

**SPEECH BY
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI
AT THE '4TH MALAYSIAN INTERNATIONAL HALAL SHOWCASE'
AT KUALA LUMPUR CONVENTION CENTRE (KLCC)
10 MAY 2007**

BISMILLAHIR RAHMANIR RAHIM

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMAHTULLAHI WABARAKATUH AND
GOOD AFTERNOON

YANG BERHORMAT DATO' SERI RAFIDAH AZIZ,
MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY

YANG BERHORMAT DATUK KHALED NORDIN,
MINISTER OF ENTREPRENEUR AND COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

YANG BERBAHAGIA TAN SRI DATO' SRI HALIM MOHAMMAD,
CHAIRMAN OF MATRADE

YANG BERBAHAGIA DATUK MOHD. NAKHAIE HAJI AHMAD,
CHAIRMAN OF THE ISLAMIC DAKWAH FOUNDATION MALAYSIA, YADIM

YANG BERBAHAGIA TAN SRI SYED JALALUDDIN SYED SALIM
CHAIRMAN, HALAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

EXCELLENCIES AND DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

1. FIRSTLY, LET ME CONGRATULATE THE MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY (MITI) FOR HOSTING THE 4TH MALAYSIA INTERNATIONAL HALAL SHOWCASE, MIHAS 2007, AND THE MALAYSIA EXTERNAL TRADE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (MATRADE) FOR THEIR COMMENDABLE EFFORT IN ORGANISING THIS EVENT.

2. I AM HAPPY TO NOTE THAT MIHAS 2007 IS ONE OF THE FINE EXAMPLES OF PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE ISLAMIC DAKWAH FOUNDATION MALAYSIA (YADIM) AND THE MINISTRY OF ENTREPRENEUR AND COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT (MECD) IN THIS ENDEAVOUR.

3. MIHAS HAS ALWAYS ATTRACTED PARTICIPATION FROM MANY COUNTRIES AROUND THE GLOBE. IT IS ENCOURAGING TO NOTE THAT MIHAS 2007 HAS ADDED NEW PARTICIPANTS TO ITS INTERNATIONAL PAVILION. IN THIS REGARD, I WARMLY WELCOME ARGENTINA, CROATIA AND KUWAIT, WHO ARE PARTICIPATING FOR THE FIRST TIME. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO WELCOME BACK PARTICIPANTS FROM THE OTHER 23 COUNTRIES TO THIS YEAR'S EDITION, WHICH PROMISES TO BE A BIGGER AND BETTER EVENT.

4. I WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND MY SINCERE APPRECIATION TO ALL THE TRADE EXHIBITORS, BUYERS AND VISITORS FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT IN MIHAS 2007. BEYOND THIS SHOWCASE, I DO HOPE THAT YOU WOULD ALSO TAKE TIME OFF TO VISIT OUR BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY. THIS IS VISIT MALAYSIA YEAR 2007 AND WE HAVE LINED UP A WHOLE HOST OF ACTIVITIES FOR YOU. I HOPE THAT ALL OF YOU WILL HAVE A REWARDING TIME HERE AND WILL RETURN HOME WITH PROFITABLE BUSINESS VENTURES AS WELL AS PLEASANT MEMORIES.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

5. THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT IS DEEPLY COMMITTED TOWARDS ENHANCING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HALAL INDUSTRY, BOTH DOMESTICALLY AND GLOBALLY. TO UNDERScore THIS COMMITMENT, THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT HAS OUTLINED HOLISTIC STRATEGIES TO INTENSIFY THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HALAL INDUSTRY TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE VISION OF MAKING MALAYSIA A GLOBAL HALAL HUB. SPECIFIC POLICIES AND STRATEGIES TO ATTAIN THIS OBJECTIVE ARE LAID OUT IN THE NINTH MALAYSIA PLAN AND THE THIRD INDUSTRIAL MASTER PLAN, BOTH OF WHICH WERE UNVEILED LAST YEAR. IN ADDITION, THE HALAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (HDC) WAS SET UP IN SEPTEMBER 2006 TO SPEARHEAD AND COORDINATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HALAL SECTOR. WITH SUCH CONCERTED EFFORTS TAKING PLACE, WE ENVISAGE THE HALAL INDUSTRY PLAYING AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE MALAYSIAN ECONOMY.

6. VARIOUS INITIATIVES, INCENTIVES AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED TO FURTHER DEVELOP THE HALAL INDUSTRY. THE HALAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK, STANDARDS AS WELL AS CERTIFICATION PROCESSES WILL CONTINUE TO BE IMPROVED UPON TOWARDS ENHANCING THE INTEGRITY OF HALAL.

