

**SPEECH BY
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI
AT THE OFFICIAL COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION WORKS OF THE ASIA
PETROLEUM HUB PROJECT
AT TANJUNG BIN RECLAIMED ISLAND
5 JULY 2007**

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI
WABARAKATUH DAN SALAM SEJAHTERA

YAB DATO' HAJI ABDUL GHANI OTHMAN
MENTERI BESAR JOHOR

YB DATO' SERI CHAN KONG CHOY
MENTERI PENGANGKUTAN

YBHG. TUAN HAJI ABDUL RASHID MOHD ISA
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ASIA PETROLEUM HUB SDN BHD

DIF-DIF KEHORMAT

TUAN-TUAN, PUAN-PUAN DAN PARA HADIRIN SEKALIAN

1. ALHAMDULILLAH, SAYA BERSYUKUR KE HADRAT ALLAH S.W.T. KERANA DENGAN LIMPAH, KURNIA DAN IZIN-NYA KITA DAPAT SAMA-SAMA HADIR DI SEBUAH MAJLIS YANG AMAT BERMAKNA INI, IAITU MAJLIS PECAH TANAH DAN PERMULAAN KERJA-KERJA PEMBINAAN PROJEK ASIA PETROLEUM HUB (APH).

2. PEMBANGUNAN PROJEK INI, YANG DILAKSANAKAN OLEH KONSORTIUM TEMPATAN YANG DIKETUAI OLEH KIC OIL & GAS LTD DENGAN KOS 1.4 BILION RINGGIT, MEMBUKTIKAN KEUPAYAAN USAHAWAN TEMPATAN DI DALAM SEKTOR PETROLEUM. PEMBANGUNAN PROJEK INI JUGA MERUPAKAN MERCU TANDA BUKAN SAHAJA DI MALAYSIA TETAPI DI RANTAU INI JUGA. BAGI MENYOKONG INISIATIF SEKTOR SWASTA INI, KERAJAAN TELAH MELABURKAN 100 JUTA RINGGIT UNTUK MEMBANGUNKAN PULAU TEBUS GUNA INI DAN JUGA AKAN MENYEDIAKAN JARINGAN PRASARANA SOKONGAN YANG DIPERLUKAN.

3. PROJEK INI TELAH DITEMPATKAN DI DALAM WILAYAH PEMBANGUNAN ISKANDAR (WPI) DAN INI MERUPAKAN SALAH SATU USAHA KERAJAAN UNTUK TERUS MENJAYAKAN INISIATIF PEMBANGUNAN WILAYAH TERSEBUT. TAMBAHAN LAGI, PROJEK INI BAKAL MENYEDIAKAN PERKHIDMATAN LOGISTIK, YANG TELAH PUN DIKENALPASTI SEBAGAI SALAH SATU TERAS UTAMA SEKTOR PERKHIDMATAN DI DALAM PELAN PEMBANGUNAN KOMPREHENSIF WPI. DENGAN ITU, SAYA BERHARAP PROJEK INI AKAN MENJADI PEMANGKIN SERTA AKAN MENDORONG PEMBANGUNAN INISIATIF SEKTOR SWASTA YANG LAIN DI DALAM WPI, BUKAN SAHAJA DI DALAM SEKTOR PETROLEUM TETAPI JUGA DI DALAM SEKTOR-SEKTOR YANG LAIN. KERAJAAN BERGANTUNG KEPADA SEKTOR SWASTA UNTUK MENJADI PEMACU UTAMA PEMBANGUNAN EKONOMI DI DALAM WPI, AGAR HASRAT UNTUK MENJADIKAN WPI METROPOLIS BERTARAF DUNIA AKAN TERCAPAI.

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4. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE APH WILL BRING ABOUT MANY POSITIVE SPILLOVER EFFECTS AND SYNERGIES TO MALAYSIA AS A WHOLE AND WPI SPECIFICALLY. APH WILL COMPLEMENT AND ENHANCE THE CAPABILITIES OF PASIR GUDANG PORT AND TANJUNG PELEPAS PORT TO PROVIDE AN INTEGRATED COMPREHENSIVE PACKAGE TO ITS CLIENTS. IN THIS RESPECT, APH WILL PROVIDE UNINTERRUPTED BUNKERING SERVICES TO LINERS CALLING AT THESE PORTS, ENHANCING THE VALUE AND THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF MALAYSIA'S MAJOR PORTS.

5. APH WILL ALSO BE A KEY STRATEGIC FACILITY FOR MALAYSIA AS IT WILL MEET THE NATION'S DEMAND FOR PETROLEUM STORAGE AND BLENDING REQUIREMENTS, WHICH ARE PRESENTLY BEING DONE AT FOREIGN FACILITIES. FURTHERMORE, APH WILL IN TIME PROVIDE SUFFICIENT STORAGE FACILITIES FOR MALAYSIA TO MEET THE NATIONAL FUEL RESERVE REQUIREMENTS.

