

**SPEECH BY  
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI  
AT THE LAUNCH OF SYNERGY DRIVE BERHAD  
AT SIME DARBY CONVENTION CENTRE, KUALA LUMPUR  
28 NOVEMBER 2007**

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BISMILLAHIR RAHMANIR RAHIM

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH AND GOOD AFTERNOON

YBHG TUN MUSA HITAM  
CHAIRMAN OF SYNERGY DRIVE

YBHG TAN SRI AHMAD SARJI ABDUL HAMID  
DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF SYNERGY DRIVE

YBHG DATUK SERI AHMAD ZUBIR MURSHID  
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF SYNERGY DRIVE

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

1. ALHAMDULILLAH, ALL PRAISE AND GLORY ARE FOR ALLAH S.W.T., FOR IT IS WITH HIS BLESSINGS AND GUIDANCE THAT WE ARE GATHERED HERE TODAY.

2. TOO OFTEN WE OVERSTATE THE IMPORTANCE OF AN EVENT, BY REACHING FOR WORDS SUCH AS "HISTORIC" AND "MOMENTOUS" TO DESCRIBE IT. IN TRUTH, IT IS VERY RARE THAT EVENTS MERIT SUCH DESCRIPTION.

3. MORE THAN 25 YEARS AGO, MALAYSIANS WITNESSED A TRULY HISTORIC MOMENT WHEN SIME DARBY, GUTHRIE, AND HARRISONS & CROSFIELD WERE BOUGHT OVER BY MALAYSIAN INVESTORS. THEY REPRESENTED THE COMMANDING HEIGHTS OF THE MALAYSIAN ECONOMY OF THAT ERA – THREE PLANTATION GIANTS OF THE COLONIAL AGE THAT WERE FINALLY RETURNED INTO MALAYSIAN HANDS.

4. TODAY, WE ARE WITNESSING YET ANOTHER OF THOSE RARE HISTORIC OCCASIONS – THE BIRTH OF A NEW MALAYSIAN ICON.

5. INDEED, TODAY IS THE CULMINATION OF MORE THAN 12 MONTHS OF SOLID GROUND WORK, GREAT SACRIFICE, AND EXEMPLARY VISION. I ONLY HAVE ADMIRATION FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF SIME DARBY, GOLDEN HOPE, AND KUMPULAN GUTHRIE WHO HAVE MOVED OUT OF THEIR COMFORT ZONES, AND EMBRACED WHOLEHEARTEDLY THE IDEA OF POOLING RESOURCES TOWARDS BUILDING A NEW CORPORATE GIANT.

6. MAKE NO MISTAKE: THE THREE COMPANIES INVOLVED IN THE SYNERGY DRIVE MERGER WERE JEWELS IN THE CROWN OF MALAYSIAN INDUSTRY. INDIVIDUALLY THEY WERE GOOD, SOLID COMPANIES. BUT AS A MERGED ENTITY, THEY HAVE EVERY CHANCE OF COLLECTIVELY BECOMING CHAMPIONS ON THE GLOBAL STAGE.

7. FOR THAT, THE NATION SALUTES ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE WORKED SO HARD TO MAKE THIS MERGER A SUCCESS. ALL OF YOU HAVE PUT THE COMMON GOOD OVER PERSONAL COMFORT AND INTEREST. YOU HAVE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE STARK REALITY OF GLOBAL COMPETITION CALLS FOR THE NEED TO COMBINE RESOURCES, POOL TALENT, AND ENJOY ECONOMIES OF SCALE. YOU HAVE UNDERSTOOD THAT GLOBAL SUCCESS CALLS FOR THE ADOPTION OF BEST PRACTICES, THE IMPROVEMENT OF SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES, AND THE FINANCIAL MUSCLE TO ACQUIRE AND GROW.

8. MOST IMPORTANTLY, YOU HAVE SET YOUR AMBITIONS HIGH. INSTEAD OF SETTling FOR A COMFORTABLE EXISTENCE, YOU WERE WILLING TO PUSH THE BOUNDARIES; TO TEST YOURSELVES AGAINST THE VERY BEST. INSTEAD OF JUST BEING SATISFIED AT BEING "JAGUH KAMPUNG", YOU HAVE SET YOUR SIGHTS AT BECOMING GLOBAL CHAMPIONS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

9. AS I MENTIONED EARLIER, WE ARE WITNESSING TODAY THE BIRTH OF A NEW CORPORATE GIANT. THE MERGED ENTITY WILL NOT BE STARTING FROM GROUND ZERO, BUT WILL EMERGE FULLY FORMED, STRONG, AND FIGHTING ON ALL FRONTS.

