

SPEECH BY
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI
AT THE 5TH MALAYSIA INTERNATIONAL HALAL SHOWCASE (MIHAS 2008)
AT MATRADE EXHIBITION AND CONVENTION CENTRE, MECC
8 MAY 2008

BISMILLAHIR RAHMANIR RAHIM

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH AND GOOD AFTERNOON

YANG BERTHORMAT TAN SRI MUHYIDDIN YASSIN
MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY

YANG BERBAHAGIA TAN SRI HALIM MOHAMMAD
CHAIRMAN, MALAYSIA EXTERNAL TRADE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (MATRADE)

YANG BERBAHAGIA DATO' NOHARUDDIN NORDIN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF MATRADE

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

1. I AM INDEED PLEASED TO BE HERE TODAY TO OFFICIATE AT THE FIFTH MALAYSIA INTERNATIONAL HALAL SHOWCASE (MIHAS 2008). OVER THE YEARS, MIHAS HAS GROWN FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH, AND CONTINUES TO EXPAND IN TERMS OF THE RANGE OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES, AS WELL AS IN THE NUMBER OF EXHIBITORS AND PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES. IN THIS REGARD, I WOULD LIKE TO RECORD MY APPRECIATION TO THE MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND ITS AGENCY, MATRADE, FOR ONCE AGAIN ORGANISING THIS EXHIBITION. FROM THE RESPONSE RECEIVED FOR THIS EXHIBITION, AND AS EVIDENCED BY THE PRESENCE OF ALL OF YOU HERE TODAY, MIHAS HAS CLEARLY BECOME A PREMIER INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION FOR HALAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES.

2. THE HALAL INDUSTRY TODAY CONTINUES TO BE A LUCRATIVE BUSINESS PROPOSITION. AMONGST OTHERS, THIS IS ATTRIBUTED TO THE INCREASING INCOME LEVELS AND CHANGING LIFESTYLE OF THE MUSLIM WORLD, AS WELL AS IN THE INCREASING AWARENESS OF THE AVAILABILITY OF HALAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES, BEYOND JUST HALAL MEAT-BASED PRODUCTS. THE INTEGRATION OF MUSLIMS INTO THE GLOBAL ECONOMY, FACILITATED BY I.C.T., GREATER MOBILITY AND INCREASING TRADE LIBERALISATION, HAS PROVIDED FURTHER IMPETUS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GLOBAL HALAL INDUSTRY. IF HALAL CAN BE ELEVATED TO BECOME A PREMIUM BRAND, THEN THE POTENTIAL OF THE NON-MUSLIM CROSS OVER MARKET IS ALSO MASSIVE.

3. RECOGNISING THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS INDUSTRY, THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT HAS PUT MAJOR EMPHASIS ON DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING THE HALAL SECTOR. THE THIRD INDUSTRIAL MASTER PLAN AND THE NINTH MALAYSIA PLAN SPECIFICALLY OUTLINES MALAYSIA'S STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP THE HALAL INDUSTRY AS A NEW GROWTH SECTOR, LEVERAGING ON ITS CURRENT STRENGTHS

AND ADVANTAGES. THE VISION IS FOR MALAYSIA TO BECOME A HALAL HUB, NOT JUST IN TERMS OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES BUT ALSO AS A REFERENCE AND KNOWLEDGE CENTRE FOR HALAL.

4. THE HALAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (H.D.C.) HAS BEEN TASKED TO BE THE FOCAL POINT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HALAL INDUSTRY IN MALAYSIA. I AM PLEASED TO NOTE THAT H.D.C. HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT STRIDES SINCE ITS INCORPORATION IN 2006. AMONGST OTHERS, H.D.C. HAS BEEN MANDATED TO ISSUE HALAL CERTIFICATES, USING JAKIM'S LOGO AND PROCESSES, FOR BOTH THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL MARKETS. H.D.C. WILL LOOK INTO FURTHER STREAMLINING PROCEDURES FOR CERTIFICATION AS WELL AS WORK TO EXPEDITE THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS. SUCH EFFORTS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HALAL INDUSTRY IN MALAYSIA. IN TERMS OF STREAMLINING THE PROCEDURES, H.D.C. WILL SPEARHEAD THE INITIATIVE TO FURTHER ENHANCE THE HALAL BRAND TO BECOME A PREMIUM BRAND, INCORPORATING GLOBALLY ACCEPTED STANDARDS SUCH AS GOOD MANUFACTURING PRACTICE (G.M.P.), GOOD HYGIENE PRACTICE (G.H.P.) AND OTHERS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

