

**SPEECH BY**  
**YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI**  
**AT THE NSTP-PWC MALAYSIAN HUMANITARIAN AWARD**  
**AT SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR**  
**5 DECEMBER 2006**

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME TO SAY A FEW WORDS AT THE NSTP-PWC HUMANITARIAN AWARDS PRESENTATION. I AM INDEED HONOURED TO BE IN SUCH EXALTED COMPANY – AMONG INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE DEVOTED THEIR HEARTS AND MINDS, THEIR BODIES AND SOULS TO THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY.

2. BY THEIR VERY NATURE, HUMANITARIANS PLACE THE WELL-BEING OF OTHERS ABOVE ALL ELSE AND THEY THEREFORE DO NOT COVET FAME OR REWARD. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD GO UNNOTICED OR THAT THEIR SACRIFICES SHOULD GO UNACKNOWLEDGED. SOCIETY IS ALL THE RICHER BECAUSE OF THE SHINING EXAMPLES THAT THEY SET. I AM SURE THE ORGANISERS WOULD AGREE WITH ME THAT THESE AWARDS ARE NOT MEANT TO GLORIFY, BUT TO EDIFY.

3. AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THE HUMANITARIANS THAT HAVE BEEN NOMINATED SPAN A WIDE ARRAY OF DEEDS AND CONTRIBUTIONS. YOUNG AND OLD, INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS – THE COMMON DENOMINATOR IS THAT THEY HAVE DISTINGUISHED THEMSELVES BY HELPING OTHERS. INCLUDED AMONG THE NOMINEES ARE THOSE WHO HAVE CONSISTENTLY DEVOTED THEMSELVES TO CARE FOR THE LESS FORTUNATE. OTHERS HAVE HARNESSSED THE PHILANTHROPY OF THE PUBLIC FOR WORTHY CAUSES. SOME HAVE, THROUGH THEIR ACTS OF COURAGE AND CONCERN, HAVE SAVED AND CHANGED LIVES.

4. WHATEVER THE SHAPE OR FORM OF THEIR ACTS OF HUMANITARIANISM, I DO NOT ENVY DATO' PAUL LEONG AND HIS PANEL OF JUDGES. BASED ON WHAT I HAVE SEEN, ALL OF THE NOMINEES HAVE PERFORMED STERLING SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY AND IN MY EYES, ALL ARE WINNERS. I SHOULD ADD THAT ALL THE DILIGENCE THAT HAS GONE INTO THE SELECTION PROCESS WILL BE WORTHWHILE IF FELLOW MALAYSIANS ARE INSPIRED TO FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN NOMINATED TONIGHT. AT THE VERY LEAST, IF THESE AWARDS CAN INSPIRE ORDINARY MALAYSIANS TO AT LEAST GIVE A LITTLE TIME AND THOUGHT TO THE LESS FORTUNATE, THEN THESE AWARDS WOULD HAVE MADE A PROFOUND DIFFERENCE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

5. WE IN MALAYSIA CAN CONSIDER OURSELVES LUCKY. OUR COUNTRY HAS ENJOYED POLITICAL STABILITY ALMOST CONTINUOUSLY FOR FIVE DECADES, ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT TAKE THIS BLESSING FOR GRANTED AND MUST CONSTANTLY WORK AT PRESERVING IT. OUR EFFORTS TO COMBAT POVERTY HAVE BEEN ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE UNITED NATIONS AS ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS OF ITS KIND ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD. BY AND LARGE, WE ARE FREE FROM THE MASSIVE NATURAL DISASTERS THAT RAVAGE MANY COUNTRIES IN OUR REGION, ALTHOUGH THE TSUNAMI TWO YEARS AGO WAS A SOBERING WAKE-UP CALL AGAINST COMPLACENCY.

6. THIS RELATIVE STATE OF GRACE HAS ENABLED US TO DEVELOP THIS COUNTRY IN A CONSISTENT AND SUSTAINED MANNER. THE FRUITS OF OUR LABOUR ARE CLEAR FOR ALL TO SEE. ALMOST EVERYWHERE WE TURN, ESPECIALLY IN URBAN SETTINGS SUCH AS THIS, THE MONUMENTS OF OUR PROGRESS BEAR TESTAMENT TO HOW SUCCESSFUL MALAYSIA HAS BECOME.

7. BUT THE TRAPPINGS OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS SHOULD NOT BLIND US TO THE FACT THAT THERE ARE STILL THOSE IN OUR COUNTRY WHO ARE IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE. THERE ARE STILL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY THAT HAVE NOT FULLY BENEFITED FROM OUR STRONG ECONOMIC GROWTH, JUST AS THERE ARE PORTIONS OF SOCIETY WHO STILL REQUIRE A HELPING HAND.

