

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI
AT THE WORLD HALAL FORUM 2008
AT KUALA LUMPUR CONVENTION CENTRE
12 MAY 2008**

BISMILLAHIR RAHMANIR RAHIM

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH AND GOOD MORNING

HIS EXCELLENCY SHEIKH SALEH KAMEL
CHAIRMAN OF THE WORLD HALAL FORUM

HIS EXCELLENCY DR. ANTON APRIYANTONO
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

TAN SRI DR. SYED JALALUDIN SYED SALIM
CHAIRMAN, HALAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, MALAYSIA

EXCELLENCIES

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

1. I AM HONOURED TO WELCOME YOU TO THE THIRD ANNUAL WORLD HALAL FORUM. THIS YEAR SEES THE PARTICIPATION OF STAKEHOLDERS FROM MORE THAN FIFTY COUNTRIES. THIS NUMBER CONTINUES TO GROW EVERY YEAR, REFLECTING THE FORUM'S RISING IMPORTANCE AND ITS VITAL ROLE IN DEVELOPING THE GLOBAL HALAL INDUSTRY.

2. THIS YEAR'S THEME OF 'SUSTAINED DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INVESTMENT AND INTEGRATION' IS BOTH PERTINENT AND APT. GIVEN ITS VAST POTENTIAL, HIGHER LEVELS OF INVESTMENT, INNOVATION AND VALUE ADD ARE NEEDED TO TAKE THE HALAL INDUSTRY UP TO THE NEXT LEVEL. FURTHERMORE, MARKET INTEGRATION IS CRUCIAL IN ORDER TO UNLOCK OPPORTUNITIES AND FACILITATE TRADE IN THIS BURGEONING INDUSTRY.

3. THIS YEAR'S EVENT MARKS THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA, WITH HIS EXCELLENCY SHEIKH SALEH KAMEL TAKING OVER AS CHAIRMAN OF THE WORLD HALAL FORUM. I UNDERSTAND THAT IN THE LAST YEAR, W.H.F. INDUSTRY DIALOGUES WERE HELD IN MORE THAN A DOZEN COUNTRIES, INCLUDING AUSTRALIA, THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, SOUTH AFRICA, INDONESIA, THAILAND, BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA AND THE NETHERLANDS. ISSUES IDENTIFIED AT THOSE DIALOGUES WILL BE TABLED HERE AT THIS FORUM FOR DISCUSSION AND RESOLUTION. I AM CONFIDENT THAT UNDER SHEIKH SALLEH'S ASTUTE LEADERSHIP AND ABLE SUPPORT FROM THE W.H.F. SECRETARIAT, THE FORUM WILL NOT ONLY GROW FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH, BUT WILL ALSO BE ABLE TO CRITICALLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GLOBAL HALAL INDUSTRY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

4. THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT HAS LONG BEEN COMMITTED TOWARDS DEVELOPING THE HALAL INDUSTRY, BOTH DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY. WE CONTINUE TO EMPHASISE THAT COLLABORATION AND NETWORKING – PARTICULARLY AMONG GOVERNMENTS AND KEY PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS – ARE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN THE INDUSTRY'S FUTURE GROWTH. INDEED, THE SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT OF HALAL IS OUR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY. NO NATION OR STAKEHOLDER CAN GO IT ALONE.

5. AS I SPEAK, WE FACE A MYRIAD OF EXTERNAL PRESSURES AND GLOBAL UNCERTAINTIES. THE PRICES OF OIL, COMMODITIES AND STAPLE FOOD HAVE INCREASED TO RECORD HIGHS. INFLATION IS A REAL THREAT FOR MANY ECONOMIES WORLDWIDE, PARTICULARLY FOR MUSLIM COUNTRIES WHO ARE NET FOOD IMPORTERS. FOR THIS AND OTHER REASONS, MUSLIM COUNTRIES MUST REINVENT THEMSELVES AND QUICKLY ADOPT NEW STRATEGIES.

6. FOR EXAMPLE, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE ABOUT 1.8 BILLION MUSLIMS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, IT IS NON-MUSLIM COUNTRIES THAT ARE THE PRIMARY BENEFICIARIES OF THE HALAL INDUSTRY. IN VIEW OF THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT MUSLIM COUNTRIES JOINTLY DEVELOP THE POTENTIAL OF THE HALAL INDUSTRY. THIS GOES BEYOND MEAT-BASED PRODUCTS TO INCLUDE NOT JUST AGRICULTURE AND FOOD INDUSTRIES, BUT ALSO MEDICINE, PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS AND ISLAMIC FINANCIAL SERVICES. IN THIS RESPECT, AS A LEGACY OF MALAYSIA'S PAST CHAIRMANSHIP AND AS OUR COMMITMENT TO THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (O.I.C.), MY GOVERNMENT REITERATES OUR WILLINGNESS TO EXTEND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ALL MUSLIM NATIONS, AS WELL AS TO MUSLIM MINORITIES IN NON O.I.C. NATIONS. THIS ASSISTANCE WILL BE IN THE AREAS OF HALAL CERTIFICATION, TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW AND STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

7. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT HALAL CERTIFICATION IS A KEY ENABLER FOR THE SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT OF THE GLOBAL HALAL INDUSTRY. NONETHELESS, TO-DATE, THERE EXISTS NO OFFICIAL AUTHORITY LOOKING INTO THE INTEGRITY OF THE HALAL MARK AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL. DIFFERING CERTIFICATION STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR HALAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TO FULLY PROSPER.

8. AT THE RECENT O.I.C. SUMMIT IN SENEGAL, A RESOLUTION WAS PASSED AUTHORISING THE ISLAMIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (I.C.C.I.), UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF HIS EXCELLENCY SHEIKH SALEH KAMEL, TO IMPLEMENT HALAL RELATED INITIATIVES. MY GOVERNMENT STRONGLY SUPPORTS THIS RESOLUTION TOWARDS FURTHERING AND HARMONISING THE GROWTH OF THE GLOBAL HALAL INDUSTRY.

9. THIS O.I.C. DECISION IS IN SIMILAR MOULD WITH THE RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT THE PAST TWO WORLD HALAL FORUMS IN 2006 AND 2007. THESE W.H.F. RESOLUTIONS HAD RESULTED IN THE SETTING UP OF AN INTERNATIONAL, NON-PROFIT BODY CALLED THE INTERNATIONAL HALAL INTEGRITY ALLIANCE (I.H.I. ALLIANCE). THIS ORGANISATION WAS FORMED TO ENSURE INTEGRITY THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE HALAL SUPPLY CHAIN, BY ENHANCING AND

HARMONISING HALAL STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL.

10. MY GOVERNMENT HAS FORMALLY ENDORSED THE FUNCTION AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE I.H.I. ALLIANCE. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE O.I.C., THROUGH I.C.C.I., IS ALSO COMMITTED TOWARDS MAKING I.H.I. ALLIANCE A STRONG, CREDIBLE AND RESPECTED GLOBAL HALAL AUTHORITY. TO UNDERLINE MALAYSIA'S COMMITMENT TO THIS INITIATIVE, I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT MY GOVERNMENT WILL PROVIDE 15 MILLION RINGGIT OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS AS FUNDING SUPPORT TO KICK-OFF THE I.H.I. ALLIANCE. I HEREBY URGE OTHER COUNTRIES TO FORMALLY ENDORSE AND SUPPORT I.C.C.I. AND ITS PROGRAM I.H.I. ALLIANCE IN THEIR EFFORTS TO DEVELOP THE GLOBAL HALAL INDUSTRY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

11. SINCE ITS FORMATION IN SEPTEMBER 2006, THE HALAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (H.D.C.) HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT STRIDES TOWARDS DEVELOPING THE DOMESTIC HALAL INDUSTRY. GOING FORWARD, I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT H.D.C. HAS FORMULATED A MASTER PLAN FOR THE MALAYSIAN HALAL INDUSTRY. THE HALAL INDUSTRY MASTER PLAN IS A HOLISTIC AND WIDE-RANGING POLICY DOCUMENT THAT SEEKS TO ESTABLISH MALAYSIA AS A GLOBAL REFERENCE CENTRE FOR HALAL INTEGRITY AND AS A GLOBAL HUB FOR PRODUCTION AND TRADE IN A NUMBER OF HALAL RELATED SECTORS.

12. THE AREAS OF FOCUS IN THE MASTER PLAN HAVE BEEN SELECTED TO LEVERAGE ON MALAYSIA'S STRENGTHS IN HALAL. A PHASED APPROACH WILL BE UTILISED TO ENABLE US TO REALISE OUR VISION OF BECOMING A PREFERRED GLOBAL HUB FOR HALAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES. THIS MASTER PLAN IS IMPORTANT AS IT PROVIDES A CLEAR ROADMAP FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS IN THE HALAL INDUSTRY. THE UNVEILING OF THE MASTER PLAN IS IN LINE WITH H.D.C.'S THEME FOR THIS YEAR, WHICH IS THAT MALAYSIA IS "OPEN TO BUSINESS"; THE H.D.C. HOPES TO ACT AS A CATALYST TO ATTRACT GLOBAL BUSINESSES TO TAKE PART IN MALAYSIA'S HALAL INDUSTRY, AND TO ASSIST MALAYSIAN COMPANIES TO BRING THEIR HALAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TO THE WORLD.