5. AS ONE OF THE PIONEERS IN HALAL CERTIFICATION, MALAYSIA WILL CONTINUE TO ADHERE TO THE STRICT COMPLIANCE OF SYARIAH REQUIREMENTS TO ENSURE THE INTEGRITY OF HALAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES. LEVERAGING ON THIS, MY GOVERNMENT IS ACTIVELY PROMOTING MALAYSIA AS THE PREMIER HUB FOR THE PRODUCTION AND SUPPLY OF QUALITY HALAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES. IN THIS REGARD, I WOULD LIKE TO INVITE COMPANIES SEEKING TO INVEST OR TO SOURCE FOR HALAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TO LOOK AT MALAYSIA AS YOUR INVESTMENT DESTINATION AND PREFERRED SOURCE OF SUPPLY.

6. MY GOVERNMENT RECENTLY LAUNCHED FIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORRIDORS, NAMELY ISKANDAR MALAYSIA, NORTHERN CORRIDOR ECONOMIC REGION (N.C.E.R.), EAST COAST ECONOMIC REGION (E.C.E.R.), SABAH DEVELOPMENT CORRIDOR (S.D.C.) AND THE SARAWAK CORRIDOR OF RENEWABLE ENERGY (SCORE). I WISH TO HIGHLIGHT THAT WITHIN THESE CORRIDORS, DESIGNATED AREAS HAVE BEEN EARMARKED FOR THE SETTING UP OF HALAL RELATED BUSINESSES, COVERING AMONG OTHERS, AGRO-BASED INDUSTRIES, PROCESSED FOOD, FACTORY INCUBATORS AND COLD STORAGE FACILITIES. BACKED BY ATTRACTIVE INCENTIVES AND SOUND INFRASTRUCTURE, THIS WILL PROVIDE EVEN MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADDITIONAL INVESTMENTS IN THE HALAL SECTOR, AS WELL AS ACT TO FURTHER CATALYSE THE SUPPLY OF HALAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES FROM MALAYSIA.

7. WHILE MY GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN VARIOUS MEASURES TO CREATE A CONDUCIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR HALAL BUSINESSES TO THRIVE AND GROW, THE GROWTH OF THE INDUSTRY IS VERY MUCH DEPENDENT ON THE COMMITMENT AND ACTION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR. IN THIS REGARD, LARGE AND ESTABLISHED COMPANIES SHOULD ASSUME THE ROLE OF ANCHOR COMPANIES IN NURTURING SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (S.M.E.'S) IN THE HALAL SECTOR. SUCH COMPANIES SHOULD ESTABLISH 'WIN-WIN' PARTNERSHIPS BY PROVIDING ASSISTANCE AND GUIDANCE IN TERMS OF TECHNOLOGY, PROCESSES AND MARKET ACCESS.

8. FURTHERMORE, IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT OUR CAPACITY TO SUPPLY HALAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IS SUSTAINABLE, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE ESTABLISH STRATEGIC ALLIANCES OR MERGERS AMONG VARIOUS PLAYERS WITHIN THE INDUSTRY, LEVERAGING ON EACH OTHER'S STRENGTHS IN TECHNOLOGY, DISTRIBUTION NETWORKS, BRANDING AND PRODUCT RANGE. IN THIS REGARD, I URGE THE MALAYSIAN PRIVATE SECTOR, INCLUDING GOVERNMENT- LINKED COMPANIES (G.L.C.'S), TO TAKE THE LEAD IN FORMING THESE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH DOMESTIC OR INTERNATIONAL ENTITIES INVOLVED IN THE HALAL INDUSTRY.

