

SPEECH BY
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI
AT 1ST O.I.C. ANTI CORRUPTION AND ENHANCING INTEGRITY FORUM
2006 AT KUALA LUMPUR CONVENTION CENTRE (KLCC)
28 AUGUST 2006

BISMILLAHIR RAHMANIR RAHIM

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH AND GOOD MORNING

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EXCELLENCIES, AMBASSADORS AND HIGH COMMISSIONERS

DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

1. IT IS AN HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE FOR ME TO ADDRESS THIS "1ST O.I.C. ANTI-CORRUPTION AND ENHANCING INTEGRITY FORUM 2006". ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA, I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME ALL DELEGATES, ESPECIALLY OUR FOREIGN GUESTS, TO MALAYSIA.

2. AS THE CURRENT CHAIR OF THE O.I.C., MALAYSIA IS PLEASED TO HOST THIS IMPORTANT GATHERING OF LEADING SCHOLARS, POLICY-MAKERS AND CONCERNED MUSLIMS TO EXPRESS OUR COMMON STAND AGAINST CORRUPTION AS WELL AS TO SHARE EXPERIENCES AND BEST PRACTICES IN ENHANCING INTEGRITY. THIS IS AN ENORMOUS RESPONSIBILITY, BUT AN OBLIGATION THAT MUST BE CARRIED OUT FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE UMMAH. INDEED, YOUR PRESENCE HERE TODAY SHOWS THE O.I.C.'S DEEP CONCERN FOR AND COMMITMENT TO THE AGENDA OF ENHANCING INTEGRITY AND COMBATING CORRUPTION AT ALL LEVELS.

3. AS A SIGNIFICANT GROUPING OF 57 MEMBER COUNTRIES WITH A TOTAL POPULATION OF 1.8 BILLION PEOPLE, THE O.I.C. COMPRISES ABOUT ONE FIFTH OF THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY. BINDING US TOGETHER IS THE RELIGION OF ISLAM — THE BELIEF IN ALLAH THE ALMIGHTY, HIS MESSENGERS AND HIS BOOKS. INDEED, AS MUSLIMS, IT IS OUR BELIEF IN ALLAH THE ALMIGHTY THAT FORMS THE FOUNDATION OF OUR INTEGRITY. THIS IS BECAUSE OUR FINAL ACCOUNTABILITY IS TO ALLAH, HERE IN THIS WORLD AND IN THE HEREAFTER. SHOULD WE PROVE FALSE IN OUR WORDS, BREACH PROMISES OR BETRAY THE TRUST REPOSED IN US, WE FALL PREY TO THE EVILS OF CORRUPTION, IGNORANCE AND ARROGANCE. IF

LEFT UNADDRESSED, THE EVENTUAL CONSEQUENCE OF SUCH ACTIONS WOULD BE ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL DESTRUCTION OF HUMANKIND.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

4. CORRUPTION HAS BEEN LIKENED TO A FORM OF CANCER THAT UNDERMINES MORALITY, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND THE RULE OF LAW. IT IS AN AFFLICTION THAT DEVIATES RESOURCES MEANT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS, TO WASTEFUL AND DANGEROUS ENDS. IN THAT SENSE, CORRUPTION IS NOT ONLY A PROBLEM FOR THE PRESENT GENERATION, BUT THE NEXT AS WELL, BECAUSE A CORRUPT ACT COMMITTED TODAY WILL ALSO AFFECT GENERATIONS TO COME.

5. CLEARLY, WE CANNOT HOPE TO HAVE MUCH SUCCESS IN OUR CAPACITY-BUILDING, EDUCATION AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IF THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS HAVE BEEN WEAKENED BY CORRUPTION. THEREFORE, WE MUST WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP AMONG OUR PEOPLE A RESPECT FOR INTEGRITY IN OUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND PRIVATE COMPANIES, AND TO DEMAND IT OF THEM, IF NECESSARY. OF COURSE, STRONG POLITICAL WILL AND PUBLIC SUPPORT ARE CRUCIAL ELEMENTS TO ENSURE THAT OUR EFFORTS TO RAISE LEVELS OF INTEGRITY BEAR FRUIT.