10. AS IT STANDS TODAY, SYNERGY DRIVE WILL BE THE LARGEST LISTED COMPANY ON BURSA MALAYSIA, WITH AN EXPECTED MARKET CAPITALISATION OF MORE THAN 50 BILLION RINGGIT. THE GROUP WILL BE OPERATING IN OVER 20 COUNTRIES, AND 60 PERCENT OF ITS EARNINGS IS EXPECTED TO DERIVE FROM OVERSEAS.

11. SYNERGY DRIVE WILL BE THE WORLD'S LARGEST LISTED OIL PALM PLANTATIONS GROUP, WITH 543,000 HECTARES OF PLANTATION LAND SPANNING ACROSS BOTH MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA.

12. SYNERGY DRIVE WILL ALSO BE THE NUMBER ONE DEVELOPER OF RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL COMMUNITIES IN MALAYSIA, WITH PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN MALAYSIA HAVING A TOTAL GROSS DEVELOPMENT VALUE (G.D.V.) OF MORE THAN 18 BILLION RINGGIT.

13. THE MERGED ENTITY WILL BE THE NUMBER ONE DEALER FOR BRANDED HEAVY EQUIPMENT IN MALAYSIA AND OTHER ASIAN MARKETS. IT WILL ALSO BE A LEADING DISTRIBUTOR AND DEALER FOR MAJOR AUTOMOBILE BRANDS, INCLUDING B.M.W., FORD, AND LAND ROVER. WITH A MAJORITY STAKE IN THE BAKUN DAM AND THE UNDERSEA CABLE TRANSMISSION PROJECT, SYNERGY DRIVE'S ENERGY AND UTILITIES BUSINESS WILL BE A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH.

14. MOST IMPORTANTLY, SYNERGY DRIVE WILL HAVE A DEEP POOL OF TALENT AVAILABLE AT ITS DISPOSAL. THE MERGED ENTITY WILL HAVE A WORKFORCE OF 104,000 PEOPLE. MANY OF THEM ARE YOUNG, TALENTED MALAYSIANS WITH THE POTENTIAL TO ACHIEVE GREAT THINGS.

15. THROUGHOUT MY TENURE AS PRIME MINISTER, I HAVE SPOKEN FREQUENTLY ON THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN CAPITAL. I EXPECT THAT AS SYNERGY DRIVE BEGINS TO SPREAD ITS WINGS INTO NEW MARKETS AND NEW BUSINESS AREAS,

THESE TALENTED EXECUTIVES CAN BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO GROW AND TO SHINE. INDEED, I IMAGINE THAT ONE DAY SYNERGY DRIVE WOULD BE RECOGNISED AS A LEADERSHIP FACTORY THAT WILL PRODUCE CORPORATE CAPTAINS FOR THE FUTURE OF MALAYSIA AND THE REGION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

16. THESE ARE CHALLENGING TIMES TO BE IN BUSINESS. IT IS NO LONGER ADEQUATE TO SIMPLY FOCUS ON THE BOTTOM LINE ALONE. ISSUES OF CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY CAN NO LONGER BE RELEGATED AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT. CORPORATIONS ARE NOW EXPECTED TO CONTINUE GROWING AND PRODUCING PROFITS, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME PLAYING THE ROLE OF A RESPONSIBLE CORPORATE CITIZEN.

17. THAT IS WHY I AM GRATIFIED THAT THE MERGED ENTITY HAS ADOPTED "SUSTAINABLE FUTURES" AS ITS CALLING CARD. IT IS MY HOPE THAT SUSTAINABILITY WILL BECOME A CORE COMPONENT OF THE D.N.A. FOR SYNERGY DRIVE. THIS IMPLIES THAT SYNERGY DRIVE WILL BE DRIVEN NOT ONLY BY ECONOMIC IMPERATIVES, BUT ALSO BY THE BELIEF THAT IT HAS A SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY, AND ESPECIALLY TO MALAYSIA.