9. TO FAST-TRACK ENTRY INTO THE GLOBAL HALAL MARKETPLACE, MALAYSIAN COMPANIES SHOULD CONSIDER AS A STRATEGY, ESTABLISHING LINKAGES WITH INTERNATIONAL BRANDS OF HALAL PRODUCTS, EITHER THROUGH EQUITY PARTICIPATION OR THROUGH ACQUISITION OF SUCH BRANDS. USING THIS APPROACH, MALAYSIAN COMPANIES WILL BE ABLE TO ACCESS THE INTERNATIONAL SUPPLY CHAIN, INCLUDING PROCUREMENT, PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION NETWORKS OF SUCH BRANDS. THIS WILL ALSO FACILITATE THE SOURCING OF RAW MATERIAL SUPPLIES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARKETING CHANNELS, BOTH OF WHICH OTHERWISE WOULD HAVE REQUIRED LARGE INVESTMENTS AND LONG GESTATION PERIODS TO MATURE.

10. AS A FURTHER STEP TO ACCESS THE GLOBAL MARKETPLACE, COMPANIES IN THE HALAL INDUSTRY SHOULD LEVERAGE ON I.C.T. AND THE POWER OF THE INTERNET. MANY OTHER INDUSTRIES ARE ALREADY UTILISING I.C.T. FOR IDENTIFYING, ESTABLISHING AND CONDUCTING BUSINESSES WORLDWIDE. IN THIS REGARD, COMPANIES INVOLVED IN THE HALAL INDUSTRY SHOULD ALSO CAPITALISE ON CYBERSPACE TO EXPAND THEIR BUSINESS REACH. THERE ARE MANY BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS (B.2.B.) AND BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER (B.2.C.) ONLINE PORTALS THAT CAN BE LEVERAGED TO MARKET HALAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TO INSTITUTIONAL BUYERS AND CONSUMERS WORLDWIDE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

11. MIHAS, NOW IN ITS FIFTH YEAR, REPRESENTS MALAYSIA'S COMMITMENT TO THE SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE AND KNOW-HOW TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A VIBRANT GLOBAL HALAL INDUSTRY. MIHAS, THE LARGEST HALAL TRADE EXHIBITION IN THE WORLD, PROVIDES AN EFFECTIVE PLATFORM FOR BOTH MALAYSIAN AND FOREIGN COMPANIES TO ESTABLISH NEW BUSINESS VENTURES, LINKAGES, COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS IN THE HALAL SECTOR. IN THIS RESPECT, I URGE EVERYONE, IN PARTICULAR S.M.E.'S, TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PRESENCE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE VISITORS AND EXHIBITORS TO EXPLORE NEW BUSINESS VENTURES.

12. I AM INFORMED THAT THIS YEAR WE HAVE MANY MORE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITORS. TO THESE FOREIGN GUESTS, I WOULD LIKE TO BID YOU A VERY WARM WELCOME. YOU WILL SEE THAT MALAYSIA HAS MORE TO OFFER THAN JUST BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES. MALAYSIA IS ALSO A FAVOURITE DESTINATION FOR VACATIONERS FROM ALL OVER THE GLOBE. LAST YEAR ALONE WE RECORDED A TOTAL OF 20.9 MILLION TOURIST ARRIVALS. THEY WERE HERE TO VISIT PLACES OF INTEREST AND TO ENJOY MALAYSIAN HOSPITALITY, INCLUDING IN SAVOURING A WIDE VARIETY OF CUISINE AND EXPLORING THE MANIFOLD SHOPPING OPPORTUNITIES ON OFFER. I KNOW THAT MATRADE HAS ARRANGED A FULL AND BUSY BUSINESS PROGRAMME FOR EXHIBITORS. HOWEVER, I HOPE THAT ALL OF

YOU HERE ARE EXPERTS AT MIXING BUSINESS WITH RECREATION, AND HOPE THAT YOU WILL TAKE SOME TIME OFF TO ENJOY THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF MALAYSIA.

13. ON THAT NOTE, AND WITH THE RECITATION OF BISMILLAHIR RAHMANIR RAHIM, IT IS NOW MY PRIVILEGE AND HONOUR TO DECLARE OPEN MIHAS 2008.

THANK YOU.