

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY  
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI  
AT THE WORLD HALAL FORUM 2007  
KLCC CONVENTION CENTRE, KUALA LUMPUR  
7 MAY 2007**

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BISMILLAHIR RAHMANIR RAHIM

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH AND GOOD MORNING

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EXCELLENCIES AND DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

1. I AM PLEASED TO BE HERE TODAY TO PERSONALLY WELCOME ALL THE DELEGATES AND PARTICIPANTS OF THE WORLD HALAL FORUM 2007. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT GATHERING TO DISCUSS AND SHARE IDEAS ON HOW TO PUSH THE HALAL AGENDA FURTHER FORWARD. WE HAVE HERE DELEGATES FROM 33 COUNTRIES, ALL OF WHOM ARE COMMITTED AND PASSIONATE ABOUT DEVELOPING THE HALAL INDUSTRY WORLDWIDE.

2. AS SUCH, THE THEME OF THIS YEAR'S WORLD HALAL FORUM – "HARMONISING THE GLOBAL HALAL MARKET" – IS BOTH RELEVANT AND SIGNIFICANT. I HOPE THAT THE WORLD HALAL FORUM WILL CONTINUE TO STRIVE FOR THE HARMONISATION OF THE MARKET BY ARRIVING AT A CONSENSUS ON MAJOR ISSUES, TO CREATE WIN-WIN SITUATIONS FOR EVERYONE, AND TO MOVE THE INDUSTRY TO A NEW LEVEL OF COLLABORATION, EXCELLENCE AND GLOBAL SUCCESS.

3. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE WORLD HALAL FORUM SECRETARIAT ALSO ORGANISED VARIOUS WORLD HALAL FORUM INDUSTRY DIALOGUES AROUND THE GLOBE LAST YEAR, WITH THE AIM OF ENHANCING UNDERSTANDING AND RAISING AWARENESS OF THE ISSUES FACING THE HALAL INDUSTRY IN THE DIFFERENT MARKETS WORLDWIDE. I WISH TO CONGRATULATE THE WORLD HALAL FORUM, THE HALAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (H.D.C.), AS WELL AS KASEHDIA FOR THEIR CONTINUOUS EFFORTS IN PROMOTING THE HALAL INDUSTRY GLOBALLY.

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4. I WISH TO UNDERLINE THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPING THE HALAL INDUSTRY, BOTH AT THE DOMESTIC AS WELL AS AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL. INDEED, MALAYSIA CONTINUES TO BE OPEN AND KEEN TO WORK WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN ADVANCING THE GLOBAL HALAL INDUSTRY, NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF BREADTH AND SIZE, BUT ALSO IN TERMS OF SCALE AND SOPHISTICATION. TOWARDS THIS END, THE WORLD HALAL FORUM AND ITS PROGRAMMES CAN PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE PLATFORM DUE TO ITS FOCUSED

AGENDA AND WIDE RANGING REACH. I AM PLEASED TO SAY THAT THE WORLD HALAL FORUM, TOGETHER WITH ITS PARTNER EVENT THE MALAYSIAN INTERNATIONAL HALAL SHOWCASE (MIHAS), HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IN MALAYSIA'S 15 YEAR INDUSTRIAL MASTER PLAN AS ANNUAL EVENTS TO BOOST THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HALAL SECTOR.

5. IN THIS REGARD, I AM PLEASED TO NOTE THAT LAST YEAR'S WORLD HALAL FORUM PRODUCED A NUMBER OF TANGIBLE FOLLOW-THROUGH PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES. FOLLOWING THE RESOLUTIONS AT THE WORLD HALAL FORUM 2006, I AM MADE TO UNDERSTAND THAT A BODY HAS BEEN FORMED TO DRIVE THE COLLECTIVE ENDEAVOURS TOWARDS HARMONISATION. THIS BODY IS THE INTERNATIONAL HALAL INTEGRITY ALLIANCE OR I.H.I. ALLIANCE. IT IS A NON-GOVERNMENTAL, NON-NATIONAL AND NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION THAT WILL BECOME THE BODY THAT REPRESENTS THE VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS IN THE GLOBAL HALAL INDUSTRY; AND AS SUCH, PROVIDE A COMMON PLATFORM FOR ALL EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN THE INDUSTRY FURTHER. THIS IS CRUCIAL IN BUILDING A MORE ROBUST HALAL INDUSTRY WITH HARMONISED GLOBAL STANDARDS, WHICH WOULD NO DOUBT BE HIGHLY BENEFICIAL FOR HALAL CONSUMERS AND HALAL INDUSTRY PLAYERS ALIKE.

