

THE LAUNCHING OF MALAYSIA

THE NATIONAL PLANETARIUM, KUALA LUMPUR, 13 JANUARI 1995

I would like to thank the members of the Malaysia Space and Telecommunications Research Consortium or MAXSTAR in short, for inviting me to the launch of Malaysia's Micro-Satellite Programme.

2. I am told the consortium, whose members comprise industry representatives, Government agencies and universities, have been working very hard for several months on the mission and payload details of the first Malaysian Micro-Satellite. I am happy to note that the Micro-Satellite's configuration will be finalised by July this year and it is expected that the first Micro-Satellite will take two years to build and scheduled for launch by Arianespace in July 1997.

3. This Micro-Satellite Programme will certainly take us a step closer to achieving the ability to design, engineer, build and launch a Malaysian spacecraft. Contracts for Measat-I and Measat-II which were signed last May paved the way for Malaysia's participation in space and telecommunications technology. The Measat System, together with space research and education, are an important and integral link to support the total development of a technologically advanced and efficient communications infrastructure in Malaysia.

4. The launch of Measat-I on 20 December 1995 will be followed, I understand, by that of Measat-II in July 1996. In addition, two satellites, built under the Micro-Satellite programme, will be placed in orbit before the end of the decade. These four launches will firmly position Malaysia among nations that own and operate satellites built to satisfy their specific requirements.

5. The Measat System and Micro-Satellite Programme will provide the country with a platform on which we can further develop our space and telecommunications technology. Hopefully, Malaysia will be one of the countries in the region that will be able to launch its own made-in-Malaysia spacecraft.

6. For this purpose, MAXSTAR has been established. The members of MAXSTAR are : Binariang Sdn. Bhd; Telekom Malaysia Berhad; Bahagian Kajian Sains Angkasa (BAKSA); The Malaysian Institute of Micro-Electronics Systems (MIMOS); Universiti Sains Malaysia; Universiti Malaya; Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia; Universiti Teknologi Malaysia and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia. MAXSTAR is an example of how a commercial project has led to cooperation between the public and private sectors to serve national interests. MAXSTAR will undertake a Micro-

Satellite Programme that will enable scientific research activities, in and from space, to be carried out.

7. The Micro-Satellites have several applications that will benefit the community. The first Micro-Satellite weighing about 50 kilogram will be designed to carry out scientific and educational operations and remote sensing, i.e. the gathering of data from the earth's surface for resource management, land use and the protection of the environment.

8. It is planned that subsequent Micro-Satellites would be capable of sophisticated applications including material and component testing in space and earth-based pollution monitoring.

9. The aerospace industry can also expect significant derivative benefits from the work that will be undertaken by MAXSTAR.

10. The Government is pleased to note that following the G-15 Meeting in New Delhi in 1994, India, through the Indian Space and Research Organisation or ISRO, will support Malaysia in its space programme. ISRO will assist us in the development of our technology to build and launch satellites.

11. I take this opportunity to thank the Government of the Republic of India and ISRO for their assistance and participation in developing Malaysia's space programme and launch technology. It is also our hope that this participation by ISRO will lead to collaboration in other related activities such as satellite broadcasting.

12. As part of the MEASAT contracts, Arianespace and Hughes Space and Communications, Inc. have also agreed to actively participate in Malaysia's space programme. I am pleased to note that our space programme involves participation by India, France and the United States and demonstrates Malaysia's ability to interact and work globally.

13. Malaysian institutions of higher learning will benefit through participation in MAXSTAR. It is envisaged that Universiti Sains Malaysia will be able to offer courses in satellite and launch vehicle technology and applications starting from the 1996/1997 academic year, ultimately leading to the establishment of a space technology faculty.

14. In addition to leading the Micro-Satellite Programme, I am told Binariang has provided initial funding to Universiti Sains Malaysia. Arrangements have also been made for two members of the academic staff of the University to undergo training and internship at Hughes.

15. The space and communications industry requires vast capital, human and technical resources to acquire and to keep pace with the rapidly advancing technology. To this end, the Government recognises the need for selected alliances among Malaysian companies and between these companies and foreign technology partners.

16. In this context, I understand that Binariang and Telekom Malaysia Berhad have entered into joint working arrangements. These arrangements will accelerate the development of an efficient and state-of-the-art national communications infrastructure and, at the same time, optimise the nation's resources.

17. In conclusion, I would like to wish the Malaysia Space and Telecommunications Research Consortium every success in undertaking the ambitious task ahead.

18. When Malaysia first put forward the idea of a national car, it was thought that we were being too ambitious. However, the record of Proton has proved our capability not only to have control over our own commercial destiny but also our ability to interact and compete globally. Whilst we are equally ambitious in the task before us, we are confident that the success of this programme will serve as a role model and inspire future generations.