6. TODAY, CORRUPTION CAN NO LONGER BE CONSIDERED AS A COUNTRY'S INTERNAL PROBLEM ALONE. INCREASINGLY OPEN BORDERS, TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS AS WELL AS CHANGING ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES – THE HALLMARKS OF TODAY'S GLOBAL SOCIETY – MEAN THAT THE IMPACT OF CORRUPTION IN ONE COUNTRY IS FELT BEYOND ITS BORDERS. IN THIS CASE, EVERY NATION MUST WORK WITH EVERY OTHER NATION TO FIGHT CORRUPTION.

7. AS SUCH, THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION MUST BE ON A HOLISTIC, GLOBAL AND UNIFIED SCALE. ANYTHING LESS WOULD BE SELF-DEFEATING. FORTUNATELY, THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL IS NOT NEW. INITIATIVES TO COMBAT CORRUPTION ARE ONGOING IN INTERNATIONAL PLATFORMS SUCH AS THE O.E.C.D., APEC, E.U., THE AFRICAN UNION AND ASEAN, TO NAME JUST A FEW.

8. I AM PLEASED TO SAY THAT MALAYSIA, TOO, HAS PLAYED ITS PART IN THIS ENDEAVOUR. IN 2005, MALAYSIA ORGANISED THE FIRST "WORLD ETHICS AND INTEGRITY FORUM" WHICH AMONG OTHER THINGS, HIGHLIGHTED THE NEED FOR HOLISTIC ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES. ESSENTIALLY, IT CALLED FOR PUNITIVE MEASURES, WHICH IS THE TRADITIONAL RESPONSE TO CORRUPTION, TO BE COMPLEMENTED BY PREVENTIVE MEASURES IN ORDER TO BE THAT MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE. THIS WORLD FORUM, WHICH IS TO BE HELD ON A REGULAR BASIS, WAS ATTENDED BY MANY INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS AND SCHOLAR. DELEGATES DISCUSSED THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND BEST PRACTICES, THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL LAWS, AS WELL AS THE PROVISION OF

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ENHANCE NATIONAL-LEVEL ANTI-CORRUPTION PROGRAMS AND TO FOSTER INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THIS FIELD.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

9. AS CHAIR OF THE O.I.C. AND AS THE LEADER OF A DEVELOPING MUSLIM COUNTRY, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE O.I.C. PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN THE GLOBAL FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION. WE MUST DO THIS, NOT ONLY TO FULFILL OUR OBLIGATIONS TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE MUST ALSO DO THIS FOR THE UMMAH, TO SECURE A BETTER ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FUTURE FOR OURSELVES.

10. INDEED, I AM DEEPLY SADDENED TO NOTE THAT MUSLIM COUNTRIES, AS A GROUP, DO NOT RATE VERY HIGHLY WHEN IT COMES TO PERCEPTIONS OF CORRUPTION. AN ANALYSIS OF TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL'S "CORRUPTION PERCEPTION INDEX" (C.P.I.) SHOWS THAT OUT OF THE 158 COUNTRIES SURVEYED IN 2005, THE MUSLIM COUNTRY WITH THE BEST RECORD COULD ONLY RANK 29TH. MORE THAN HALF OF THE BOTTOM 10 PLACES WERE OCCUPIED BY MUSLIM COUNTRIES. IF WE AVERAGE THE TOTAL SCORE OF MUSLIMS NATIONS AS A WHOLE, WE WOULD ONLY SCORE 3.06 OUT OF 10 POINTS, PLACING US AT 89TH PLACE. ALTHOUGH THE C.P.I. IS MERELY A SURVEY OF PERCEPTIONS, IT HAS BECOME A WIDELY USED REFERENCE POINT FOR POTENTIAL INVESTORS. THEREFORE, IT IS VITAL FOR MUSLIM NATIONS TO FOCUS THEIR ATTENTION ON IMPROVING THEIR POSITION IN THE C.P.I.. EVEN IF THE FINDINGS THEMSELVES ARE DEBATABLE, THERE IS NO ARGUING WITH THE EFFECT THAT IT HAS ON OUR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INTERESTS.