6. I AM TOLD THAT THE ALLIANCE IS ALREADY STARTING TO BUILD UP ITS MEMBERSHIP BASE. A STRONG MEMBERSHIP BASE IS BOTH NECESSARY AND CRITICAL FOR THE I.H.I. ALLIANCE TO PLAY AN EFFECTIVE ROLE IN BUILDING CONSENSUS AMONG ITS MEMBERS, AS WELL AS TO ACT AS A FOCAL POINT FOR OTHER NON-MEMBERS TO DISCUSS AND ENGAGE. I AM PLEASED TO NOTE THAT THE WORLD HALAL FORUM IS THE SECRETARIAT FOR THE I.H.I. ALLIANCE. IN THIS REGARD, MALAYSIA WOULD BE HONOURED TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS MAKING THE I.H.I. ALLIANCE A STRONG AND EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION. WE OFFER MALAYSIA TO BE THE HOST VENUE FOR THE I.H.I. ALLIANCE. GOING FORWARD, IT IS OUR HOPE THAT THE WORLD HALAL FORUM, THROUGH THE I.H.I. ALLIANCE, WILL BE ABLE ACHIEVE SOME FORM OF GLOBAL CONSENSUS ON HOW TO FURTHER DEVELOP THE HALAL INDUSTRY.

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7. THOSE WHO ATTENDED THE WORLD HALAL FORUM LAST YEAR WOULD REMEMBER THAT I ANNOUNCED THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A NEW LEADING BODY FOR THIS INDUSTRY, CALLED THE HALAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, OR H.D.C.. I AM PLEASED TO REPORT TO YOU THAT THE H.D.C. IS NOW BUILDING UP ITS CAPABILITIES AND IS CURRENTLY ROLLING OUT ITS PROGRAMMES TO FURTHER DEVELOP THE HALAL INDUSTRY.

8. AT THE HEART OF IT, THE H.D.C. HAS THREE STRATEGIC THRUSTS. THE FIRST THRUST IS "HALAL INTEGRITY", WHICH IS TO PROTECT THE INTEGRITY OF HALAL THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EFFECTIVE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK, COMPREHENSIVE STANDARDS, EFFICIENT CERTIFICATION PROCESSES, AND WORLD-CLASS R&D AND TRAINING FACILITIES. THE SECOND THRUST IS "CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT", WHICH INVOLVES ENHANCING MALAYSIA'S DOMESTIC CAPACITY IN THE PRODUCTION AND TRADING OF HALAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES. THE THIRD THRUST IS "BRANDING AND PROMOTIONS", WHICH IS TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE BRANDING, MARKETING AND PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGNS FOR MALAYSIA'S HALAL INITIATIVES.

9. MALAYSIA'S HALAL BRANDING AND CERTIFICATION PROCESSES ARE WELL ESTABLISHED AND HIGHLY REGARDED BY THE GLOBAL HALAL INDUSTRY. THE GROWTH OF THE GLOBAL HALAL INDUSTRY AS WELL AS RISING AWARENESS ABOUT HALAL HAS INCREASED THE DEMAND FOR HALAL CERTIFICATION THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. IN ORDER TO LEVERAGE ON MALAYSIA'S STRONG BRANDING AND CERTIFICATION, I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE H.D.C. WILL UNDERTAKE OVERSEAS HALAL CERTIFICATION – BASED ON THE MALAYSIAN CERTIFICATION STANDARDS AND PROCESSES – FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE GLOBAL HALAL INDUSTRY.

