

**SPEECH BY
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI
AT THE NAPOLEON HILL INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
AT PUTRAJAYA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE, PUTRAJAYA
12 MARCH 2003**

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKUTUH; PEACE BE UPON YOU

MS. CHRISTINA CHIA

DISTINGUISHED PARTICIPANTS AND GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

1. IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO DESCRIBE HOW I FEEL – THIS MUST BE THE BIGGEST MEDAL I HAVE EVER RECEIVED! I FEEL OVERWHELMED; DO I DESERVE THIS?

2. IT IS AN HONOUR INDEED TO BE A RECIPIENT OF THE GLOBAL LEADERSHIP AWARD BESTOWED BY THE NAPOLEON HILL FOUNDATION. I ACCEPT IT WITH HUMILITY. I WOULD NOT BE WHAT I AM, IF I DID NOT HAVE THE SUPPORT OF MALAYSIANS, WHO ARE WORKING WITH ME, AND NOT FOR ME. I SAY THANK YOU, FOR THE SUPPORT AND COOPERATION. FOR MALAYSIANS, WE HAVE A LONG JOURNEY AHEAD, AND WE MUST HAVE THE STRENGTH TO COMPLETE OUR JOURNEY.

3. INDEED, I AM OVERWHELMED, FOR THE LATE NAPOLEON HILL STOOD FOR MANY THINGS ADMIRABLE IN LIFE – MORALITY; SELF-DISCIPLINE; INDOMITABLE SPIRIT; TIRELESS ENDEAVOUR; THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE; THE POWER OF IDEAS; STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE; RISING ABOVE ADVERSITY; AND ABOVE ALL, HELPING OTHERS REALISE THEIR POTENTIAL AND ACHIEVE A BETTER LIFE. I COULD NOT HELP BUT THINKING, HOW I HAVE COME FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS, THEN THROWN OUT OF THE CABINET FOR THREE YEARS... I AM HERE TODAY, THANK YOU.

4. HE PIONEERED A WHOLE SCHOOL OF LITERATURE THAT INSPIRED PEOPLE TO RISE ABOVE THEMSELVES AND REACH FOR THE STARS. IN SO DOING HE AND THE OTHERS THAT HAVE FOLLOWED HAVE DONE MUCH TO HELP IMPROVE LIVELIHOODS AND MAKE FOR A BETTER WORLD.

5. HERE IN MALAYSIA MY GOVERNMENT AND I ARE ALSO PASSIONATELY DEDICATED TO MAKING THINGS BETTER. AFTER 50 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE, WE ARE READY TO TAKE THE NEXT GIANT STEP TO ACHIEVING GLOBAL SUCCESS. WHAT NAPOLEON HILL WILLED FOR INDIVIDUALS WE DESIRE FOR THE NATION. WE HAVE IN VISION 2020 WHAT HE TERMED A "DEFINITE MAJOR PURPOSE". WE HAVE SET OUR SIGHTS FIRMLY ON MAKING THIS COUNTRY FULLY DEVELOPED, IN OUR OWN MOULD, BY 2020. ALL OUR PLANS, ALL OUR ENDEAVOURS, ARE GEARED TOWARDS MAKING THIS VISION, A REALITY.

6. MY PERSONAL MISSION IS TO ENSURE, IN THE TIME THAT I HAVE, THAT WE PROGRESS AS FAR AS WE CAN. I HAVE INTRODUCED INTO OUR STRATEGIC PLANNING WHAT I CALL THE "NATIONAL MISSION". IT IS DESIGNED TO FAST FORWARD DEVELOPMENT IN EVERY SPHERE, SO THAT THE GOALS OF VISION 2020 ARE BROUGHT WELL WITHIN OUR GRASP.

7. THE NATIONAL MISSION FOCUSES OUR ATTENTION ON FIVE STRATEGIC AREAS: MOVING THE ECONOMY UP THE VALUE CHAIN; NURTURING A KNOWLEDGE-RICH MENTALITY; ELIMINATING POVERTY AND REDUCING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISPARITIES; IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE; AND STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY.