13. THE MASTER PLAN LOOKS TO ESTABLISH MALAYSIA AS A GLOBAL LEADER IN HALAL INTEGRITY BY 2010, THE FIRST STAGE IN OUR PLAN TOWARDS 2020. TO BUILD UPON OUR POSITION IN HALAL INTEGRITY, WE ARE LOOKING AT MALAYSIA'S HALAL CERTIFICATION AS A KEY ENABLER TO ENCOURAGE MORE BUSINESSES TO GO HALAL.

14. I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT H.D.C. IS NOW PROVIDING LOCAL AS WELL AS GLOBAL CERTIFICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF JABATAN KEMAJUAN ISLAM (JAKIM) OF THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT, USING THE EXISTING MALAYSIAN HALAL LOGO. THE MALAYSIAN HALAL CERTIFICATION IS ALREADY GLOBALLY RECOGNISED AND UTILISED BY MULTINATIONAL GIANTS SUCH AS NESTLE AND TESCO. MOREOVER, THE MALAYSIAN HALAL CERTIFICATION STANDS FOR THE HIGHEST STANDARDS RECOGNISED BY INTERNATIONAL BODIES SUCH AS THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

15. H.D.C. WILL MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE HALAL CERTIFICATION SYSTEM, BACKED BY H.D.C.'S SHARIAH AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEES. H.D.C. WILL ALSO CONTINUOUSLY ENHANCE STANDARDS AND MAKE THE APPLICATION PROCESS MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF LOCAL AND GLOBAL BUSINESSES. IN THIS

REGARD, I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT COLGATE PALMOLIVE THAILAND IS THE FIRST RECIPIENT OF H.D.C.'S HALAL CERTIFICATION, AND I AM SURE THAT MANY OTHERS WILL FOLLOW SUIT.

16. IN LINE WITH THE MASTER PLAN, I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO ANNOUNCE THAT MY GOVERNMENT HAS APPROVED ATTRACTIVE INCENTIVES TO DRAW BUSINESSES TO MALAYSIA. THE MASTER PLAN HAS IDENTIFIED FOCUS AREAS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY'S HALAL INDUSTRY, BASED ON THE POTENTIAL TO CREATE THE MOST ECONOMIC IMPACT. THE PROMOTED INDUSTRIES ARE SPECIALTY PROCESSED FOODS, COSMETICS AND PERSONAL CARE, PHARMACEUTICALS, HALAL INGREDIENTS, AND LIVESTOCK AND MEAT PRODUCTS. FOR INDUSTRY PLAYERS IN THESE PROMOTED INDUSTRIES, THE INCENTIVES INCLUDE INVESTMENT TAX ALLOWANCE OR EXEMPTION ON STATUTORY INCOME FROM EXPORT SALES. IN ADDITION, THERE WILL BE EXEMPTION FROM IMPORT DUTY ON RAW MATERIALS AS WELL AS DOUBLE DEDUCTION ON EXPENSES INCURRED IN OBTAINING INTERNATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS.

17. THERE IS ANOTHER SET OF INCENTIVES SPECIFICALLY TARGETED AT HALAL PARKS AND LOGISTICS OPERATORS TO ENSURE THAT BUSINESSES HAVE THE OPTIMAL SUPPLY CHAIN AND INFRASTRUCTURE. SUCH INCENTIVES INCLUDE PIONEER STATUS OR INVESTMENT TAX ALLOWANCE, AS WELL AS EXEMPTION FROM IMPORT DUTY ON EQUIPMENT USED IN COLD ROOM OPERATIONS.

18. THESE INCENTIVES WERE PUT FORWARD BY H.D.C. AFTER DIALOGUES WITH GLOBAL AND LOCAL INDUSTRY PLAYERS, IN ORDER TO MEET THE NEEDS OF BUSINESSES WISHING TO INVEST IN THE MALAYSIAN HALAL SECTOR. I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT AS OF TODAY, BUSINESSES CAN APPLY TO H.D.C. FOR SUCH INCENTIVES.

19. MOVING FORWARD, ONE OF H.D.C.'S ROLES AS PART OF THE MASTER PLAN IS TO ENSURE INTEGRATED AND COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MALAYSIAN HALAL INDUSTRY, THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE VALUE CHAIN. THE HALAL VALUE CHAIN IS EXTREMELY DIVERSE. AMONG THE SECTORS INVOLVED ARE ISLAMIC FINANCE, HALAL LOGISTICS, LIVESTOCK AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE, HALAL PARKS, HALAL ENTREPRENEURS, S.M.E. DEVELOPMENT AND EXPORT PROMOTION.