10. IN ADDITION, THE H.D.C. WILL PLACE EMPHASIS ON HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AS A KEY INGREDIENT IN BUILDING UP THE NECESSARY CAPABILITIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE HALAL INDUSTRY. A GROWING HALAL INDUSTRY WILL CREATE NEW JOBS THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE VALUE CHAIN. QUALIFIED AND SKILLED KNOWLEDGE WORKERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO FILL THESE POSITIONS, ESPECIALLY IF THE INDUSTRY ITSELF IS ALSO MOVING UP THE VALUE CHAIN. AN INDUSTRY-CENTRIC APPROACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN CAPITAL IS IMPERATIVE TO THE SUCCESS AND CONTINUED GROWTH OF THE HALAL INDUSTRY AS A WHOLE. SEVERAL MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITIES, INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA AND UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA, NOW OFFER COURSES THAT RELATE TO HALAL. THE H.D.C. WILL ENSURE THAT RELEVANT TRAINING AND EDUCATION WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO ENSURE THAT THE WORKFORCE IN THE HALAL INDUSTRY HAVE THE RELEVANT KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO CARRY OUT THEIR DUTIES WELL. THE H.D.C. ITSELF WILL OFFER TRAINING PROGRAMMES ON AN INDUSTRY-WIDE BASIS BY THE END OF 2007.

11. IN TERMS OF KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT, THE HALAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND CERTIFICATION STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES WILL BE STRENGTHENED, AIDED BY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A HALAL REFERENCE CENTRE WHICH CAN ACT AS A FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATING TO HALAL. R&D ACTIVITIES IN THIS SECTOR WILL ALSO BE ENHANCED, IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE RESEARCH, TESTING AND INNOVATION CAPABILITIES IN THE SECTOR. IN THIS RESPECT, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER RELEVANT INSTITUTIONS TO BE CO-OPTED TO INCREASE THEIR LEVEL OF R&D ACTIVITIES IN HALAL-RELATED AREAS.

12. INDEED, CONTINUOUS HUMAN CAPITAL AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT IS IMPERATIVE IN THE HALAL INDUSTRY. THIS IS NECESSARY DUE TO THE INCESSANT TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT AND INNOVATION IN PRODUCTS AND SERVICES THAT COULD RENDER CURRENT HALAL STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES INADEQUATE. CONSUMER AND PRODUCTION TRENDS ARE ALSO EVER CHANGING. CONSEQUENTLY, THIS DEMANDS THAT HALAL STANDARDS, CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES AND INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT KEEP UP WITH SUCH MOVEMENTS AND CHANGES. A GOOD EXAMPLE WOULD BE THE EXISTENCE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD. EXTENSIVE RESEARCH IN SUCH AREAS NEEDS TO BE CARRIED OUT TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER THE PRODUCTION OF SUCH FOOD FULFILS HALAL REQUIREMENTS. AT THE SAME TIME, RESEARCH INTO SUCH AREAS MAY ALSO BE COMMERCIALY BENEFICIAL, AS IT CAN WIDEN THE RANGE OF HALAL PRODUCTS AVAILABLE IN THE MARKET.

13. IT IS OUR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT HALAL INTEGRITY IS MAINTAINED AND REMAINS IN LINE WITH CHANGES IN THE INDUSTRY. IN THIS

REGARD, THERE NEEDS TO BE A "MUSYAWARAH" OR MEETING OF MINDS AMONG ISLAMIC JURISTS, SCIENTISTS AND BUSINESS LEADERS ON HOW TO FURTHER DEVELOP THE GLOBAL HALAL INDUSTRY. IT IS ONLY THROUGH INCREASED ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE THAT THIS WILL HAPPEN. IF NOT, WE WILL RUN THE RISK OF BEING LEFT BEHIND AND MISS OUT ON THE LUCRATIVE POTENTIAL OFFERED BY THE HALAL SECTOR. IF ISLAMIC JUDGEMENTS CANNOT BE MADE QUICKLY AND ACCURATELY ON THE QUESTIONS THAT THE INDUSTRY POSE, THEN HALAL INTEGRITY MAY BECOME OBSOLETE AND EVENTUALLY FALTER. WE CANNOT AND MUST NOT ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN.