8. WE HAVE MADE TANGIBLE ADVANCES IN WHAT I CALL THE "HARDWARE" OF DEVELOPMENT – HOUSES, BUILDINGS, ROADS, SEAPORT, AIRPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS. I INTEND TO BUILD STRONGLY ON THIS PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE.

9. IN EVERY MARGINALISED CORNER OF THE COUNTRY THERE WILL BE MASSIVE DEVELOPMENT. THERE WILL BE A NORTHERN CORRIDOR OF DEVELOPMENT THAT COVERS AREAS IN THE STATES OF PERLIS, KEDAH, PERAK AND PULAU PINANG. THESE ARE STRANGE NAMES, BUT THEY ARE BEAUTIFUL PLACES; ESPECIALLY PENANG, MY HOME STATE.

10. THERE WILL BE AN EAST COAST CORRIDOR OF DEVELOPMENT THAT EMBRACES AREAS OF KELANTAN, TERENGGANU AND PAHANG. THERE WILL BE A SOUTHERN CORRIDOR OF DEVELOPMENT IN JOHOR. JUST LIKE HONG KONG, SOUTH JOHOR WILL BE LIKE THE "SHENZHEN" TO SINGAPORE. AND THERE WILL BE CORRIDORS OF DEVELOPMENT IN SABAH AND SARAWAK AS WELL.

11. THESE PROJECTS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN. THEY WILL PROVIDE JOBS FOR THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS. THEY WILL SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE THE LIVELIHOODS AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF MALAYSIANS. THE PROJECTS WILL ALSO PROSPER FOREIGN INVESTORS WHO WISH TO BECOME A PART OF OUR FUTURE.

12. EVEN HIGHER IN MY AGENDA IS THE CULTIVATION OF WHAT I CALL THE "SOFTWARE" OF DEVELOPMENT. IT IS "HUMAN DEVELOPMENT" IN ITS MOST PROFOUND SENSE. I AM COMMITTED TO NURTURING AND DEVELOPING OUR MOST PRECIOUS ASSET, OUR HUMAN CAPITAL. I INTEND TO NOURISH AND STRENGTHEN OUR VALUES, OUR CHARACTER AND OUR MIND. I BELIEVE THAT ALL THINGS FLOW FROM THE STRENGTH OF THE SPIRIT AND THE POWER OF THE MIND.

13. THE RESOURCES WE HAVE ALLOCATED FOR EDUCATION IN THE CURRENT FIVE-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN ARE UNPRECEDENTED IN OUR HISTORY. 50 BILLION RINGGIT WILL BE SPENT ON FURTHER DEVELOPING EDUCATION IN FIVE YEARS. THIS IS IN ADDITION TO HEFTY ALLOCATIONS FOR OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE EACH YEAR.

14. WE ARE BUILDING MORE SCHOOLS AND MORE UNIVERSITIES. WE WILL PROVIDE BETTER TRAINING FOR TEACHERS. WE WILL IMPROVE AND ENRICH THE CURRICULUM. WE ARE DETERMINED THAT THIS GENERATION OF STUDENTS WILL BECOME MORE INNOVATIVE AND CRITICAL IN THEIR THINKING, AND MORE SKILLED AND ATTUNED TO THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL AND GLOBAL MARKET.

15. THE SOFTWARE OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS NOT CONFINED TO EDUCATION ALONE. I AM ALSO PROMOTING A MORE OPEN ENVIRONMENT FOR PUBLIC DISCOURSE. WE ARE MINDFUL THOUGH, THAT IT DOES NOT LEAD TO EXCESSES. EXCESSES CAN UNDERMINE COMMUNAL HARMONY AND STABILITY. WE CANNOT AFFORD THIS IN THE COMPLEX MILIEU OF ETHNICITY AND FAITHS IN MALAYSIA.

