

**SPEECH BY  
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI  
AT THE LAUNCHING OF MALAYSIA FESTIVAL OF THE MIND  
DI UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN  
25 OCTOBER 2007**

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YABHG TUN DR. LING LIONG SIK  
CHAIRMAN OF THE MALAYSIA MENTAL LITERACY MOVEMENT AND  
CHAIRMAN OF UTAR COUNCIL

HONOURABLE MINISTERS AND DEPUTY MINISTERS

YAB DATO' SERI IDRIS BIN JUSOH  
CHIEF MINISTER OF TERENGGANU DARUL IMAN

YBHG TAN SRI DATUK DR. NG LAY SWEE  
PRESIDENT OF UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN (UTAR)

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

1. IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO BE HERE TODAY TO OFFICIALLY LAUNCH THE INAUGURAL 'MALAYSIA FESTIVAL OF THE MIND 2007'. I COMMEND THE MALAYSIA MENTAL LITERACY MOVEMENT (M.M.L.M.) AND UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN (UTAR), BOTH UNDER THE STEWARDSHIP OF YABHG TUN DR. LING LIONG SIK, FOR THEIR NOBLE EFFORTS TO BUILD AWARENESS AMONG MALAYSIANS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL LITERACY.

2. THROUGH THE MANY ACTIVITIES ORGANISED DURING THIS FESTIVAL, THE PUBLIC WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO CHALLENGE THEIR MENTAL POWER AND HARNESS THE FULL POTENTIAL OF THEIR MINDS. A HEALTHY, ACTIVE AND AGILE MIND IS THE KEY TO DEVELOPING HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE PEOPLE. COLLECTIVELY, HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE PEOPLE MAKE UP THE HIGH-QUALITY HUMAN CAPITAL NEEDED TO PROPEL OUR NATION FORWARD TO EVEN HIGHER LEVELS OF COMPETITIVENESS AND PROSPERITY. THEREFORE, MY HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS GO TO M.M.L.M. AND UTAR FOR ORGANISING THIS FESTIVAL.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

3. THE YEAR 2007 MARKS AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE FOR OUR COUNTRY. WE HAVE JUST CELEBRATED OUR 50TH YEAR OF INDEPENDENCE. WE HAVE GOOD REASON TO BE PROUD OF OUR PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE THE BIRTH OF OUR NATION IN 1957. MALAYSIA HAS GONE THROUGH MANY DEVELOPMENT PHASES OVER THE PAST 50 YEARS. FROM AN AGRICULTURAL AND MINING-BASED ECONOMY, MALAYSIA HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO A MANUFACTURING-BASED AND INDUSTRIALISED ECONOMY WITH ATTENDANT PROSPERITY FOR ALL. BUT OUR JOURNEY IS FAR FROM OVER.

4. WE ARE NOW AT THE MID-POINT OF OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS MEETING OUR TARGET OF BECOMING A DEVELOPED KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY BY 2020, AS ARTICULATED IN 'VISION 2020' AND THE 'NATIONAL MISSION'. GOING FORWARD, WE MUST ENSURE THAT OUR PROSPERITY AND MATURITY AS A NATION IS NOT JUST REFLECTED IN HIGHER INCOME LEVELS AND BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE. OUR 50 YEARS AS A NATION, SHOULD ALSO BE REFLECTED BY MATURITY OF THOUGHT AND ACTION AMONGST OUR PEOPLE.

5. AFTER 50 YEARS, MALAYSIANS HAVE DEVELOPED A HEALTHY COMPETITIVE SPIRIT, MOULDED THROUGH DISCIPLINE AND HARD WORK, AND GUIDED BY STRONG MORALS AND ETHICAL VALUES. WE NEED TO EXPAND UPON THIS, BUILDING THE NEXT FIFTY YEARS OF NATIONHOOD ON A PLATFORM OF SOUND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND STRATEGIES. AFTER ALL, IT IS IN PEOPLE THAT KNOWLEDGE, CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION — THE MAIN DRIVERS OF WEALTH AND POWER IN TODAY'S WORLD — ARE EMBODIED. UNDOUBTEDLY, WE WILL NEED NOT JUST MORE KNOWLEDGE-WORKERS, BUT ALSO MORE THOUGHT-LEADERS, CREATORS AND INNOVATORS, IF WE ARE TO ACHIEVE OUR ASPIRATIONS AND BECOME A KNOWLEDGE-ECONOMY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

6. OUR STRENGTH AS A NATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN BASED ON A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT. IN MALAYSIA, 'PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT' HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE CENTRAL FOCUS, EVEN AS WE CONTINUE TO EMPHASISE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT. I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT MALAYSIA'S FUTURE AS A SUCCESSFUL, KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY WILL DEPEND INCREASINGLY ON OUR ABILITY TO DEVELOP A HIGHLY-EDUCATED, HIGHLY-SKILLED WORK FORCE.

7. MY GOVERNMENT IS TAKING THE NECESSARY STEPS TO RAISE THE QUALITY OF THE COUNTRY'S EDUCATION SYSTEM TO MEET GLOBAL STANDARDS AND TO ENSURE THAT OUR GRADUATES HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO SUCCEED IN A KNOWLEDGE-ECONOMY. IT IS THE AIM OF MY GOVERNMENT TO CREATE A MORE STIMULATING EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT BY GRADUALLY MOVING AWAY FROM A SYSTEM THAT MERELY SPOON-FEEDS STUDENTS, TO ONE THAT PRODUCES ANALYTICAL AND THINKING STUDENTS.

