

**SPEECH BY**  
**YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI**  
**AT THE LAUNCH OF THE SIME DARBY CONVENTION CENTRE**  
**AT SIME DARBY CONVENTION CENTRE, KUALA LUMPUR**  
**6 DECEMBER 2007**

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BISMILLAHIR RAHMANIR RAHIM

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH AND GOOD EVENING

YABHG TUN MUSA HITAM  
CHAIRMAN, SIME DARBY BERHAD

YBHG TAN SRI AHMAD SARJI  
DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, SIME DARBY BERHAD

YBHG DATO SERI AHMAD ZUBIR MURSHID  
PRESIDENT AND GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE, SIME DARBY BERHAD

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

1. ALHAMDULILLAH, ALL PRAISE BE TO ALLAH S.W.T., FOR IT IS WITH HIS BLESSINGS AND GUIDANCE THAT WE ARE GATHERED HERE TODAY.

2. IT IS INDEED A PLEASURE FOR ME TO BE HERE THIS EVENING TO LAUNCH THE SIME DARBY CONVENTION CENTRE. LET ME THANK SIME DARBY FOR AFFORDING ME THIS GREAT HONOUR.

3. IN MANY WAYS, SIME DARBY'S TRANSFORMATION MIRRORS THE SPECTACULAR PROGRESS ACHIEVED BY MALAYSIA SINCE GAINING INDEPENDENCE IN 1957. FROM ITS BEGINNINGS AS COLONIAL, PLANTATION-BASED CONCERN, SIME DARBY HAS EVOLVED INTO A WHOLLY MALAYSIAN-OWNED, DIVERSIFIED MULTI-NATIONAL INVOLVED IN SEVERAL KEY GROWTH SECTORS INCLUDING PLANTATIONS, ENERGY AND UTILITIES, PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT, INDUSTRIAL EQUIPMENT AND AUTOMOTIVE.

4. I AM PROUD TO SAY THAT, TODAY, SIME DARBY HAS BECOME MALAYSIA'S NEWEST CORPORATE ICON AND A BAROMETER FOR MALAYSIA'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC WELL-BEING. THE SUCCESS OF SIME DARBY IS A PROUD TESTAMENT OF OUR PEOPLE'S CAPABILITIES AND A SYMBOL OF MALAYSIA'S PRIDE AND PROSPERITY.

5. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONGRATULATE SIME DARBY FOR EMERGING AS THE LARGEST COMPANY ON BURSA MALAYSIA UPON ITS RE-LISTING ON NOVEMBER 30TH. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE MARKET CAPITALISATION FOR SIME DARBY NOW STANDS AT OVER 67 BILLION RINGGIT, A FAR CRY FROM ITS PRO-FORMA MARKET CAPITALISATION OF 31 BILLION RINGGIT WHEN THE MERGER WAS ANNOUNCED IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR.

6. THIS BEARS EVIDENCE TO THE OVERWHELMING SUPPORT AND CONFIDENCE THAT THE INVESTING PUBLIC HAVE IN SIME DARBY'S VISION OF DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE FUTURES. MOREOVER, THIS HAS CREATED A LARGER IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY, AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE STRONG SHOWING IN THE K.L.C.I., WHICH CLOSED AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH OF 1,427.77 YESTERDAY. UNDOUBTEDLY, THE RE-LISTING OF SIME DARBY HAS PROVIDED A FRESH IMPETUS FOR THE MARKET AND HAS GIVEN AN UPSIDE TO THE K.L.C.I..

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

7. MY GOVERNMENT HAS MADE RAISING THE STANDARD AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PEOPLE'S QUALITY OF LIFE A KEY DEVELOPMENTAL PRIORITY. THIS HAS BEEN CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES, PARTICULARLY IN THE NINTH MALAYSIA PLAN AND SUBSEQUENT BUDGET ANNOUNCEMENTS.

8. FOR MANY PEOPLE, COMFORTABLE AND CONDUCIVE HOUSING IS A KEY DETERMINANT OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE THAT THEY ENJOY. IN THIS RESPECT, MY GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ACTIVELY DRIVING THE EFFORT TOGETHER WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO ENSURE THAT THE LOWER INCOME GROUP IS NEVER FORGOTTEN OR MARGINALIZED. INDEED, THE GOVERNMENT HAS BUILT, AND CONTINUES TO BUILD, THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF AFFORDABLE HOMES ALL ACROSS THE NATION TO FULFIL THAT VISION.

