT THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ESCAPE PUNISHMENT.

24. HENCE, ANOTHER PRONG OF MY ANTI-CORRUPTION STRATEGY FOCUSES ON INCREASING THE KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY OF ANTI-CORRUPTION OFFICERS SO THAT THEY MAY CARRY OUT THEIR DUTIES MORE EFFECTIVELY. ALONG THIS LINE, THE ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENCY OF MALAYSIA HAS TAKEN THE INITIATIVE TO SET UP A SPECIALISED TRAINING ACADEMY FOR THE PURPOSES OF TRAINING ANTI-CORRUPTION OFFICERS FROM MALAYSIA AND ACROSS THE REGION. I AM PLEASED TO SAY THAT "THE A.C.A. ACADEMY" – WHICH WILL BE FULLY OPERATIONAL IN JULY 2005 – HAS ALREADY GAINED THE CONFIDENCE OF MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (A.D.B.) AND THE O.E.C.D., AS DEMONSTRATED BY THEIR AGREEMENT TO SEND THEIR RESPECTIVE ANTI-CORRUPTION OFFICERS TO THE ACADEMY FOR TRAINING PURPOSES. IN ADDITION, AT THE RECENT A.D.B./O.E.C.D. ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN HANOI LAST WEEK, IT WAS AGREED THAT THE TRAINING FOR A COURSE ON "MUTUAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE" WILL BE HELD AT THE A.C.A. ACADEMY. BESIDES BEING A SIGNIFICANT VOTE OF CONFIDENCE BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, FOR MALAYSIA'S ANTI-CORRUPTION EFFORTS, I AM SURE THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO GAIN SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS FROM HAVING EXPOSURE TO INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPANTS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

25. GETTING STRATEGIES AND POLICIES RIGHT ON THE HOME FRONT IS JUST ONE HALF OF THE BATTLE. WITH THE INCREASING PERVASIVENESS AND SOPHISTICATION OF TECHNOLOGY AS WELL AS THE GROWING INTERNATIONALISATION OF BUSINESS, IT IS INEVITABLE THAT CORRUPTION TOO HAS GROWN BEYOND NATIONAL BOUNDARIES. INDEED, CROSS-BORDER CORRUPTION, SOMETIMES CALLED "WHITE-COLLAR CRIMES", HAS BECOME A GROWING PROBLEM ALL OVER THE WORLD.

26. STEMMING THIS TRANS-BORDER FORM OF CORRUPTION REQUIRES THAT GOVERNMENTS CONTINUE TO BE VIGILANT AND TO CONTINUE TO INVEST IN UPGRADING THE KNOWLEDGE AND CAPABILITIES OF THEIR ANTI-CORRUPTION OFFICERS. IT IS ALSO CRITICAL FOR ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN ANTI-CORRUPTION TO DEVELOP BETTER LINKS WITH THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN OTHER COUNTRIES AND TO CONSULT THEM ON A REGULAR BASIS. BESIDES ALLOWING THEM TO KEEP ABREAST OF LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD, IT WILL ALSO EXPOSE THEM TO NEW IDEAS, APPROACHES, TOOLS AND MECHANISMS TO FIGHT INTERNATIONAL CORRUPTION MORE EFFECTIVELY. I HOPE THAT THIS FORUM WILL BE THE STARTING POINT TO ENABLE SUCH DISCUSSIONS AND EXCHANGES TO BE CONDUCTED IN THE FUTURE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

27. I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT THE DISCUSSIONS AND DELIBERATIONS OVER THESE PAST TWO DAYS HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY VIGOROUS. MANY USEFUL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW COUNTRIES, ORGANISATIONS AND SOCIETIES CAN IMPROVE THEIR GOVERNANCE THROUGH THE PROMOTION OF ETHICS AND INTEGRITY AS WELL AS THE REDUCTION OF CORRUPTION, HAVE BEEN MADE. I WOULD THEREFORE URGE THE CO-ORGANISERS TO TAKE NOTE OF THESE AND IF POSSIBLE TO COMPILE THEM INTO A PUBLICATION SO THAT THEY MAY BE A USEFUL RESOURCE FOR POLICY-MAKERS AND IMPLEMENTORS, NOT JUST IN MALAYSIA BUT AROUND THE WORLD.

28. FOLLOWING ON THE SUCCESS OF THE FORUM THIS YEAR, I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO SUGGEST THAT THE ORGANISERS CONSIDER MAKING THE WORLD INTEGRITY AND ETHICS FORUM A YEARLY EVENT. INDEED, IT WILL GIVE ME AND MY COUNTRY GREAT PLEASURE TO PLAY HOST TO SUCH A GATHERING OF EMINENT PEOPLE IN THE FIELD OF GOVERNANCE, ETHICS AND INTEGRITY AND ANTI-CORRUPTION, NEXT YEAR AND BEYOND.

29. WITH THAT, I THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRESENCE AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THIS FORUM. I URGE YOU TO CONTINUE TO BUILD UPON THE IDEAS THAT YOU HAVE DISCUSSED TOGETHER OVER THESE PAST TWO DAYS AND TO IMPLEMENT THEM IN YOUR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS, SO THAT WE CAN

ACHIEVE OUR SHARED VISION OF A SOCIETY THAT PRACTICES GOOD GOVERNANCE AND UPHOLDS THE VALUES OF ETHICS AND INTEGRITY. LET US JOIN HANDS AND WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE A MORE JUST AND EQUITABLE WORLD, ONE WHERE THE WEAK ARE PROTECTED AND WHERE THE MAJORITY CAN BE GUIDED ONTO THE PATH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

THANK YOU.