11. OF COURSE, THE IMPERATIVE TO FIGHT CORRUPTION AND ENHANCE INTEGRITY GOES BEYOND THE NEED TO MERELY PERFORM BETTER IN SURVEYS AND INDICES. AS CHAIR OF THE O.I.C., I HAVE SPENT MUCH TIME REFLECTING ON THE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES THAT FACE MUSLIM COUNTRIES TODAY, AS WELL AS THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT IN WHICH THE MUSLIM WORLD FINDS ITSELF. I BELIEVE THAT MANY OF THE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES THAT THE MUSLIM UMMAH FACES HAS ITS ROOTS IN PROBLEMS OF POVERTY, POOR GOVERNANCE AND LIMITED EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES, ALL OF WHICH ARE EXACERBATED BY THE EXISTENCE OF CORRUPTION.

12. THE CURRENT CONDITION THAT MUSLIM COUNTRIES FIND THEMSELVES IN IS DEEPLY ALARMING AND DISTRESSING. I AM ESPECIALLY SADDENED WHEN WE CONSIDER ISLAM'S GLORIOUS LEGACY OF CULTURALLY- AND SCIENTIFICALLY-ADVANCED CIVILISATIONS, ALL BUILT ON A SOLID FOUNDATION OF ETHICS AND MORAL VALUES. THE ISLAMIC COMMITMENT TO JUST AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE IS PLAINLY EVIDENT IN THOSE INSTANCES.

13. AFTER ALL, THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IS CLEARLY EMBODIED IN THE HOLY QURAN. ANY MUSLIM LEADER ASSUMING POWER IN THEIR COUNTRY SHOULD BE REMINDED OF THE QURANIC VERSE IN SURAH AN NISA' VERSE 58,

WHICH MEANS 'ALLAH DOTH COMMAND YOU TO RENDER BACK YOUR TRUSTS TO THOSE TO WHOM THEY ARE DUE; AND WHEN YOU JUDGE BETWEEN MAN AND MAN, THAT YOU JUDGE WITH JUSTICE'.

14. THE ISLAMIC NOTION OF GOOD AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE WAS ALSO DEMONSTRATED IN THE RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (P.B.U.H.) — AS A LAW GIVER, ADMINISTRATOR, JUDGE AND MILITARY COMMANDER. FAMOUS ISLAMIC THINKERS SUCH AS AL-FARABI AND AL-MAWARDI, AL-GHAZZALI AND IBN KHALDUN HAVE ALSO HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD LEADERSHIP AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN THEIR WRITINGS. AMONG THE ATTRIBUTES OF LEADERSHIP AND GOOD GOVERNANCE OUTLINED BY THEM ARE HONESTY AND INTEGRITY; A PASSION FOR JUSTICE AND A SENSE OF FAIRNESS; LOVE OF THE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THE POOR; WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN TO GRIEVANCES; AND A READINESS TO SEEK COUNSEL FROM THE WISE AND THE LEARNED.

15. JUSTICE, IN PARTICULAR, ALSO FIGURES PROMINENTLY IN THE ISLAMIC NOTION OF GOOD GOVERNANCE. INDEED, IT IS BECAUSE JUSTICE IS SO PIVOTAL TO GOOD GOVERNANCE THAT CONCEPTS SUCH AS EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW AND THE RULE OF LAW WERE EMPHASISED IN EARLY ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE. PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY, WHICH MANY CONTEMPORARY THINKERS WOULD REGARD AS THE CORNERSTONE OF ETHICAL GOVERNANCE, HAS ALWAYS BEEN GIVEN HIGH IMPORTANCE IN ISLAM.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

16. IN CONFRONTING CURRENT DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES, INCLUDING CORRUPTION, THE MUSLIM WORLD CAN FIND GREAT INSPIRATION AND GUIDANCE FROM ISLAM AND ITS OWN BEST PRACTICES. IF ONLY WE REDISCOVER THE WISDOM (AL-HIKMAH) THAT IS IN ISLAM, WE WILL FIND THAT IT IS THOROUGHLY APPLICABLE TO MODERN NEEDS.

17. ALLOW ME TO HUMBLLY SHARE WITH YOU MY OWN COUNTRY'S EXPERIENCE IN FIGHTING CORRUPTION. WHILE THE MALAYSIAN EXPERIENCE IS UNIQUE AND MAY NOT BE APPLICABLE TO OTHER COUNTRIES, SOME LESSONS MAY YET BE RELEVANT. THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THESE LESSONS IS THE NECESSARY POLITICAL WILL REQUIRED TO ENFORCE ANTI-CORRUPTION LAWS, TO CLOSE-OUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORRUPTION, AS WELL AS TO INSTIL ETHICS AND INTEGRITY IN SOCIETY.

