

**SPEECH BY
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI
AT THE I.I.U.M. SPECIAL CONVOCATION 2009
AT INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA (IIUM)
16 MARCH 2009**

MENGHADAP KE BAWAH DULI YANG MAHA MULIA SULTAN DAN PEMERINTAH
NEGERI PAHANG DARUL MAKMUR

SULTAN HAJI AHMAD SHAH AL-MUSTA'IN BILLAH IBNI AL-MARHUM SULTAN ABU
BAKAR RI'AYATUDDIN AL MU'ADZAM SHAH

KETUA PERLEMBAGAAN
UNIVERSITI ISLAM ANTARABANGSA MALAYSIA

DAN

DULI YANG MAHA MULIA SULTANAH PAHANG
SULTANAH HAJJAH KALSOM

AMPUN TUANKU, BERIBU RIBU AMPUN,
SEMBAH PATIK HARAP DI AMPUN

PATIK MOHON PERKENAN TUANKU UNTUK MENYAMPAIKAN UCAPAN DI DALAM
BAHASA INGGERIS SEBAGAI MENGALU-ALUKAN TETAMU YANG TURUT HADIR

AMPUN TUANKU

HONOURABLE DATO' SERI MOHAMED KHALED NORDIN
MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION MALAYSIA

AND HONOURABLE DATIN SERI ROSNI OMAR

HONOURABLE TAN SRI MOHD. SIDEK BIN HAJI HASSAN
PRESIDENT OF INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

AND HONOURABLE PUAN SRI WAN NOORLINA WAN HUSSIN

HONOURABLE PROF. DATO' DR. SYED ARABI IDID
RECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

AND HONOURABLE DATIN NORMA ABDUL SAMAD

HONOURABLE PROF. DATO' DR. MD TAHIR AZHAR
CHAIRMAN OF IIUM SPECIAL CONVOCATION 2009

HONOURABLE MINISTERS

HIS EXCELLENCIES

IIUM MAJLIS MEMBERS AND BOARD OF GOVERNORS

HIS EXCELLENCIES AMBASSADORS AND HIGH COMMISSIONERS
YANG HORMAT AHLI-AHLI JUMAAH PANGKUAN NEGERI PAHANG
VICE CHANCELLORS AND
REPRESENTATIVES OF INSTITUTE OF HIGHER LEARNING
HONOURABLE TAN SRI - TAN SRI , PUAN SRI – PUAN SRI ,
DATO' - DATO', DATIN – DATIN AND HONORABLE GUESTS
STAFF AND STUDENTS OF
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA
MEMBERS OF MEDIA / LADIES AND GENTLEMAN
ASSALAMUALAIKUM – WARAHMATULLAHI – WABARAKATUH

1. IT IS INDEED A GREAT HONOUR FOR ME TO STAND BEFORE YOU TODAY AS THE RECIPIENT OF THIS DISTINGUISHED AWARD WHICH YOU BESTOW UPON ME. I FEEL VERY TOUCHED BY THE GESTURE AND MAGNANIMITY OF THE UNIVERSITY FOR ORGANISING THIS SPECIAL CEREMONY TO CONFER UPON ME THIS AWARD. INDEED, I AM WELL AWARE OF THE HONOUR THAT YOU HAVE ACCORDED ME, AND I AM BOTH DELIGHTED AND HUMBLED BY SUCH A CONFERMENT.

2. THIS AWARD IS ALL THE MORE MEANINGFUL BECAUSE OF THE ASSOCIATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND CIVILIZATION, AN INSTITUTION WHOSE REPUTATION PRECEDES ITSELF. ITS ESTABLISHMENT UNDER THE RENOWNED PHILOSOPHER-SCHOLAR, PROFESSOR DR. SYED NAQUIB AL-ATTAS, AND ITS SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT INTO A DISTINGUISHED CENTER OF LEARNING FOCUSING ON ISLAMIC THOUGHT, PHILOSOPHY, CIVILIZATION AND SCIENCE, IS WELL KNOWN TO ACADEMICS ALL OVER THE WORLD.

3. PROFESSOR AL-ATTAS SET TO WORK ESTABLISHING AN INSTITUTION THAT WOULD "CARRY OUT A CONCENTRATED AND DETAILED RESEARCH ON THE ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF KNOWLEDGE,". I AM HEARTENED TO SEE THAT THE INSTITUTE HAS PROGRESSED WELL TOWARDS MEETING ITS OBJECTIVES AS SET BY PROFESSOR AL-ATTAS.

