

**SPEECH BY
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI
AT THE LAUNCH OF THE ROYAL PROFESSOR UNGKU AZIZ CHAIR AND
CENTRE FOR POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
AT AUDITORIUM BALAI UNGKU AZIZ UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA,
KUALA LUMPUR
9 NOVEMBER 2006**

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH AND GOOD MORNING

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EXCELLENCIES

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

1. IT IS INDEED A GREAT HONOUR AND PLEASURE FOR ME TO BE WITH YOU TODAY, TO COMMEMORATE THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE ROYAL PROFESSOR UNGKU AZIZ CHAIR AND CENTRE FOR POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES*

2. I BELIEVE THAT THE CREATION OF THIS CHAIR AND CENTRE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA IS PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE* AS MALAYSIA'S FOUNDING UNIVERSITY, U.M. HAS A LONG ESTABLISHED TRADITION IN SCHOLARSHIP, RESEARCH AND INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION, AND IS RECOGNISED WORLDWIDE* MORE RECENTLY, U.M.'S DESIGNATION AS ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S FOUR RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES LENDS PRIMACY TO THE NEED FOR IT TO BRING RESEARCH OUTPUT TO NEW HEIGHTS* CERTAINLY, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS CHAIR AND CENTRE WILL ALIGN WELL WITH THE SPIRIT OF A RESEARCH UNIVERSITY, SUSTAINING FERVENT AND CONSISTENT EFFORTS TO NURTURE A CULTURE OF KNOWLEDGE AND RESEARCH, PAR EXCELLENCE*
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

3. BROADLY SPEAKING, THE RAPID ONSET OF GLOBALISATION AND TRADE LIBERALISATION HAS IMPACTED UPON POVERTY LEVELS AND INCOME DISTRIBUTION ACROSS NATIONS, ESPECIALLY THOSE AT THE DEVELOPING STAGE* THIS HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES TO ALSO

FOCUS ON POVERTY ERADICATION AND INCOME DISTRIBUTION, TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE IN THIS INCREASINGLY BORDERLESS ECONOMIC ERA*

4. MALAYSIA, ON ITS PART, HAS A LONG HISTORY OF IMPLEMENTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND POVERTY ERADICATION PROGRAMMES* DURING THE 1960'S AND 70'S, AT A TIME WHEN SOME DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WERE STILL GRAPPLING WITH CIVIL STRIFE AND POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY, THE LEADERS OF MALAYSIA DIRECTED THEIR FOCUS TOWARDS MATTERS OF NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION* MALAYSIA'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE "NEW ECONOMIC POLICY" (N.E.P.) WAS ESSENTIALLY AN ATTEMPT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE TWIN ISSUES OF POVERTY ERADICATION AND SOCIAL RESTRUCTURING AS CENTRAL PILLARS OF THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT APPROACH* I DARESAY THAT IT WAS THIS CLEAR COMMITMENT TO ERADICATION OF POVERTY AND TO RESTRUCTURING OF SOCIETY, COUPLED WITH SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENTS IN EDUCATION AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, THAT HAVE BROUGHT MALAYSIA TO WHERE IT IS NOW*

5. TODAY, MALAYSIA HAS MUCH TO BE PROUD OF WITH ITS TREMENDOUS ACHIEVEMENTS IN A BROAD RANGE OF DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS* THE MOST IMPRESSIVE OF THESE IS MALAYSIA'S ACHIEVEMENT IN REDUCING THE INCIDENCE OF POVERTY — FROM OVER 50 PERCENT IN 1970 TO 5.7 PERCENT IN 2005* THIS REPRESENTS A REDUCTION OF 44 PER CENT IN A LITTLE OVER 30 YEARS, A REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT BY ANY STANDARD* AND THE EFFORT WILL NOT END THERE* BY THE END OF THE PERIOD OF THE 9TH MALAYSIA PLAN IN 2010, I HAVE SET A TARGET TO HALVE THE CURRENT POVERTY RATE, TO LESS THAN 3 PERCENT* BY 2010, I HAVE ALSO TARGETED THAT NO MALAYSIAN SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO HARDCORE POVERTY*

6. I AM PLEASED TO SAY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THAT MALAYSIA'S CONSISTENT EFFORTS HAVE NOT GONE UNRECOGNISED* I AM MADE TO UNDERSTAND THAT TODAY, ACROSS THE WORLD, THE "UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME" (U.N.D.P.) IS LAUNCHING ITS ANNUAL FLAGSHIP PUBLICATION — "THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2006"* THIS REPORT PUBLISHES THE "HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX" OR H.D.I., WHICH LOOKS BEYOND G.D.P. AND OTHER CONVENTIONAL INDICATORS OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT* THE H.D.I. MEASURES DEVELOPMENT MORE COMPREHENSIVELY, FOCUSING ON THE FACTORS THAT DIRECTLY AFFECT HUMAN WELLBEING ACROSS 177 COUNTRIES* SPECIFICALLY, IT EVALUATES THREE BROAD INDICATORS THAT COVER LIFE-EXPECTANCY, OPPORTUNITIES TO ACCESS KNOWLEDGE AND A DECENT STANDARD OF LIVING*