18. FIRSTLY, MY GOVERNMENT HAS MADE ANTI-CORRUPTION AND THE ENHANCEMENT OF INTEGRITY AS A KEY POLICY AGENDA. AGENCIES LIKE THE ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENCY (A.C.A.) CONTINUE TO HAVE THE POWER AND FREEDOM TO INVESTIGATE "WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR". TO BE EFFECTIVE, IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT THAT AGENCIES LIKE THE A.C.A. HAVE THE EXPERTISE AND CAPABILITIES TO CONDUCT INVESTIGATIONS WELL. THEREFORE, I HAVE ALSO EMPHASISED RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING IN THIS FIELD, WITH THE

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE "MALAYSIAN INSTITUTE OF INTEGRITY" (I.I.M.) AND THE "A.C.A. ACADEMY", RESPECTIVELY.

19. SECONDLY, MY GOVERNMENT HAS VIGOROUSLY PURSUED EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE GOVERNANCE SYSTEM, PARTICULARLY, THE PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM. THERE HAVE BEEN CONCERTED EFFORTS TO MAKE THE SYSTEM MORE ACCOUNTABLE, EFFICIENT AND TRANSPARENT. WITH AN IMPROVED SYSTEM, WE WILL BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE MORE RAPID AND EFFECTIVE ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES, AS WELL AS TO LOWER BUSINESS COSTS IN THE COUNTRY. MORE IMPORTANTLY, FASTER TRANSACTIONS AND BETTER PROCESSES CAN ELIMINATE SYSTEMIC GAPS AND LOOPHOLES THAT ALLOW FOR CORRUPTION TO TAKE PLACE, THUS REDUCING THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRAFT TO OCCUR.

20. THIRDLY, MY GOVERNMENT HAS EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE OF INSTILLING ETHICS, INTEGRITY AND MORAL VALUES IN SOCIETY AS AN IMPORTANT PILLAR TO COMBATING CORRUPTION. OUR ANTI-CORRUPTION EFFORTS WILL BE A "LOSING BATTLE" IF WE DO NOT ENCOURAGE PEOPLE, OF THEIR OWN VOLITION, TO TURN AWAY FROM CORRUPTION. IN LINE WITH THIS, A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL INTEGRITY PLAN (P.I.N.) WAS FORMULATED IN 2004. THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE PLAN IS TO ARTICULATE THE WAYS BY WHICH ETHICS AND INTEGRITY COULD BE MADE A WAY OF LIFE AMONG THE PEOPLE. ALL SECTORS, INCLUDING THE GOVERNMENT, PRIVATE SECTOR, POLITICAL PARTIES, RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS, TRADE UNIONS, N.G.O.'S, AND OTHER GROUPS – SUCH AS WOMEN, MEDIA, YOUTH AND STUDENTS – ARE COVERED BY THIS PLAN. INDEED, THE NATIONAL INTEGRITY PLAN IS ONE OF OUR MOST IMPORTANT PREVENTIVE TOOLS FOR COMBATING CORRUPTION.

21. FOURTHLY, WE HAVE INTRODUCED ISLAM HADHARI (CIVILIZATIONAL ISLAM) AS AN APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT IN MALAYSIA. AS YOU MAY BE AWARE, ISLAM HADHARI IS AN APPROACH THAT EMPHASISES PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT CONSISTENT WITH THE TENETS OF ISLAM, AND FOCUSES ON ENHANCING THE WELLBEING AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE PEOPLE. ALLOW ME TO RECOUNT THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM HADHARI HERE:

- FIRST, FAITH AND PIETY IN ALLAH
- SECOND, A JUST AND TRUSTWORTHY GOVERNMENT
- THIRD, A FREE AND INDEPENDENT PEOPLE
- FOURTH, A VIGOROUS PURSUIT AND MASTERY OF KNOWLEDGE
- FIFTH, BALANCED AND COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- SIXTH, A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE PEOPLE
- SEVENTH, PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF MINORITY GROUPS AND WOMEN
- EIGHTH, CULTURAL AND MORAL INTEGRITY
- NINTH, SAFEGUARDING NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT; AND
- TENTH, STRONG DEFENCE CAPABILITIES.