8. OF COURSE, THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE FOR AND IMPROVE THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE LIES WITH THE GOVERNMENT. AND IN THIS REGARD, WE WILL NOT REST IN ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE MALAYSIAN PEOPLE. HOWEVER, THE FACT THAT THERE ARE THOSE WHO ARE WILLING TO STEP UP TO HELP THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS IS PROOF OF THE GENEROSITY OF SPIRIT THAT UNDERPINS MALAYSIAN SOCIETY. IT IS ALMOST SECONDARY THAT THEIR EFFORTS COMPLEMENT AND SUPPLEMENT GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES AND THAT THEY HELP TO SHOULDER THE HEAVY TASK. MORE IMPORTANTLY, THEIR CARE AND CONCERN FOR THEIR LESS FORTUNATE FELLOW MALAYSIANS, FORM THE GLUE THAT BINDS US TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO REPRESENT THE ESSENCE OF MALAYSIA, RATHER THAN THE SHAMEFUL DISPLAYS OF APATHY THAT ARE BECOMING MORE APPARENT IN MODERN SOCIETY.

9. THEIR GENEROSITY MAKES ME OPTIMISTIC THAT THE QUEST FOR MATERIAL COMFORTS HAS NOT EXTINGUISHED OUR CAPACITY FOR COMPASSION AND DECENCY. MALAYSIA AND MALAYSIANS HAVE ALWAYS ANSWERED THE CALL OF HUMANITARIAN DUTY TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITIES. WHETHER IN ACEH, PAKISTAN OR LEBANON, IT IS A SOURCE OF PRIDE THAT OUR CITIZENS ARE

AMONG THE FIRST ON THE SCENE WHENEVER DISASTER STRIKES. THIS IS A TRADITION THAT I HOPE CONTINUES LONG INTO THE FUTURE.

10. ON A SEPARATE NOTE, I AM ALSO PLEASED THAT MANY OF OUR CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS DO NOT JUST HAND OUT ALMS BUT HAVE GONE A STEP FURTHER BY WORKING TO EMPOWER THE HAVE-NOTS. WHILE WE APPLAUD THE NOBLE ACTS OF GIVING AID TO THOSE IN NEED, I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT THE CAPACITY BUILDING ASPECT OF HUMANITARIAN WORK IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT. TANGIBLE AID LIKE MONEY, EQUIPMENT AND OTHER GOODS MAY BE HELPFUL DURING EMERGENCIES OR DURING CRISIS SITUATIONS. IN THE LONG RUN, HOWEVER, IT IS BEST THAT PEOPLE ARE GIVEN THE TOOLS TO HELP THEM REALIZE THEIR POTENTIAL. EVERYONE HAS THE ABILITY TO GROW AND BLOSSOM IF GIVEN THE PROPER GUIDANCE AND THE RIGHT OPPORTUNITIES.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

11. BEFORE I END, I WOULD LIKE TO OFFER MY CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NSTP GROUP AND PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS FOR ORGANIZING THESE AWARDS. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO RECORD MY APPRECIATION TO ALL THE INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED THEIR TIME AND ENERGY TO ENSURE THAT THIS EVENT IS A SUCCESS.

12. OF COURSE, MY HEARTFELT CONGRATULATIONS AND GRATITUDE GOES TO ALL THE AWARD NOMINEES AND RECIPIENTS. I HOPE THAT THE RECOGNITION GIVEN TO YOU TONIGHT MARKS A NEW BEGINNING IN YOUR NOBLE EFFORTS TO WORK FOR THE BETTERMENT OF SOCIETY. MALAYSIA IS A BETTER PLACE BECAUSE OF YOUR GOOD WORK.

13. MANY YEARS AGO, AS A YOUNG BOY IN SCHOOL, I LEARNED SOME WORDS OF WISDOM THAT HAVE STAYED WITH ME ALL THIS TIME. IF MEMORY SERVES ME CORRECTLY, IT GOES LIKE THIS: "I EXPECT TO PASS THROUGH THE WORLD BUT ONCE. ANY GOOD THEREFORE THAT I CAN DO, OR ANY KINDNESS I CAN SHOW TO ANY CREATURE, LET ME DO IT NOW. LET ME NOT DEFER IT, FOR I SHALL NOT PASS THIS WAY AGAIN." I HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT THESE ARE WORDS THAT WOULD SERVE HUMANKIND WELL AND IT IS A CREDO THAT I HAVE TRIED TO LIVE BY. IT IS ALSO A CREDO THAT THE NOMINEES FOR THIS AWARD EXHIBIT EXEMPLIFY MAGNIFICENTLY. MAY WE CONTINUE TO BE MOVED TO SHOW KINDNESS ALWAYS.

THANK YOU.