20. HALAL PARKS ARE A VITAL LINK IN THIS VALUE CHAIN. AS SUCH, I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT MALAYSIA'S FIRST FLAGSHIP HALAL ZONE, WHICH IS LOCATED IN THE PORT KLANG FREE ZONE, IS ALREADY UP AND RUNNING AS A PRIME PRODUCTION LOCATION FOR HALAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES. ASIDE FROM THIS FLAGSHIP ZONE, H.D.C. IS ALSO SUPPORTING OTHER HALAL PARKS DEVELOPED BY STATE GOVERNMENTS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR. INTERESTED PARTIES SHOULD APPROACH H.D.C. TO UNDERSTAND HOW THEY CAN BENEFIT FROM LOCATING IN MALAYSIA'S HALAL PARKS.

21. WITH THESE STEPS IN PLACE, MALAYSIA IS CONFIDENT THAT IT CAN EMERGE AS A MAJOR GLOBAL HALAL HUB IN THE FUTURE. MY GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TOWARDS ENSURING THAT THE MASTER PLAN IS ROBUSTLY IMPLEMENTED TOWARDS ACHIEVING ALL OF ITS OBJECTIVES.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

22. IT IS ALWAYS PLEASING TO SEE THE WORLD HALAL FORUM SPARK OFF MANY RELATIONSHIPS IN THE HALAL SPHERE. TODAY, WE WILL PRESIDE OVER THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN I.C.C.I AND I.H.I. ALLIANCE, AND WITNESS THE SIGNING OF SEVERAL MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN H.D.C AND OTHER RELEVANT PARTIES.

23. THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN I.C.C.I. AND I.H.I. ALLIANCE IS A MOMENTOUS AND EXCITING DEVELOPMENT. A NEW HALAL INDUSTRY GLOBAL AUTHORITY IS BEING EMPOWERED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE O.I.C. TO CATALYSE THE DEVELOPMENT OF GLOBAL HALAL STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION.

24. SECONDLY, H.D.C., TABUNG HAJI AND DUBAI INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT GROUP (D.I.I.G.) ARE FORMALISING AN UNDERSTANDING TO PROVIDE SHARIAH COMPLIANT FUNDS FOR THE HALAL INDUSTRY IN THIS REGION.

25. THIRDLY, I WISH TO CONGRATULATE C.I.M.B. PRIVATE EQUITY AND TRACETRAKER FOR SIGNING THEIR MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TO PROVIDE FACILITATION OF PRODUCT AND SERVICE INTEGRITY WITHIN THE HALAL SUPPLY CHAIN.

26. FOURTHLY, I COMMEND THE EAST MALAYSIAN HALAL PARK DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN TANJUNG MANIS, SARAWAK, FOR SIGNING A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH H.D.C. TO DEVELOP FULL-FLEDGED HALAL INDUSTRIAL PARKS.

27. FIFTHLY, I LAUD THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN H.D.C. AND PORT KLANG FREE ZONE FOR SIGNING A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TO MANAGE MALAYSIA'S FIRST FLAGSHIP HALAL ZONE.

28. TO THE REST OF THOSE INVOLVED, THESE BEING M.I.S.C. INTEGRATED LOGISTICS, PRIMA AGRI FOODS, THE AUTONOMOUS REGION OF MUSLIM MINDANAO, TAMADAM AND KFC HOLDINGS; I COMMEND YOU FOR CHOOSING THE WORLD HALAL FORUM 2008 TO SHOWCASE YOUR COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS IN THE HALAL INDUSTRY. I AM CONFIDENT THAT ALL THE SIGNINGS TODAY WILL BRING TREMENDOUS BENEFITS NOT ONLY FOR THE MALAYSIAN HALAL SECTOR, BUT ALSO FOR THE GLOBAL HALAL INDUSTRY.

29. FINALLY, I WISH TO THANK AND CONGRATULATE THE ORGANISERS FOR ONCE AGAIN SUCCESSFULLY ORGANISING THE WORLD HALAL FORUM. I URGE ALL DELEGATES TO FULLY PARTICIPATE IN AND CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE FORUM OVER THE NEXT TWO DAYS, FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE UMMAH AND THE WORLD AS A WHOLE.

30. I PRAY FOR GOD'S GRACE AND BLESSINGS TOWARDS A MOST PRODUCTIVE AND SUCCESSFUL FORUM. ON THAT NOTE, WITH THE RECITATION OF BISMILLAHIR RAHMANIR RAHIM, IT IS NOW MY PLEASURE TO OFFICIALLY DECLARE THE WORLD HALAL FORUM 2008, OPEN.

THANK YOU.