22. IN THAT SENSE, ISLAM HADHARI CAN BE VIEWED AS AN INITIATIVE NOT ONLY TO BRING THE FAITHFUL BACK TO THE BASICS, BUT TO ALSO GIVE PRIMACY TO GOOD GOVERNANCE AND GOOD VALUES. WHILE EACH OF THE TEN PRINCIPLES CAN STAND ALONE, THEY ARE ALSO INTER-RELATED AND MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE

OF ONE ANOTHER. THEREFORE, ALTHOUGH THE FIRST, SECOND AND EIGHTH PRINCIPLE OF ISLAM HADHARI — THAT IS, “FAITH AND PIETY IN ALLAH”, “A JUST AND TRUSTWORTHY GOVERNMENT, AND “CULTURAL AND MORAL INTEGRITY”, RESPECTIVELY — ARE IMPORTANT TO UPHOLD IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION, THEY CANNOT BE SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED WITHOUT AN EQUAL APPRECIATION FOR, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF, THE OTHER PRINCIPLES.

23. IN MALAYSIA, WE STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT THE ONLY WAY TO FIGHT CORRUPTION EFFECTIVELY IS TO ADDRESS IT IN A COMPREHENSIVE AND HOLISTIC MANNER. WHILE WE STRIVE TO TIGHTEN OUR ANTI-CORRUPTION LAWS AND ENSURE THAT TRANSGRESSIONS ARE SPEEDILY AND FAIRLY ENFORCED, WE ARE ALSO LOOKING AT WAYS TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE VALUES SUCH AS HONESTY AND INTEGRITY CAN FLOURISH, AS PREVENTIVE MEASURES AGAINST CORRUPTION. IT IS MY SINCERE HOPE THAT IN DISCUSSING MANY OF THE IMPORTANT ISSUES THAT YOU WILL COME ACROSS IN THIS FORUM, YOU WILL ALSO TAKE THE SAME APPROACH AND LOOK AT SOLUTIONS TO CORRUPTION IN A COMPREHENSIVE AND HOLISTIC FASHION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

24. BEFORE I END, I WOULD LIKE TO REMIND US OF OUR PURPOSE HERE. WE HAVE GATHERED TOGETHER TO DISCUSS AND EMBARK UPON A GRAND VISION FOR THE UMMAH THAT CALLS FOR A LOT OF SELF-EXAMINATION (MUHASABAH), GODLY-INSPIRED THINKING (ILHAM) AND STEADFASTNESS IN PRACTICING THE BASIC TENETS OF ISLAM. WE HAVE GATHERED TOGETHER FULLY AWARE THAT WE BEAR THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CHARTING A BETTER FUTURE FOR THE UMMAH, A FUTURE FREE FROM THE SCOURGE OF CORRUPTION. THERE ARE NO QUICK OR CERTAIN FIXES, BUT I BELIEVE WE CAN ACCOMPLISH MUCH IF WE UNDERTAKE THE NECESSARY MIX OF STRATEGIES, AS WELL AS LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS. IT MAY NOT BE EASY TO ERADICATE CORRUPTION COMPLETELY, BUT WE MUST AND CERTAINLY CAN WORK TOWARD MINIMISING IT.

25. I PRAY TO ALLAH THE ALMIGHTY TO GIVE US THE STRENGTH TO TAKE UP THE ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENDA EFFECTIVELY AND WITH FULL COMMITMENT. BY MATCHING WISDOM WITH INTELLIGENCE, HUMANITY WITH COMPASSION, AND REALISM WITH IDEALISM; AND BY INSTITUTING INTEGRITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN OUR GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS, MUSLIM COUNTRIES MAY RAISE THEMSELVES TO EVEN GREATER HEIGHTS OF ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT, INSYA-ALLAH.

26. ON THAT NOTE, AND IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, MOST GRACIOUS AND MOST MERCIFUL, I AM PLEASED TO DECLARE THE FIRST O.I.C. ANTI-CORRUPTION AND ENHANCING INTEGRITY FORUM 2006, OFFICIALLY OPEN.

THANK YOU.