16. I AM ALSO COMMITTED TO IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES. THEY MUST DELIVER BETTER QUALITY SERVICE, AND THEY MUST DELIVER IT MORE EXPEDITIOUSLY. WE WANT A WORLD CLASS PUBLIC SERVICE, AS WELL AS A FIRST CLASS DELIVERY SYSTEM. ENHANCING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IS VERY MUCH A PART OF THIS MAJOR EXERCISE. SO IS REDUCING THE SCOURGE OF CORRUPTION. WE ARE COMMITTED TO DOING ALL THIS TO SECURE AND ENHANCE GOOD GOVERNANCE IN THE COUNTRY. PROBLEMS WILL ALWAYS BE, BUT IF WE ARE DETERMINED, WE CAN OVERCOME.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

17. MALAYSIA IS HELD AS A MODEL OF SUCCESSFUL NATION-BUILDING BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. WE ARE PERHAPS ENVIED BY MANY COUNTRIES THAT HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO MAKE THEIR MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIETIES WORK QUITE AS WELL. EVEN SO, IT IS CLEAR TO ME THAT THE GREATEST CHALLENGE CONFRONTING MALAYSIANS IS THE FORGING OF A YET MORE RESILIENT AND UNITED NATION.

18. WE CONTINUE TO FACE FORMIDABLE CHALLENGES. ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS, REGIONAL AND INCOME DIFFERENCES CONTINUE TO REINFORCE EACH OTHER, THOUGH NOT AS MUCH AS BEFORE. DISPARITIES PERSIST WITHIN COMMUNITIES AS WELL. ALL OVER THE WORLD, ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES AND SENSITIVITIES ARE BECOMING STRONGER. IN SUCH AN ENVIRONMENT, RISING ABOVE RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS DIVIDES IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE CHALLENGING. FOR MALAYSIANS, WE KNOW THAT DIVERSITY IS AN ASSET, AND WE CHERISH THIS ASSET.

19. I AM CONVINCED, HOWEVER, THAT THE MODEL WE HAVE AND THE STRATEGIES WE EMPLOY ARE THE BEST FOR US IN OUR PRESENT SITUATION. WE HAVE A SOCIAL CONTRACT THAT HAS WITHSTOOD THE TEST OF TIME. WE WILL CONTINUE TO BE GUIDED BY THE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF MODERATION, CONSULTATION AND JUSTICE FOR ALL. OUR POLICIES OF INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION WILL REMAIN FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STRATEGIES. SHARED PROSPERITY AND EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT IN A COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT WILL ALSO REMAIN THE BEDROCK OF OUR ECONOMIC POLICIES.

20. BUT THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT WE MUST IMPROVE OUR POLICIES AND PREVENT EXCESSES IN THEIR IMPLEMENTATION. ALL LEADERS, ALL COMMUNITIES, ALL PARENTS AND ALL TEACHERS MUST ALSO PLAY THEIR PARTS. WE MUST RESIST THE FORCES THAT SEEK TO DIVIDE US. WE MUST CHECK THE DRIFT INTO OUR OWN NARROW WORLDS IN THE SCHOOLS, THE CAMPUSES AND THE WORKPLACE. WE MUST RESPECT AND CELEBRATE OUR DIFFERENCES, YET ALSO FEEL, THINK AND LIVE TOGETHER AS ONE, FOR WE HAVE ONLY ONE DESTINY, WHICH IS OURS TO BUILD TOGETHER.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

21. ULTIMATELY, IT IS OUR SPIRIT, OUR FAITH AND OUR VALUES THAT WILL DETERMINE WHETHER MALAYSIA AND MALAYSIANS CAN RANK AMONG THE BEST IN THE WORLD. OUR MALAYSIAN BADMINTON DOUBLES WON THE ALL-ENGLAND LAST NIGHT. THEY PLAYED VERY, VERY HARD. THE CROWD WAS CHANTING "MALAYSIA BOLEH" – OR "MALAYSIA CAN" – ALL THE WAY THROUGH THE MATCH. I WAS HAPPY

THAT THEY WON THE MATCH. WE WON BACK WHAT WE LOST 25 YEARS AGO. I GOT THEIR PHONE NUMBER AND GAVE THEM A CALL; I WOULD BE SURPRISED IF THE P.M. CANNOT GET THEIR PHONE NUMBER!