7. I AM PROUD TO NOTE THAT THIS YEAR, MALAYSIA HAS MANAGED TO SURPASS AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE IN ITS HUMAN DEVELOPMENT* THIS MILESTONE IS CERTAINLY SIGNIFICANT AS IT IS THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE LAUNCH OF THE H.D.I. IN 1990, THAT MALAYSIA HAS BEEN REDESIGNATED AS A HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT COUNTRY, UP FROM A MEDIUM HUMAN DEVELOPMENT COUNTRY* WHAT THIS EFFECTIVELY DOES IS TO PLACE MALAYSIA FIRMLY IN THE SAME LEAGUE AS THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, IN TERMS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS* THIS NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT REFLECTS OUR STRONG AND LONG-STANDING DEDICATION TO DEVELOPING OUR HEALTHCARE SERVICES, AMENITIES

PROVISION AND INFRASTRUCTURE, AS WELL AS OUR ENDURING COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION, TRAINING AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

8. MALAYSIA IS OFTEN SHOWCASED AS A COUNTRY THAT HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN ATTAINING — AND BALANCING — MANY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES* MORE IMPORTANTLY, IN MALAYSIA, WE BELIEVE THAT OUR EXPERIENCES ARE SOMETHING THAT SHOULD BE SHARED* THROUGH THE AUSPICES OF THE “MALAYSIAN TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME”, FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE PROVIDED A PLATFORM FOR THE SHARING OF OUR DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES WITH OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES*

9. GIVEN OUR EXPERIENCE IN UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT, I CONSIDER IT FITTING THAT MALAYSIA OFFERS ITSELF IN AN ACTIVE ROLE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THIS FIELD OF STUDY* SUCH A STEP ALSO REPRESENTS MALAYSIA'S MODEST CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS OTHER DEVELOPING NATIONS* INDEED, I HUMBLY BELIEVE THAT THE MALAYSIAN EXPERIENCE CAN PROVIDE USEFUL LESSONS FOR OTHER COUNTRIES IN TERMS OF POVERTY ERADICATION POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES *

10. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, THE SETTING UP OF A CENTRE FOR POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES HERE IN U.M. IS, I BELIEVE, TIMELY AND WISE* I ENVISAGE THAT THIS CENTRE WILL BE WELL POSITIONED TO BECOME A CRITICAL REFERENCE POINT FOR ACADEMIC, RESEARCH AND CONSULTANCY WORK ON POVERTY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, SERVING ACADEMIA, THE GENERAL PUBLIC, POLICY MAKERS AS WELL AS THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY*

11. SUCH A CENTRE WOULD ALSO BE ABLE TO HELP DEVELOP NEW STRATEGIES AND METHODOLOGIES IN THE STUDY OF POVERTY, AND INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY TO INFORMATION PERTAINING TO RURAL COMMUNITIES AND POVERTY GROUPS* IN ADDITION, THE CENTRE WOULD ALSO BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE RURAL AREAS, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE POOR* THIS WOULD HELP TO ENCOURAGE THE INCORPORATION OF LOCAL AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS*

12. MOREOVER, WITH THE INCREASED DYNAMISM REQUIRED OF ECONOMIC POLICY FORMULATION IN RECENT TIMES, THERE IS A STRONG NEED FOR ACCURATE INFORMATION AND DATA ON ALL ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT* AFTER ALL, IT IS ONLY WITH A COMPREHENSIVE SET OF FACTS COUPLED WITH THE APPROPRIATE ANALYTICAL TOOLS THAT ONE CAN MAKE CORRECT AND TIMELY DECISIONS* THERE IS ALSO A NEED TO DEVELOP THE EXPERTISE NECESSARY TO ANALYSE THE INFORMATION AND DATA* PUT SIMPLY, WE MUST DEVELOP THE NECESSARY FIRST CLASS HUMAN CAPITAL, SO THAT THE COUNTRY CAN BE INTELLECTUALLY SELF-SUFFICIENT AND BE ABLE TO ENGAGE AS EQUALS THE WORLD OVER, ESPECIALLY IN ADVANCING NEW THEORIES AND SOLUTIONS*

13. MOREOVER, THERE IS TODAY A ROLE FOR SCHOLARS IN OUR UNIVERSITIES TO APPLY THEIR RIGOROUS RESEARCH FINDINGS TO POLICY DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION* STRONGER TIES BETWEEN THE BRILLIANT MINDS IN OUR COUNTRY'S INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING AND THOSE IN GOVERNMENT SHOULD THEREFORE BE FOSTERED, IN THE INTEREST OF ADVANCING NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY* THIS IS WHERE I SEE THE CENTRE FOR POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT PLAYING A MAJOR AND MEANINGFUL ROLE*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