6. APH IS ALSO POISED TO ACT AS A STIMULUS FOR THE LOGISTICS SERVICES AND OTHER COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES IN THE WPI, AS IT WILL BE PART OF THE GLOBAL PETROLEUM TRADING NETWORK AND THE 'BULK-GATEWAY' TO THE REGIONAL AND DOMESTIC MARKETS. FOR EXAMPLE, A DIRECT POSITIVE IMPACT WILL BE THAT THE PETROLEUM HUB WILL CREATE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE MARITIME INDUSTRY AS WELL AS PROMOTE THE EMERGENCE OF MARINE SUPPORT ACTIVITIES. THIS SECTOR IS SET TO THRIVE ESPECIALLY WITH THE EXPECTED INCREASE IN MARITIME AND OTHER ANCILLARY ACTIVITIES, ONCE OPERATIONS COMMENCE AT THE HUB.

7. WITH THE INCREASE IN ACTIVITIES PARTICULARLY IN THE HIGHLY SPECIALISED PETROLEUM SECTOR, THE HUB AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS WILL BE A MAGNET OR FOCAL POINT FOR TALENT ESPECIALLY IN THE PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL SEGMENTS. IN THIS RESPECT, I HOPE THAT THERE WILL BE SIGNIFICANT TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE RELEVANT FIELDS, FOR THE BENEFIT OF WPI AND MALAYSIA AS A WHOLE. THIS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY HUMAN CAPITAL, WHICH IS ONE OF THE FOREMOST THRUSTS OF THE NINTH MALAYSIA PLAN AND NATIONAL MISSION.

8. THIS PROJECT AND ITS SUPPORTING ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES WILL ATTRACT FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT AS WELL AS STRONGER TRADE INFLOWS. THE RESULTANT SPIN-OFFS FROM THE HUB WILL GENERATE AN ECONOMIC MULTIPLIER EFFECT FOR THE SOUTHERN REGION AND MALAYSIA AS A WHOLE, AND CONTRIBUTE CONSIDERABLY TO THE GDP GROWTH OF OUR ECONOMY. CONSEQUENTLY, WPI, THE STATE OF JOHOR AND THE NATION WILL ENJOY VARIOUS SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS.

9. GIVEN THE FAST PACED DEVELOPMENT THAT IS TAKING PLACE IN THE WPI, I WOULD LIKE TO REMIND ALL THOSE INVOLVED TO ENSURE THE PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF OUR PRECIOUS SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT. THE PRESERVATION OF OUR NATURAL ASSETS IS A CRITICAL ASPECT THAT MUST NOT BE IGNORED. THIS IS IMPORTANT SO THAT OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS CAN ENJOY THE FRUITS OF OUR DEVELOPMENT IN A BALANCED AND SUSTAINABLE MANNER.

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10. I MUST ALSO HIGHLIGHT THAT IN ORDER FOR A DEVELOPMENT LIKE THE WPI TO BE SUCCESSFUL, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT ALL GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES AND AUTHORITIES WORK TOGETHER SEAMLESSLY. TIMELY DELIVERY OF SERVICES AND APPROVALS ARE NECESSARY TO ENSURE PROJECTS SUCH AS APH IS IMPLEMENTED IN AN EFFICIENT AND SUCCESSFUL MANNER.

11. IT IS WITH THIS IN MIND THAT ENTITIES SUCH AS THE ISKANDAR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (IRDA) WAS FORMED TO ACT AS A ONE-STOP CENTRE AND TO DRIVE AS WELL AS COORDINATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF INITIATIVES WITHIN WPI. IN THIS RESPECT, AN APPROVALS AND IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE (AIC) UNDER IRDA HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, WHICH WILL HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO IDENTIFY, COORDINATE AND MONITOR THE ROLES AND ACTIVITIES OF ALL RELEVANT GOVERNMENT ENTITIES. THIS IS CRITICAL IN ORDER TO EXPEDITE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS AND INVESTMENTS WITHIN WPI.

12. WITH THESE INITIATIVES IN PLACE, I AM HOPEFUL THAT PRIVATE SECTOR ACTIVITIES IN WPI WILL THRIVE. THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDE A CONDUCIVE AND BUSINESS FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO FLOURISH. I AM CONFIDENT THAT ALL GOVERNMENT RELATED ENTITIES ARE ABLE TO WORK TOGETHER TO IMPLEMENT THE DEVELOPMENT PLANS UNDER THE WPI, WITHOUT UNDUE DELAYS AND UNNECESSARY RED-TAPE. TO THIS END, I URGE ALL CIVIL SERVANTS TO DISCHARGE THEIR DUTIES HONOURABLY AND EFFICIENTLY, TOWARDS THE GREATER AIM OF ACHIEVING THE GOALS SET OUT UNDER THE NATIONAL MISSION AND NINTH MALAYSIA PLAN.

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

13. LASTLY, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONGRATULATE APH ON THE GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY OF THE PETROLEUM HUB PROJECT AND I LOOK FORWARD TO THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS LANDMARK PROJECT. THIS RECLAIMED ISLAND IS POISED FOR A GREAT FUTURE AND HAS A BIG ROLE TO PLAY IN THE PETROLEUM INDUSTRY, BOTH DOMESTICALLY AND REGIONALLY.

THANK YOU.