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14. I AM PLEASED TO NOTE THAT THE H.D.C. IS PLANNING TO SIGN SEVERAL MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING AND AGREEMENTS WITH SEVERAL PARTIES TOWARDS THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE HALAL AGENDA. I WOULD LIKE TO HIGHLIGHT SUCH INITIATIVES, NOT ONLY TO SHOWCASE THE PROGRESS OF H.D.C. BUT ALSO TO NOTE THE VARIOUS INNOVATIVE WAYS THAT CAN BE EXPLOITED AND UTILISED TO MOVE FORWARD IN THE HALAL SECTOR. WE MUST BROADEN THE HORIZON OF HALAL TO GO BEYOND JUST FOOD RELATED PRODUCTS AND SERVICES. THERE ALSO NEEDS TO BE A MINDSET CHANGE IN ORDER TO EXPLOIT THE BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL OF HALAL IN ORDER TO MAXIMISE THE DELIVERY OF SOCIOECONOMIC BENEFIT TO THE PEOPLE.

15. FIRSTLY, I AM DELIGHTED THAT THE H.D.C., TOGETHER WITH MICROSOFT AND OTHER KEY PARTNERS, WILL DEVELOP AN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM FOR THE HALAL INDUSTRY. THE SYSTEM WILL COMPRISE OF THREE MAIN COMPONENTS: A HALAL PRODUCT EXCHANGE CENTRE WHICH IS A ONE-STOP INTERNET PORTAL FOR GLOBAL HALAL TRADING; A HALAL RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE CENTRE WHICH WILL SERVE AS A REPOSITORY OF INFORMATION ON THE HALAL MARKET AND RELATED MARKET INTELLIGENCE; AS WELL AS REMOTE HALAL CERTIFICATION, WHICH IS A CENTRALISED WEB-BASED SYSTEM TO FACILITATE INTERNATIONAL HALAL CERTIFICATION. MICROSOFT AND THE H.D.C. ARE WORKING TOWARDS CREATING A PILOT PROGRAMME IN MALAYSIA, WHICH CAN THEN BE EXPANDED TO OTHER COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY O.I.C. MEMBER COUNTRIES.

16. SECONDLY, I AM PLEASED THAT ONE OF THE AGREEMENTS BEING SIGNED TODAY IS BETWEEN C.I.M.B. ISLAMIC BANK AND THE H.D.C.. THESE TWO PARTIES WILL WORK TOGETHER TO PROVIDE MORE HOLISTIC FUNDING SOLUTIONS FOR THE HALAL INDUSTRY. THIS INCLUDES C.I.M.B. ISLAMIC'S PLEDGE TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR BANKABLE PROJECTS IN THE HALAL SECTOR, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (S.M.E.'S). THIS IS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT AS COMPREHENSIVE AND COMPETITIVE ISLAMIC FINANCING CAN PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN SUCCESSFUL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT.

17. THIRDLY, I CONGRATULATE THE CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY OF THAILAND, THE INSTITUTE FOR HALAL FOOD STANDARD OF THAILAND AND THE H.D.C.. THE SIGNING OF THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WILL SEE THE PARTIES WORKING TOGETHER ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMMES, R&D ACTIVITIES AS WELL AS HARMONISATION OF HALAL STANDARDS.

18. I AM ALSO PLEASED TO NOTE THAT AL-ISLAMI FOODS OF DUBAI IS SIGNING A STRATEGIC M.O.U. WITH THE H.D.C.. THIS M.O.U. SIGNALS THE INTRODUCTION OF THE AL ISLAMI CART FRANCHISE CONCEPT TO DIVERSE BUSINESS ENTREPRENEURS THROUGHOUT SOUTH-EAST ASIA. THE H.D.C. WILL WORK CLOSELY WITH AL ISLAMI IN THIS INITIATIVE BY LIAISING WITH RELEVANT LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND DEPARTMENTS.

19. LASTLY, I MUST CONGRATULATE THE ETHNIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF NINGXIA HUI AUTONOMOUS REGION, THE H.D.C. AND THE VARIOUS MALAYSIAN COMPANIES THAT WILL SEE COLLABORATION IN THE AREAS OF HEALTHCARE AND RELATED SERVICES. IN THIS REGARD, TRADITIONAL CHINESE MUSLIM MEDICINE WILL BE INTRODUCED TO MALAYSIA. THIS SEGMENT OF THE MARKET, ALONG WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF HALAL GRADE PHARMACEUTICALS, WILL BE ONE OF THE KEY GROWTH AREAS FOR HALAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES.