4. ALL MUSLIMS, FROM A TENDER AGE, ARE TAUGHT AND MADE AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION AND EDUCATION. FOR SOME INDIVIDUALS, THE LESSONS THAT THEY OBTAIN PROPEL THEM TO PLAY A MORE SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN ADDRESSING THE CONCERNS OF THE UMMAH. THEY STRIVE, CONSCIOUSLY OR UNCONSCIOUSLY, PURPOSEFULLY OR OTHERWISE, TO THIS END. THESE INDIVIDUALS HAVE TURNED OUT TO BE THE "NAQUIB" OR LEADERS OF THE AGES. THOSE THAT HAVE COME BEFORE US HAVE LEFT BEHIND IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS THAT HAVE PLACED THE UMMAH IN A BETTER POSITION AND MADE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE IN.

5. WE ARE NOT AMAZED BY THESE ACHIEVEMENTS BECAUSE THOSE WHO ARE CONSCIOUS OF THE CALL OF RELIGION UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS COMMENSURATE WITH THE DEMANDS OF AD-DEEN. THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE US CLUNG TO THIS DICTUM WITH STEADFASTNESS, AND WITHIN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME, THEY CONTRIBUTED INNUMERABLE IDEAS AND INVENTIONS — IN PHILOSOPHY, HUMANITIES, ARTS AND THE SCIENCES — THAT BROUGHT MUCH ADVANCEMENT TO THE WORLD.

6. WITHOUT QUESTION, MUSLIMS HAVE PARTICIPATED WELL IN THIS HISTORICAL JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY AND CONTRIBUTION, ADDING MUCH TO THE GROWTH OF OUR OWN COLLECTIVE CIVILIZATION AND THAT OF THE WORLD AS A WHOLE. IN THOUGHT AND CIVILIZATION, ISLAM HAS PRODUCED ENDURING AND STALWART PERSONALITIES THAT FEW IN ANY OTHER CIVILIZATION CAN CLAIM TO HAVE EQUALED.

7. AS MUSLIMS, WE RIGHTFULLY LAY CLAIM TO THE FACT THAT WE AWAKENED EUROPE INTELLECTUALLY FROM THE DARK AGES, BUT MOURN THE DAY THAT WE CHOSE TO SLUMBER AFTER SHOWING THEM THE LIGHT. MUSLIM HISTORIANS HAVE STUDIED THE CAUSE OF OUR DECLINE AS WELL AS OUR ABANDONMENT OF THE DESIRE TO INNOVATE, CREATE AND DEVELOP.

8. WHATEVER THE REASON FOR THIS DECLINE, WE KNOW, WITHOUT A DOUBT, THAT IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN ARRESTED A LONG TIME AGO. THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION IS THAT OUR DISADVANTAGED STATE OF AFFAIRS TODAY IS THE FAILURE OF OUR PREDECESSORS TO RECOGNIZE AND ADDRESS THIS REGRESSION EFFECTIVELY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

9. TODAY, THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE ISSUES GOVERNING THE PRESENT DAY MUSLIM WORLD — IN THE FORM OF DIVERSE OPINIONS ABOUT THE WAY FORWARD AND DIFFERENCES REGARDING THE ADOPTION OF THE APPROPRIATE SOLUTIONS TO COLLECTIVE CONCERNS — HAVE HINDERED MUSLIMS FROM PRESENTING A MUCH NEEDED UNITED FRONT. THIS INABILITY HAS DEBILITATED US AS A PEOPLE TO RESPOND ADEQUATELY TO THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHALLENGES OF A MODERN GLOBALISED WORLD.

10. NOWHERE IS THIS MORE STARKLY DEMONSTRATED THAN THE ISSUE OF IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, AND PALESTINE WHERE THE SUFFERING IMPOSED ON THESE PEOPLE HAVE BROUGHT TO LIGHT AN OLD, YET NEW REALITY OF OUR CONTINUING INADEQUACIES. THE RECENT GAZA TRAGEDY IS YET ANOTHER CLEAR INDICATION OF OUR IMPOTENCE AS A PEOPLE TO DICTATE SOLUTIONS TO AN UNRELENTING PROBLEM THAT HAS PERSISTED FOR THE PAST SIXTY YEARS ON OUR TERMS. DISTURBINGLY, THIS CRISIS SHOWS NO SIGN OF ABATING IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HUNDREDS OF INNOCENT LIVES HAVE BEEN SHED IN THIS MASSACRE WITH THE AID OF SOME OF THE MOST SOPHISTICATED MACHINES IN THE WORLD AND ALL THAT WE COULD DO WAS WATCH HELPLESSLY. THE UNITED NATIONS, UNFORTUNATELY, WAS INCAPABLE OF DOING ANY BETTER.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