9. AS ONE OF THE NATION'S TOP PROPERTY DEVELOPERS, I AM GRATIFIED TO KNOW THAT SIME DARBY TAKES ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO THE COMMUNITY VERY SERIOUSLY. INDEED, SIME DARBY IS WELL-KNOWN TO BE A UNIQUE AND CONSCIENTIOUS DEVELOPER WHO PUTS THE NEEDS OF ITS CUSTOMERS FOREMOST. IT HAS MANAGED TO CAPTURE THE IMAGINATION OF HOUSE-BUYERS OVER THE LAST FEW DECADES BY FOCUSING ON DEVELOPING NOT JUST HOUSES, BUT RATHER, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES.

10. GIVEN SIME DARBY'S STRONG TRACK-RECORD, I AM GREATLY HEARTENED BY THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF ITS LATEST DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE— THE "BANDAR GEMILANG SIME DARBY". I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE JUST ANOTHER LOW-COST HOUSING DEVELOPMENT. RATHER, IT WILL PROVIDE THE PROPER FACILITIES OF A MODERN TOWNSHIP THAT ARE AFFORDABLE TO THE LOWER INCOME GROUPS.

11. SPECIFICALLY, THE "BANDAR GEMILANG" DEVELOPMENT WILL PROVIDE AMENITIES REQUIRED FOR COMFORTABLE LIVING SUCH AS HEALTHCARE, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, RECREATION, PUBLIC TRANSPORT, EFFICIENT ENERGY, WHILE MAINTAINING ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY. I ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT SIME DARBY PLAN TO BUILD MOSQUES, TEMPLES AND OTHER PLACES OF WORSHIP FOR THE MAJOR RELIGIONS, WITH THE AIM OF CREATING A TOWNSHIP THAT WILL BECOME MODEL OF MULTI-RACIAL LIVING.

12. "BANDAR GEMILANG" WILL ALSO BE THE FIRST MAJOR TOWNSHIP PROJECT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING WHERE LARGER UNITS OF APARTMENTS AND HOUSES ARE BEING OFFERED TO THOSE IN THE LOW AND MIDDLE-INCOME GROUPS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE SIZE OF APARTMENTS IN BANDAR GEMILANG WILL AVERAGE 900 SQUARE FEET AS COMPARED TO THE USUAL 600 SQUARE FEET.

13. I AM DELIGHTED AND PLEASED BY THE UNIQUENESS OF SUCH A DEVELOPMENT PROJECT. I BELIEVE IT HOLDS GREAT PROMISE IN PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR THE PEOPLE, AT THE SAME TIME RAISING THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE AS WELL AS ENHANCING THEIR ECONOMIC PROSPECTS.

14. INDEED, THE MEASURE OF A NATION'S PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT IS SIGNIFIED NOT JUST BY THE LEVEL OF ECONOMIC GROWTH, BUT ALSO BY THE QUALITY OF LIFE ENJOYED BY ITS PEOPLE. I AM VERY PLEASED THAT SIME DARBY IS WORKING HARD TOWARDS ACHIEVING THIS VISION AS PART OF ITS CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. I WOULD LIKE TO URGE THE REST OF CORPORATE MALAYSIA TO DO THE SAME IN THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

15. AS YOU ARE OF COURSE AWARE, MALAYSIA CELEBRATES ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE THIS YEAR. AS WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE NEXT 50 YEARS OF SHARED PEACE, PROSPERITY AND STABILITY, LET US ALSO BE REMINDED OF OUR HISTORY AND HERITAGE—THE COMMON THREADS THAT TOGETHER WEAVE THE COLOURFUL FABRIC OF OUR NATION.

16. INDEED, IT IS OUR HISTORY AND OUR CULTURE THAT FORM OUR IDENTITY AND DEFINE US A NATION. THEREFORE, IT IS VITAL THAT MALAYSIA'S FUTURE GENERATIONS BE MADE AWARE OF THEIR HISTORY, CULTURE AND HERITAGE. NOT JUST SO THAT THEY MAY UNDERSTAND THEIR PAST, BUT RATHER, THAT THEY MAY BUILD ON IT TO CREATE A BETTER AND BRIGHTER FUTURE.