14. I HAVE IN THE PAST, MADE MANY REFERENCES TO THE NEED FOR MALAYSIA TO PRODUCE "TOWERING PERSONALITIES" AS THE BENCHMARK OF FIRST-CLASS HUMAN CAPITAL* THEREFORE, I AM PLEASED TO NOTE THAT THE "ROYAL PROFESSOR UNGKU AZIZ CHAIR" IS LINKED TO TWO SUCH "TOWERING PERSONALITIES"*

15. YANG MULIA ROYAL PROFESSOR UNGKU ABDUL AZIZ — WHOM THE CHAIR IS NAMED AFTER— HAS DEDICATED THE GREATER PART OF HIS LIFE TO RESEARCH ON POVERTY; AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, HAS CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TOWARDS PLANNING AND EXECUTING PRACTICAL MEASURES TO ERADICATE POVERTY IN THE COUNTRY* THIS CHAIR AT THE CENTRE FOR POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES THEREFORE HONOURS THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF PAK UNGKU IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ESPECIALLY THAT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY* THE CHAIR COULD NOT HAVE BEEN NAMED AFTER A MORE DESERVING INDIVIDUAL* IT IS MY SINCERE HOPE THAT EVERYONE INVOLVED IN THE PURSUIT AND DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE WILL BE ABLE TO DRAW INSPIRATION FROM THE INTEGRITY, RESOLVE AND DEDICATION SHOWN BY PAK UNGKU*

16. THE SECOND "TOWERING PERSONALITY" THAT IS LINKED TO THE CHAIR IS NO STRANGER TO THE FIELD OF POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT* IN 2000, THE UNITED NATIONS INITIATED A GLOBAL PROJECT TO REDUCE EXTREME POVERTY, DISEASE AND HUNGER BY YEAR 2015, AND THE COLLECTION OF 8 TARGETS CAME TO BE KNOWN AS THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS* TO HELP LEAD THIS PROJECT, A RENOWNED INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIST WAS APPOINTED AS DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS MILLENNIUM PROJECT AND AS SPECIAL ADVISOR TO U.N. SECRETARY GENERAL KOFI ANNAN ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS*

17. IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO ANNOUNCE THAT PROFESSOR JEFFREY SACHS HAS ACCEPTED THE INVITATION TO BECOME THE FIRST HOLDER OF THE ROYAL PROFESSOR UNGKU ABDUL AZIZ CHAIR IN POVERTY STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA* PROFESSOR SACHS IS DIRECTOR OF THE "EARTH INSTITUTE", "QUETELET PROFESSOR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT", AND PROFESSOR OF "HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT" AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA* FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS PROFESSOR SACHS HAS BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE CHALLENGES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND ENLIGHTENED GLOBALISATION, PROMOTING POLICIES TO HELP ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD TO BENEFIT FROM EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND WELLBEING*

18. I BELIEVE THAT THIS ACCEPTANCE BY PROFESSOR SACHS IS ALSO TESTAMENT TO MALAYSIA'S WORLD-LEADING POSITION IN POVERTY ERADICATION AND DEVELOPMENT* I AM CONFIDENT THAT THROUGH HIS INVOLVEMENT, PROFESSOR SACHS WILL BRING IMMENSE EXPERIENCE, INSIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL LINKS THAT WILL HELP THE CENTRE PROPEL ITSELF GLOBALLY, TO MEET ITS STATED OBJECTIVES OF FURTHERING COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH IN THE AREAS OF POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

19. I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT THE CREATION OF THE ROYAL PROFESSOR UNGKU AZIZ CHAIR AND CENTRE FOR POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES HERE IN U.M. RERESENTS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR MALAYSIA TO CONTINUE TO TAKE A LEADING POSITION ON SUCH ISSUES ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE* U.M. MUST RISE TO THE CHALLENGE AND MAKE THIS CENTRE A NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENT NOT ONLY OF THE UNIVERSITY, BUT ALSO OF MALAYSIA* I AM TOLD THAT THERE ARE FEW PROMINENT CENTRES ON POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES IN THE WORLD* AS SUCH, THE SUCCESS OF THIS CENTRE AT U.M. WOULD GIVE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR MALAYSIA TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THS FIELD, EVEN AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN THIRD AND FIRST WORLD COUNTRIES* INDEED, IT IS MY ARDENT HOPE THAT THE CHAIR AND CENTRE WOULD BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR CAPABILITY AS A TRUE "GLOBAL CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE" IN THE FIELD OF POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT* I SINCERELY BELIEVE THAT THIS AND OTHER EFFORTS MADE BY U.M. WILL ONLY ENHANCE U.M.'S NAME ACROSS THE WORLD*

20. I WOULD THEREFORE LIKE TO OFFER MY HEARTFELT CONGRATULATIONS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA FOR SUCCESSFULLY BRINGING THIS VISION TO REALISATION, AND I WISH THE UNIVERSITY EVERY SUCCESS IN ITS ENDEAVOURS* ON THAT NOTE, IT IS NOW MY GREAT HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE TO LAUNCH THE ROYAL PROFESSOR UNGKU AZIZ CHAIR AND CENTRE FOR POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA*

THANK YOU*