22. I HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE THAT WE HAVE WHAT IT TAKES. BUT WE MUST WORK HARD, VERY, VERY HARD, AND BELIEVE THAT "MALAYSIA BOLEH", AS NAPOLEON HILL WOULD NO DOUBT COUNSEL US. IN THIS WE WILL HAVE OUR FAITHS AND OUR VALUES TO GUIDE US.

23. INDEED, IT IS WITH THIS IN MIND THAT I INTRODUCED THE CONCEPT OF ISLAM HADHARI OR CIVILISATIONAL ISLAM TO FELLOW MALAYSIANS. IT HAS ALL THE PRINCIPLES THAT CAN MAKE MALAYSIANS AND MUSLIMS IN PARTICULAR TAKE THEIR PLACE AMONG THE ACHIEVING AND THE GREAT.

24. ISLAM HADHARI ENJOINS UPON US TO PRACTISE JUST AND GOOD GOVERNANCE. IT CALLS UPON US TO VALUE FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE. IT REQUIRES US TO BE INSPIRED BY THE WELL-BEING OF THE PEOPLE. IT MAKES BALANCED DEVELOPMENT AND THE PROTECTION OF THE MINORITIES INCUMBENT UPON US. IT SPURS US TO SEEK KNOWLEDGE. AND IT MAKES MORAL INTEGRITY AN ESSENTIAL AND INDISPENSABLE ELEMENT OF HUMANITY.

25. I BELIEVE THE PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM HADHARI ARE RELEVANT NOT ONLY FOR MALAYSIA, BUT ALSO FOR A WORLD BLESSED AS WELL AS COMPLICATED BY ITS PROFOUND DIVERSITIES.

26. I AM CONFIDENT THAT MY FELLOW MALAYSIANS WILL WORK WITH ME TO ACHIEVE WHAT IS BEST FOR THEMSELVES AND FOR THEIR COUNTRY. OCCASIONALLY IT MAY SEEM THAT WE ARE NOT MAKING MUCH HEADWAY. SOMETIMES THERE WILL BE SETBACKS. TRANSFORMING A NATION AND ITS PEOPLE IS NEVER EASY. THERE HAVE BEEN TRAGEDIES. IF YOU FIND THE LESSON, IT WILL BE GOOD. THERE IS ALWAYS A SILVER LINING. IT TAKES PASSION AND PERSEVERANCE. I KNOW THAT MY FELLOW CITIZENS SHARE THIS PASSION AND PERSEVERANCE WITH ME.

27. MAY I NOW AGAIN TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK THE NAPOLEON HILL FOUNDATION. MAY I ALSO THANK MS. CHRISTINA CHIA AND THE ORGANISERS FOR CHOOSING MALAYSIA AS THE VENUE FOR THE FIRST EVER NAPOLEON HILL CONVENTION HELD BEYOND THE SHORES OF THE UNITED STATES. I HOPE THIS EVENT CAN BRING CHANGES TO INDIVIDUALS HERE. THERE IS A FORWARD MOVEMENT FOR IMPROVEMENT; FROM INDIVIDUALS, TO THE FAMILY, AND FINALLY TO CONTRIBUTE TO NATION BUILDING.

28. THIS IS VISIT MALAYSIA YEAR. I INVITE OUR DISTINGUISHED FOREIGN GUESTS TO AVAIL THEMSELVES FULLY OF THE SPECIAL WELCOME AND HOSPITALITY THAT WE HAVE ARRANGED FOR THEM. WE HAVE FRUITS, THE LIKES OF WHICH AND TASTE OF WHICH YOU HAVE NEVER SEEN BEFORE. I AM TALKING, OF COURSE, ABOUT THE DURIAN. MALAYSIA IS A HAPPY PLACE AND A GOOD SECOND HOME.

29. FINALLY, I HUMBLY ACCEPT, BUT WITH PRIDE, THIS AWARD.

THANK YOU