11. AT THIS JUNCTURE, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE AS MUSLIMS BEGIN TO ASK OURSELVES SOME VERY PERTINENT QUESTIONS. FIRSTLY, HOW DO WE GO

ABOUT ACHIEVING OUR ASPIRATIONS IN LINE WITH THE DICTATES OF OUR RELIGION? SECONDLY, HOW DO WE REGAIN CONTROL AND ORDER IN A WORLD THAT APPEARS BENT ON MISUNDERSTANDING US WHILE CONTINUING TO LOOK AT US THROUGH MYOPIC EYES?

12. AS A START, WE MUST LOOK TO TRUTH AND JUSTICE TO GUIDE OUR WAY. IN THE GLOBAL ARENA, WE MUST MAKE IT A POINT TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE, COOPERATE OPENLY, AND HELP BUILD OUR COUNTRIES ALONG THE TENETS OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE QURAN AND SUNNAH OF THE PROPHET (P.B.U.H.). INDEED, MUSLIM COUNTRIES HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR COMPETENCY AND READINESS TO BE PART AND PARCEL OF THE PROCESS OF GLOBALISATION AND MODERNISATION. ISLAMIC COUNTRIES AND MUSLIM SOCIETIES MUST INSTITUTE REFORMS AND RENEWAL IN THEIR THINKING AS WELL AS IN THEIR GOVERNANCE PROCESSES.

13. IN THIS REGARD, WE MUST GIVE PRIORITY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN CAPITAL, ESPECIALLY THROUGH THE PROVISION OF TERTIARY EDUCATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS FOR THE UMMAH. FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE ESTABLISHED THE WORLD ISLAMIC ECONOMIC FORUM (W.I.E.F.), WHICH IS INTENDED AS A PLATFORM TO PROMOTE THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AND TO BUILD BRIDGES FOR BUSINESS COLLABORATION TO BENEFIT THE UMMAH. IN ADDITION, MALAYSIA HAS PROMOTED THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC FINANCE BY ESTABLISHING PROPER REGULATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION IN ISLAMIC FINANCE (I.N.C.E.I.F.). MOREOVER, WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO DEVELOP I.I.U.M. INTO ONE OF THE FINEST ISLAMIC CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH. BY ACTIVELY ENGAGING IN THE HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS, MUSLIMS WILL BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THROUGH WORD AND DEED THAT ISLAM IS NO OBSTACLE TO PROGRESS AND MODERNITY, INCLUDING THE PRACTICE OF DEMOCRACY.

14. IN MALAYSIA, WE HAVE ALSO EMBARKED UPON AN INITIATIVE CALLED ISLAM HADHARI WHICH WE HOPE WILL PROVIDE A BLUEPRINT AND ESTABLISH BALANCE IN OUR PURSUIT OF PROGRESS AND ENLIGHTENMENT. I HAVE IDENTIFIED TEN PRINCIPLES - OR MANHAJ - AS CONSTITUTING THE FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM HADHARI, WHICH I BELIEVE CAN HELP US BETTER FOCUS OUR EFFORTS.

- I. THE FIRST IS FAITH IN AND PIETY TOWARDS ALLAH;
- II. THE SECOND, A JUST AND TRUSTWORTHY GOVERNMENT;
- III. THE THIRD, A FREE AND INDEPENDENT PEOPLE;
- IV. THE FOURTH, THE VIGOROUS PURSUIT AND MASTERY OF KNOWLEDGE;
- V. THE FIFTH, THE REQUIREMENT FOR A BALANCED AND COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT;
- VI. THE SIXTH, THE STRESS ON ACHIEVING A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE PEOPLE;

VII. THE SEVENTH, PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF MINORITY GROUPS AND WOMEN;

VIII. THE EIGHTH, THE MAINTENANCE OF CULTURAL AND MORAL INTEGRITY;

IX. THE NINTH, THE SAFEGUARDING OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT; AND FINALLY

X. THE TENTH, THE STRONG NEED FOR DEFENCE CAPABILITIES.

15. IT IS MY FERVENT HOPE THAT THESE PRINCIPLES CAN HELP MEET SOME OF THE CONCERNS THAT I HAVE TOUCHED UPON EARLIER. IT IS OUR INTENTION TO ADOPT ISLAM HADHARI AS A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF MANKIND, SOCIETY AND COUNTRY BASED ON THE PERSPECTIVE OF ISLAMIC TEACHINGS AND THE ISLAMIC CIVILISATION. AS AN APPROACH TO RELIGION, WE FEEL THAT EVERYONE CAN BE COMFORTABLE WITH ISLAM HADHARI BECAUSE IT EMBODIES PRINCIPLES WHICH ARE UNIVERSALLY FAMILIAR AND ACCEPTED.

16. AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL, I BELIEVE ISLAM HADHARI WILL BE ABLE TO SHOWCASE ISLAM AS A TOLERANT AND CARING RELIGION. BUT I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE IT CLEAR TO ALL CONCERNED, TO MY FELLOW MUSLIMS IN PARTICULAR, THAT ISLAM HADHARI IS NOT A NEW RELIGION OR A MAZHAB OR ANY KIND OF NEW RELIGIOUS ORDER. ISLAM HADHARI MERELY REEMPHASISES THE CENTRALITY OF ISLAM IN THE DAILY LIVES OF ITS BELIEVERS, IT SERVES AS THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR APPRECIATING AND PRACTICING THE FAITH IN THESE MODERN TIMES, INSYA-ALLAH.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

17. TO ENSURE SUCCESS, THE ISLAMIC CONTRIBUTION TO GLOBALISATION AND MODERNISATION MUST NECESSARILY BE DONE WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD. WE MUST CORRECT MISCONCEPTIONS AND ERASE SUSPICIONS WHICH EXIST BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE ISLAMIC WORLD. WE SHOULD PROMOTE A CULTURE OF TOLERANCE BETWEEN CIVILIZATIONS. WE MUST CREATE MORE INTER-CIVILIZATIONAL INITIATIVES SUCH AS THE TEACHING OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION AND CULTURE IN OUR INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING. WE SHOULD ADOPT A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO JOINT SCHOLARSHIP AND OTHER SIMILAR EFFORTS.

18. WE NEED TO FOSTER RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCES WITHIN OUR SOCIETIES. IT IS IMPORTANT HOWEVER TO REALIZE THAT IN EVERY RELIGIOUS TRADITION OF THE WORLD, THERE ARE ALWAYS EXTREMISTS THAT DO NOT REPRESENT THE VAST MAJORITY OF PEACEFUL BELIEVERS. THE GREATEST TRAVESTY IS WHEN SOMETHING CONDEMNABLE IS DONE IN THE NAME OF RELIGION.

19. WE MUST NOT ALLOW IRRESPONSIBLE TALK ABOUT AN IMPENDING CLASH BETWEEN CIVILIZATIONS TO BECOME A SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY. THE CHALLENGE THAT FACES US NOW IS TO LET MODERATE VOICES FROM THE WEST AND THE ISLAMIC WORLD TO PREVAIL IN A MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE THAT WILL SERVE THE NEEDS OF ALL.

20. I AGREE THAT THIS IS NOT A TIME TO BEMOAN THE INJUSTICES OF THE PAST, TO POINT THE FINGER AT ANYONE, OR TO APPORTION BLAME ON ANY RELIGION. BUT ANY DIALOGUE CAN ONLY BE MEANINGFUL IF IT IS A GENUINE TWO-WAY PROCESS THAT TAKES PLACE IN AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH IS FAIR, JUST AND EQUAL.

21. I BELIEVE IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS, BOTH IN THE WEST AND IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD, TO CREATE THAT SITUATION WHERE THE VOICE OF REASON CAN PREVAIL OVER THE VOICES OF HATE, BIGOTRY AND IGNORANCE. THIS IS THE TIME TO BE HONEST, RATIONAL AND SINCERE WITH OURSELVES FOR THE GOOD OF OUR OWN GENERATION AND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS TO COME.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

22. I AM CONFIDENT THAT I.I.U.M. WILL ALSO PLAY ITS PART TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DIALOGUE AND ISSUES WE HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT AND I BELIEVE THAT I.I.U.M. WILL BE ONE OF THE GREAT CENTRES OF LEARNING, INSYA'ALLAH. BEFORE I END, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WISH I.I.U.M. GREAT SUCCESS IN ALL ITS ENDEAVOURS AND TO ONCE AGAIN THANK THE UNIVERSITY FOR BESTOWING ON ME THIS AWARD.

THANK YOU.