17. IT IS WITH THIS IN MIND THAT I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO COMMEND SIME DARBY ON ITS INITIATIVE TO PRODUCE A COFFEE TABLE BOOK, ENTITLED "THE PLANTER'S BUNGALOW—A JOURNEY DOWN THE MALAY PENINSULA". THIS BOOK AIMS TO RAISE PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS ABOUT OUR HISTORY AND HERITAGE, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSERVING IT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

18. I AM PARTICULARLY PLEASED TO NOTE THAT OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS, THERE HAS BEEN A STEADY INCREASE IN THE INTEREST SHOWN BY INDIVIDUALS, AS WELL AS PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR BODIES IN HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION PROJECTS. MUCH OF THIS, I AM SURE, HAS BEEN DUE TO THE GOOD WORK OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE, ARTS AND HERITAGE IN RAISING AWARENESS OF THE ISSUES. NEVERTHELESS, MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE, ESPECIALLY IN THE AREA OF FUNDING FOR CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION WORK.

19. I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT THE PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF THIS BOOK WILL GO TO "BADAN WARISAN MALAYSIA" WHO ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION WORK. THEREFORE, I WOULD LIKE TO URGE ALL OF YOU HERE TONIGHT TO PLAY YOUR PART TO AID BADAN WARISAN MALAYSIA IN CARRYING OUT THE GOOD WORK THAT THEY DO. THE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO THEM WILL GO A LONG WAY TOWARDS HELPING RESTORE OUR NATION'S HERITAGE SITES FOR THE BENEFIT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

20. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE SIME DARBY CONVENTION CENTRE, WHICH IS THE COMPANY'S LATEST VENTURE IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM, IS BECOMING A VERY POPULAR VENUE FOR THE "MEETINGS, INCENTIVES, CONVENTIONS AND

EXHIBITIONS" (M.I.C.E.) INDUSTRY IN THE REGION. INDEED, THE SETTING UP OF THIS WORLD-CLASS CONVENTION CENTRE COMES AT AN OPPORTUNE TIME, AS MALAYSIA EMERGES AS A MAJOR PLAYER IN THE GLOBAL M.I.C.E. MARKET.

21. MY GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE INDUSTRY THROUGH CONDUCIVE POLICIES AND BY ENCOURAGING MORE REGIONAL AND GLOBAL-LEVEL CONFERENCES TO BE HELD IN MALAYSIA. WE HAVE ALREADY PLAYED HOST TO NUMEROUS WORLD-CLASS EVENTS, AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE.

22. I AM PLEASED TO SAY THAT NEXT YEAR, MALAYSIA WILL PLAY HOST TO THE "WORLD CONGRESS ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (W.C.I.T.) 2008". W.C.I.T. WILL BE THE LARGEST-EVER GATHERING OF GLOBAL LEADERS AND DECISION-MAKERS IN THE I.C.T. INDUSTRY WITH MORE THAN 2,500 PARTICIPANTS FROM OVER 80 COUNTRIES EXPECTED. SEVERAL OTHER I.C.T.-RELATED CONFERENCES WILL ALSO BE HELD OVER THE SAME PERIOD, PROVIDING A FURTHER BOOST TO THE M.I.C.E. INDUSTRY, WHILE PUTTING MALAYSIA FIRMLY ON THE GLOBAL I.C.T.-MAP.

23. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE SIME DARBY CONVENTION CENTRE WILL ADD TO MALAYSIA'S COMPREHENSIVE OFFERING OF SOPHISTICATED AND STATE-OF-THE-ART CONVENTION CENTRES TO MEET THE GROWING DEMANDS OF MALAYSIA'S M.I.C.E. INDUSTRY. ONE UNIQUE SELLING POINT OF SIME DARBY'S CONVENTION CENTRE, WHICH I AM SURE MANY WILL GREATLY APPRECIATE, IS THE ADDITION OF TWO FINE DINING RESTAURANTS SERVING MALAY AND CHINESE CUISINE HERE. THIS IS AN INNOVATIVE — AND MAY I ADD EFFECTIVE— WAY TO SPREAD OUR MALAYSIAN CULTURE, ESPECIALLY TO FOREIGN CONFERENCE DELEGATES.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

24. BEFORE I END, ALLOW ME TO ONCE AGAIN CONGRATULATE SIME DARBY ON THE LAUNCH OF THE "BANDAR GEMILANG SIME DARBY", AND THE PUBLICATION OF THE BOOK ENTITLED "THE PLANTER'S BUNGALOW—JOURNEY DOWN THE MALAY PENINSULAR", ALONG WITH THE OPENING OF ITS STUNNING NEW CONVENTION CENTER.

25. ON THAT NOTE, WITH THE RECITATION OF "BISMILLAHIR RAHMANIR RAHIM", IT IS NOW MY PLEASURE TO OFFICIALLY LAUNCH THE SIME DARBY CONVENTION CENTRE.

THANK YOU.