18. ONE AREA OF SUSTAINABILITY IN WHICH SYNERGY DRIVE IS ALREADY LEADING IS IN THE FIELD OF SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL. WITH SOME 543,000 HECTARES OF OIL PALM PLANTATIONS, SYNERGY DRIVE WILL BE THE LEADING OIL PALM PRODUCER IN THE WORLD.

19. WITH THE BENEFIT OF SIZE COMES A HUGE RESPONSIBILITY. IN THIS RESPECT, I BELIEVE THAT SYNERGY DRIVE HAS ALREADY STARTED MAKING SIGNIFICANT STEPS. FOR INSTANCE, I AM TOLD THAT ALL ITS ESTATES ARE BOUND BY A ZERO BURNING POLICY.

20. SYNERGY DRIVE IS ALSO WORKING TO PROTECT NATURAL AREAS IN AND AROUND ESTATES. FOR EXAMPLE, I AM TOLD THAT AN AGREEMENT HAS BEEN INKED WITH THE MALAYSIA NATURE SOCIETY ON A CONSERVATION PROJECT IN THE BELUM-TEMENGGOR FOREST, CALLED "THE HORNBILL PROJECT".

21. CERTIFIED SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL REQUIRES SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES, AS WELL AS TRACEABILITY TO PROVE IT. IN THIS RESPECT, I AM GLAD TO NOTE THAT SYNERGY DRIVE HAS BEEN ACTIVELY WORKING ON TRACKING AND TRACING PROCESSES, TO IDENTIFY THE ORIGIN OF SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL RIGHT DOWN TO THE PLANTATION AND THE MILL.

22. YOU SHOULD ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND THAT A GLOBAL CHAMPION MUST NEVER FORGET ITS ROOTS. THE IDEA OF SUSTAINABILITY IMPLIES THAT SYNERGY DRIVE WOULD PLAY ITS PART IN PROMOTING CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (C.S.R.). FOR INSTANCE, SYNERGY DRIVE SHOULD CONTINUE TO EXPAND ITS INVOLVEMENT IN THE PINTAR PROGRAMME, AND TAKE MORE SCHOOLS IN THE RURAL AREAS UNDER ITS WING. WITH ITS LARGE LAND BANK, I HOPE SYNERGY DRIVE WILL CONSIDER BUILDING COMMUNITIES FOR THE LESS PRIVILEGED.

23. CERTAINLY, I HOPE THAT SYNERGY DRIVE WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY ITS PART IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTHERN CORRIDOR ECONOMIC REGION (N.C.E.R.) AS WELL AS IN THE OTHER GROWTH CORRIDORS. I HOPE THAT AS THE

IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE CORRIDORS BEGINS TO UNFOLD, YOU WILL CONTINUE TO TAKE ACTIVE INTEREST IN THE SAID REGIONS THROUGH COMMERCIAL INVESTMENTS AS WELL AS THROUGH C.S.R. ACTIVITIES.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

24. IN THE COLONIAL AGE, THE COMPANIES NOW KNOWN AS KUMPULAN GUTHRIE, GOLDEN HOPE, AND SIME DARBY WERE THE CORPORATE GIANTS OF THEIR ERA. THE ARC OF HISTORY HAS LED THEM TO BECOMING THE CROWN JEWELS OF A YOUNG AND INDEPENDENT NATION, AS MALAYSIAN INVESTORS BROUGHT THESE THREE CORPORATE GIANTS BACK HOME.

25. TODAY, THAT SAME ARC OF HISTORY IS LEADING US TO THIS PRESENT MOMENT: RARE, MOMENTOUS, HISTORIC. FOR TODAY WE PRESIDE AT THE BIRTH OF WHAT WILL SURELY BE A GLOBAL CHAMPION.

26. BORN AND BRED ON MALAYSIAN SOIL, THIS NEW CORPORATE ENTITY WILL CARRY THE HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS OF OUR COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE. LIKE THE COUNTRY OF ITS BIRTH, I HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE THAT THIS NEW COMPANY IS DESTINED TO INSPIRE GREAT DREAMS, TO BUILD GREAT THINGS, AND TO ACHIEVE GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

THANK YOU.