7. THE GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO PROMOTE ROBUST INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT. THIS IS TO ENSURE THAT HALAL INDUSTRY PLAYERS WILL BE ABLE TO PRODUCE A COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES AT COMPETITIVE PRICES. GOING FORWARD, HUMAN CAPITAL AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT WILL BE EMPHASISED TO ENSURE THAT THE HALAL INDUSTRY KEEPS UP WITH THE TRENDS AND CHALLENGES AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL. IN ANTICIPATION OF A DYNAMIC HALAL INDUSTRY, WE MUST BE PREPARED WITH THE NECESSARY SKILLED WORKFORCE AND PROFESSIONALS. IN THIS REGARD, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE LOCAL UNIVERSITIES DEVELOPING AND OFFERING ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES IN HALAL RELATED AREAS.

8. THE GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO DEVELOP FURTHER THE MALAYSIAN HALAL BRAND. THE MALAYSIAN HALAL BRAND AS WELL AS THE MALAYSIAN HALAL STANDARD, MS1500:2004, IS ALREADY FIRMLY ESTABLISHED AND INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED. MALAYSIA HOPES TO LEVERAGE ON THIS COMPETITIVE EDGE IN ITS PROMOTIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. WE MUST ELEVATE THE HALAL BRAND TO BECOME A PREMIUM BRAND. TOWARDS THIS END, I ENCOURAGE ALL HALAL PRODUCERS AND MANUFACTURERS IN MALAYSIA TO NOT ONLY BE HALAL-CERTIFIED BUT ALSO FULFILL ALL BEST PRACTICE REQUIREMENTS IN TERMS OF SAFETY, GOOD HEALTH AND QUALITY. HALAL CERTIFICATION MUST BE ALL ENCOMPASSING. THIS IS IN LINE WITH GLOBAL CONSUMER TRENDS THAT ARE INCREASINGLY INCLINED TOWARDS HIGH QUALITY AND HEALTHY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES.

9. IN THIS WAY, I HOPE THAT HALAL-CERTIFICATION CAN ULTIMATELY BECOME A GLOBAL BENCHMARK AND BRAND THAT TRANSCENDS ACROSS VARIOUS RELIGIONS AND CULTURES. THIS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY ENHANCE MARKET ACCESS OF HALAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TO MANY MORE COUNTRIES. IN ADDITION, IT WILL BOOST ACCEPTANCE AND SALEABILITY TO NON-MUSLIM MARKETS AS WELL.

10. I COMMEND THE DEPARTMENT OF ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT MALAYSIA (JAKIM) FOR THEIR CONTINUING EFFORTS IN ENCOURAGING HALAL CERTIFICATION AS WELL AS SIRIM FOR ESTABLISHING THE MALAYSIAN HALAL STANDARD. TO COMPLEMENT THESE EFFORTS, MATRADE TOGETHER WITH OTHER RELEVANT AGENCIES ARE CONTINUOUSLY UNDERTAKING VARIOUS INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE MALAYSIAN HALAL CERTIFIED PRODUCTS AND SERVICES ABROAD. THESE INCLUDE THE ORGANISATION OF OVERSEAS MARKETING MISSIONS, INCOMING BUYING MISSIONS AND PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIRS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

11. AS THE HALAL MARKET CONTINUES TO EXPAND, THE INTEGRITY OF THE "FARM-TO-FORK" SUPPLY-CHAIN IS AN INCREASING CONCERN. I WISH TO HIGHLIGHT THE 'HALAL LOGISTICS' CONCEPT WHICH IS GAINING ACCEPTANCE IN SEVERAL MUSLIM COUNTRIES AND LOOKS SET TO BECOME A LUCRATIVE NICHE MARKET FOR THIRD PARTY LOGISTICS PROVIDERS. CURRENTLY MANY LOGISTICS COMPANIES HANDLE BOTH HALAL AND NON-HALAL CONSIGNMENTS, WHERE OFTEN THE INTEGRITY OF HALAL STATUS OF THE PRODUCTS CAN BE COMPROMISED. THE HALAL FOOD INDUSTRY SHOULD PUT IN PLACE DEDICATED SUPPLY CHAIN FACILITIES IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT HALAL CONSIGNMENTS REMAIN UNADULTERATED THROUGHOUT THE DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL. THIS PRESENTS YET ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY FOR LOGISTIC PROVIDERS TO TAP INTO THIS LUCRATIVE SECTOR. APART FROM TRANSPORTATION, THERE ARE OTHER OPPORTUNITIES IN THE AREAS OF WAREHOUSING, PACKAGING AND ICT DEVELOPMENT IN THE LOGISTICS VALUE CHAIN.

12. THE GLOBAL HALAL FOOD MARKET IS ESTIMATED TO BE WORTH ALMOST 600 BILLION US DOLLARS ANNUALLY, WHERE FIVE PER CENT OF THAT VALUE IS RELATED TO LOGISTICS ALONE. THIS MAKES THE LOGISTICS SUB-SECTOR AS ONE OF THE MOST RAPIDLY DEVELOPING LINKS IN THE HALAL VALUE CHAIN.

