

**SPEECH BY  
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI  
AT THE STATE BANQUET BY H.E. MWAI KIBAKI  
AT REPUBLIC OF KENYA  
18 APRIL 2007**

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His Excellency Mwai Kibaki  
President and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kenya

Honorable Ministers

Your Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

I feel very privileged to be here in Kenya, a country which is renowned for the richness of its cultural diversity and the variety of its natural heritage.

2. On behalf of the members of the Malaysian delegation and my own behalf, please allow me to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to you, Mr. President, to the Government and the people of the Republic of Kenya, for the warm welcome and generous hospitality accorded us since our arrival in Nairobi yesterday.

Your Excellency

3. Although our two countries are far apart in terms of geography, the relations between us have always been warm and friendly. However, this closeness in spirit has not been equally matched by the volume of substance in our relations. We need to do more to facilitate economic collaboration between our two countries. For instance, we can focus on increasing trade between ourselves, increasing collaboration in infrastructure and property development, education and tourism. I have come here at this time to bring fresh impetus in this direction. It is certainly my wish and hope that the discussions we had during this visit will pave the way for injecting more volume and depth into the substance of our bilateral relations.

Your Excellency,

4. Malaysia has taken due note of the fact that, over the past four years, Kenya has recorded high growth figures in the economy. This impressive record can clearly be attributed to sound economic policies, good financial management, and more importantly, your stewardship of the economy in your capacity as President. We feel therefore that we have indeed come here at the right time. There is no doubt that the political stability that Kenya has enjoyed since you took office in 2002 contributes to this achievement.

5. I must applaud you, Mr. President, and your government, for the successes that you have acquired in your quest to accomplish Kenya's Vision 2030. Malaysia too has its Vision 2020 to achieve the status of a developed nation by that date. Our two countries must collaborate so that we can deliver to our peoples what we have promised to them.

Your Excellency,

6. I would like to emphasize the role of the private sector in this regard. The potentials are very extensive if the private sectors of our two countries can work together in a true collaborative spirit. I would like our Kenyan friends to know that it is a policy of the Government of Malaysia to encourage its businessmen to go beyond national borders and explore new opportunities on a win-win formula. As a reflection of this policy, at least 25 Malaysian companies are represented in Nairobi during this official visit of mine. The Government of Malaysia and the Government of Kenya can give support to this objective by working towards the formalization of a Bilateral Trade Agreement between our two countries.

7. I am pleased with the enthusiasm shown by the participants at the Malaysia-Kenya Business Forum held this afternoon. On their part, the private sector can give support to the efforts of the Government by establishing between themselves a Malaysia-Kenya Business Council to spearhead not only future trade but also investment activities.

Your Excellency,

8. Let me cite education as an example of a new area in which Malaysia and Kenya could cooperate for mutual benefit. We already have between 600 to 700 students from Kenya studying in various Malaysian institutions of higher learning at this time. We can develop this relationship in many ways, including investing in infrastructure for twinning programmes by establishing branch campuses here in Kenya. It is a demonstration of our seriousness in promoting this area of cooperation that in 2006, two dedicated education fairs were held in Kenya to promote education in Malaysia and the response was overwhelming. Education is a desirable area for collaboration because it is vital to the development of the human capital in both Kenya and Malaysia.

9. The Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) is also dedicated to the capacity-building of individuals and the strengthening of institutions in the developing countries. We are happy to have hosted some 70 Kenyan officials over the years under this Programme.

Your Excellency,

10. I have already highlighted infrastructure, property development and tourism as among the other areas with the most immediate potentials for our investors to explore. The signing of the M.O.U on Cooperation in the Planning and Implementation of Road Projects between Malaysia and Kenya this afternoon is certainly timely. We should also have a formal Memorandum of Understanding on tourism between Malaysia and Kenya in the near future. Such steps will also help to intensify people-to-people contacts and thereby contribute to the enhancement of relations between our two countries.

11. This year 2007 is a particularly special year in Malaysia. We have designated it as Visit Malaysia Year 2007, to coincide with the celebrations of fifty years of the country's independence. We would most enthusiastically welcome Kenyans to come and visit us in Malaysia this year.

Your Excellency,

12. Let me conclude by thanking you once again for this sumptuous Banquet, for the warmth of your welcome and for the generosity of your hospitality.

13. And now may I, in return, propose a toast for the good health of His Excellency Mwai Kibaki and for the prosperity and the well being of the Government and the people of the Republic of Kenya.

I thank you.