8. THAT IS WHY MY GOVERNMENT IS INVESTING HEAVILY IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AT ALL LEVELS, FROM PRE-SCHOOL TO UNIVERSITY. EARLIER THIS YEAR, MY GOVERNMENT HAS LAUNCHED THE 'EDUCATION BLUEPRINT, 2006-2010' TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE COUNTRY. WE HAVE ALSO LAUNCHED THE 'HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN' TO ELEVATE THE STANDARD OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN THE COUNTRY.

9. BOTH THE EDUCATION PLANS ARE COMPREHENSIVE IN THEIR SCOPE AND HOLISTIC IN THEIR APPROACH. IN ADDITION TO THE STRATEGIC THRUSTS WHICH ARTICULATE CURRENT POLICY DIRECTIONS, SPECIFIC MEASURES ARE ALSO BEING UNDERTAKEN TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AS A WHOLE. NEW INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS CLUSTER SCHOOLS AND APEX UNIVERSITIES ARE BEING CREATED. NEW METHODS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ARE BEING INTRODUCED. MORE UP-TO-DATE AND RELEVANT SUBJECTS ARE BEING TAUGHT IN

OUR SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES. GREATER RESOURCES ARE BEING PUT INTO IMPROVING RURAL EDUCATION SO AS TO REDUCE THE EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC DIVIDE BETWEEN THE URBAN AND RURAL AREAS.

10. RESOURCES ARE ALSO BEING CHANNLED TOWARD IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TERTIARY EDUCATION. OUR UNIVERSITIES MUST ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. FOR THIS, WE MUST ENCOURAGE AND PROMOTE INNOVATIVE THINKING AND ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT AMONG OUR ACADEMICIANS AND STUDENTS. FOR FAR TOO LONG HAVE WE BEEN MERE USERS OF IMPORTED TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATIONS. IT IS ABOUT TIME WE BECOME NOT ONLY CREATORS OF TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION, BUT ALSO PIONEERS OF NEW AND CREATIVE WAYS TO USE EXISTING TECHNOLOGY. THIS IS THE CHALLENGE FOR OUR STUDENTS, LECTURERS, AND UNIVERSITIES.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

11. MY GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO MAKING THE NECESSARY CHANGES TO OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM, HOWEVER DIFFICULT THESE CHANGES MAY BE. INDEED, THE LONG-TERM BENEFITS FAR OUTWEIGH THE COSTS. WHILE THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO DO ITS PART TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, IT CAN ONLY ACHIEVE SO MUCH. IF WE ARE TO SUCCEED IN PRODUCING QUALITY HUMAN CAPITAL CAPABLE OF THRIVING IN THE KNOWLEDGE-ECONOMY, THE ACTIVE SUPPORT OF ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY IS CRUCIAL.

12. THAT IS WHY THE WORK THAT IS UNDERTAKEN BY ORGANISATIONS SUCH AS THE 'MALAYSIAN MENTAL LITERACY MOVEMENT' (M.M.L.M.) IS SO VITAL. WITHIN A YEAR AND A HALF OF ITS EXISTENCE, THE M.M.L.M. IS PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN CREATING AWARENESS AND INTEREST AMONG MALAYSIANS ABOUT THE NEED TO DEVELOP THINKING, MEMORY AND CREATIVE SKILLS. I UNDERSTAND THAT M.M.L.M. ACTIVITIES HAVE INTENSIFIED BOTH IN SCOPE AND DIMENSION WITH MORE TALKS ON MENTAL LITERACY AND METHODS OF MAXIMISING BRAIN POWER BEING ORGANISED IN THE FUTURE.

13. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE 'MALAYSIAN FESTIVAL OF THE MIND' IS THE HIGHLIGHT OF M.M.L.M.'S ACTIVITIES THIS YEAR. I CONSIDER THIS FESTIVAL TO BE A SPRINGBOARD TOWARD DEVELOPING MORE WIDESPREAD INTEREST IN INTELLIGENCE AND BRAIN POWER ENHANCEMENT. THIS IS IMPORTANT AS IT IS ONE WAY TO SPUR CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE THINKING AMONG MALAYSIANS AND GETTING THEM TO 'THINK OUT OF THE BOX'. THEREFORE, I WOULD LIKE TO ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE BEEN ORGANISED.

14. I AM PLEASED TO NOTE THAT THE TALKS AND ACTIVITIES ORGANISED BY M.M.L.M. IN THE PAST HAVE ENJOYED MUCH INTEREST AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION FROM MALAYSIANS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE. IN THAT SENSE, I AM HAPPY TO SEE THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S CALL FOR MALAYSIANS TO UNDERTAKE LIFELONG LEARNING IS BEING HEADED. IN THE FUTURE, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE GROUPS LENDING THEIR SUPPORT TO SUCH ACTIVITIES SO THAT THE NET CAN BE CAST FURTHER TO INCLUDE COMMUNITIES IN RURAL AREAS AS WELL.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

15. TO CONCLUDE, LET ME CONGRATULATE ONCE AGAIN THE 'MALAYSIA MENTAL LITERACY MOVEMENT' AND UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN (UTAR) FOR ORGANISING THIS FESTIVAL. I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE ACTIVITIES OF M.M.L.M. WILL HELP EDUCATE A BROAD SPECTRUM OF MALAYSIAN SOCIETY ON HOW TO TAP THE FULL POTENTIAL OF THE MIND.

16. WITH THAT, IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO LAUNCH THE INAUGURAL MALAYSIA FESTIVAL OF THE MIND 2007.

THANK YOU.