13. ON OUR PART, MALAYSIA HAS INVESTED HEAVILY IN ITS PORTS AND LOGISTICS INFRASTRUCTURE. WE ARE ALSO UNDERTAKING AMBITIOUS HALAL LOGISTICS INITIATIVES WHICH INCLUDE THE CONSTRUCTION OF SEVERAL DEDICATED HALAL INDUSTRIAL PARKS IN STRATEGIC LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. HERE, LOGISTICS COMPANIES CAN OFFER A RANGE OF SPECIALISED HALAL COLD CHAIN FACILITIES AND DISTRIBUTION SERVICES. I BELIEVE WITH ALL THESE FACILITIES IN PLACE, MALAYSIA CAN OFFER ITSELF AS A COMPETITIVE HALAL LOGISTICS HUB FOR THE REGION AND BEYOND.

14. AS SUCH, I WOULD LIKE TO COMMEND MALAYSIA INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING CORPORATION BERHAD (MISC) FOR TAKING THE INITIATIVE TO PROVIDE TOTAL HALAL LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT THROUGH THEIR RECENTLY LAUNCHED "HALAL EXPRESS", WHICH IS A DEDICATED CARGO LINER FOR HALAL PRODUCTS. THIS MARKS ANOTHER MILESTONE IN MALAYSIA'S QUEST TO BE A LEADER IN THIS INDUSTRY.

15. I AM ALSO GLAD TO WELCOME HERE AGAIN THE PORT OF ROTTERDAM, THE ONLY EUROPEAN PORT THAT HAS TAKEN THE INITIATIVE TO DEDICATE A HALAL DISTRIBUTION PARK FOR HANDLING HALAL-CERTIFIED PRODUCTS IN EUROPE. THE PORT OF ROTTERDAM PROVIDES A GATEWAY TO THE 30 MILLION MUSLIM POPULATION IN EUROPE, WITH A MARKET WORTH APPROXIMATELY 45 BILLION US DOLLARS ANNUALLY. WITH GROWING AWARENESS OF HALAL AND THE EXPANSION OF LOGISTICS, WE FORESEE THAT THE VOLUME OF HALAL PRODUCTS ENTERING EUROPE WILL LIKELY INCREASE SUBSTANTIALLY IN THE FUTURE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

16. HALAL IS A CONCEPT THAT SHOULD NOT BE CONFINED TO JUST FOOD AND BEVERAGES ONLY; IT SHOULD ENCOMPASS MORE THAN WHAT YOU SEE HERE AT MIHAS TODAY. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE EXPANSION IN OTHER HALAL RELATED SECTORS AS WELL, FOCUSING ON FOOD ADDITIVES AND INGREDIENTS, CHEMICALS, PHARMACEUTICALS, COSMETICS, TOILETRIES, LOGISTICS AND OTHERS. APART FROM INCREASING DIVERSITY, THE HALAL INDUSTRY MUST ALSO STRIVE TO ENHANCE THE VALUE ADDED ASPECTS OF SUCH PRODUCTS, FOR THE BENEFIT OF CONSUMERS IN GENERAL.

17. GOING FORWARD, THERE ARE ALSO ABUNDANT EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES IN HALAL RELATED SERVICES WHERE MALAYSIA CAN CAPITALISE ON ITS EXPERTISE, PARTICULARLY OUR EXPERIENCE IN THE AREAS OF HALAL ACCREDITATION, LABORATORY TESTING AND HALAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES. IN THIS REGARD, I ENCOURAGE ORGANISATIONS IN THESE AREAS TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN THEIR CAPABILITIES, AS WELL AS TO CONTINUE TO COLLABORATE WITH THEIR INTERNATIONAL COUNTERPARTS TO REAP THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS GENERATED FROM SUCH ACTIVITIES.

18. IN VIEW OF THIS SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE MIHAS CONTINUE TO ASSUME AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN HARNESSING THE HALAL MARKET BY FACILITATING THE TRADING OF HALAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES THROUGH THIS ANNUAL CONGREGATION. MY GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE ANNUAL MIHAS AND WORLD HALAL FORUM EVENTS AS PREMIER HALAL RELATED INITIATIVES ORGANISED IN MALAYSIA FOR THE WORLD. I HOPE THAT MIHAS, TOGETHER WITH THE WORLD HALAL FORUM, CAN BE MAJOR CATALYSTS TOWARDS THE SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HALAL INDUSTRY, AT THE DOMESTIC AS WELL AS AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL.

19. ON THAT NOTE, AND WITH THE RECITATION OF "BISMILLAHIR RAHMANIR RAHIM", IT IS MY PLEASURE AND PRIVILEGE TO DECLARE OPEN THE FOURTH MALAYSIA INTERNATIONAL HALAL SHOWCASE (MIHAS 2007).

THANK YOU.