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20. THE VAST BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL OF THE HALAL SECTOR IS BEYOND DOUBT, WITH A CAPTIVE MARKET OF 1.6 BILLION MUSLIMS AND AN ESTIMATED MARKET SIZE OF MORE THAN 600 BILLION U.S. DOLLARS. IN THIS REGARD, I WOULD LIKE TO CALL ON THE LEADING MUSLIM NATIONS IN PARTICULAR TO INCREASE THEIR INVESTMENTS INTO THE HALAL SECTOR. THE HALAL SECTOR NOT ONLY OFFERS LUCRATIVE AND TANGIBLE RETURNS, BUT IS ALSO A DUTY (FARDHU KIFAYAH) FOR MUSLIMS. I AM TOLD THAT TURKEY IS TAKING THE NECESSARY STEPS TO FURTHER DEVELOP ITS OWN HALAL INDUSTRY. THIS IS MOST OPPORTUNE AS THEY HAVE CONSIDERABLE INDUSTRIAL STRENGTH AS WELL AS ACCESS TO LUCRATIVE AND LARGE MARKETS, SUCH AS THE EUROPEAN UNION, THE MIDDLE EAST AND EASTERN EUROPE.

21. THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HALAL INDUSTRY THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROGRAMMES, INCLUDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DEDICATED HALAL INDUSTRIAL ZONES THAT WILL FORM PRODUCTION CENTRES TO TAP INTO THE GROWTH OF THE GLOBAL HALAL MARKET. BOTH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL INVESTORS ARE WELCOME TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE VARIOUS PROGRAMMES, INITIATIVES AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CURRENTLY OFFERED IN MALAYSIA. WE WILL LIKEWISE SUPPORT HALAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS IN THE OTHER COUNTRIES, AS WE WORK TOGETHER TOWARDS DEVELOPING THE HALAL INDUSTRY WORLDWIDE.

22. INDEED, THE CONCEPT OF HALAL WAS DESIGNED TO BE GLOBAL, WHEREBY THE QURAN EXPLICITLY MENTIONED "OH MANKIND, EAT WHAT IS HALAL AND THAYYIB". HALAL IS FOR ALL, MUSLIMS AND NON-MUSLIMS ALIKE. IT IS THEREFORE OBLIGATORY FOR MUSLIMS TO MAKE HALAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO ALL OF HUMANKIND, THUS MAKING HALAL A GLOBAL BUSINESS. WE ARE FORTUNATE IN THAT HALAL IS ALREADY AN INHERENT BRAND WITH A LARGE CAPTIVE MARKET. AS MUSLIMS, IT IS OUR DUTY TO ENHANCE AND FURTHER PROMOTE HALAL TO BECOME A PREMIUM BRAND, ONE THAT IS ASSOCIATED WITH QUALITY, SAFETY AND GOOD HEALTH. IN LIGHT OF THIS, MALAYSIA REMAINS COMMITTED TO BECOMING A SIGNIFICANT PLAYER IN THE GLOBAL HALAL MARKET AND ULTIMATELY, TO BECOME A WORLD HALAL HUB. INSYA-ALLAH, THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HALAL INDUSTRY AND ECONOMY, WE WILL SEE A POSITIVE

IMPACT OF ISLAM AND MUSLIMS IN BUSINESS AND COMMERCE AROUND THE GLOBE.

23. LASTLY, I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME ALL OF YOU ONCE AGAIN TO THIS FORUM, ESPECIALLY THE INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPANTS, AND PRAY THAT ALL OF YOU WILL HAVE A FULFILLING AND BENEFICIAL TIME DURING THIS FORUM. WE ASK GOD THAT THIS FORUM RECEIVES HIS BLESSINGS AND PROTECTION, SO THAT IT CAN PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN FURTHER PROMOTING THE HALAL AGENDA WORLDWIDE, FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL. ON THAT NOTE, AND WITH THE RECITATION OF BISMILLAHIR RAHMANIR RAHIM, IT IS NOW MY PLEASURE TO DECLARE OPEN THE WORLD HALAL FORUM 2007.

THANK YOU.