

THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE SUNWAY LAGOON RESORT HOTEL
PETALING JAYA, SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN, 17 SEPTEMBER 1997

I would like to thank the Sungei Way Group for inviting me here tonight to officiate the opening of the Sunway Lagoon Resort Hotel.

2. I understand that this Resort is an emulation of the West Edmonton Mall in Canada and has taken the best features of Suncity of South Africa, while flavoured with local architecture, colour and culture.

3. The construction of Resort Hotels such as this is consistent with the Government's policy to encourage the growth of foreign and local tourism. Currently, the tourism industry is the nation's second largest foreign exchange earner, after the manufacturing sector. This dynamics of working hand-in-hand between the public and the private sector is most welcome by the government as this would enable the private sector to generate profits, while at the same time create other spin-off effects.

4. It is in this context that world class hotels, such as the Sunway Lagoon Resort Hotel, can play a significant role in helping the Government put Malaysia on the tourism and business world map.

5. The development of this hotel augurs well for the forthcoming Commonwealth Games which Malaysia is hosting. I also understand that the Bowling event of the Commonwealth Games will be held at the adjacent Pyramid Shopping Mall. This will certainly attract many visitors to the country, who will seek accommodation at this beautiful hotel. I am confident that the hotel will continue to execute its professional competence which it has demonstrated during the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting last month.

6. In the Government's attempt to encourage the private sector to contribute to the development of the country, pragmatic policies have been designed to support mega tourism-related projects initiated by private companies. We acknowledge their contribution, and we encourage the private sector by granting many incentives and certification and approval from the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism.

7. In addition, the Government is prepared to allow incentives such as Investment Tax Allowance under the Promotion Investment Act (1986), that would cushion the initial difficulties arising from such projects in the early years of their operations. This incentive has been extended to Sunway Lagoon Resort Hotel, which has no doubt benefitted from Government's assistance.

8. Apart from drawing the tourist crowds to Malaysia, it is also our hope that Malaysia will be known as the venue for world class conventions and exhibitions. The Sunway Lagoon Resort Hotel has invested a total of RM320 million into building this 439-room hotel, which is equipped with the latest state-of-the-art facilities, built with the most advanced technology, with the largest pillarless convention and exhibition hall in this region. It is therefore ideally suited for

international events of any kind. This is in keeping with the Government' s call to promote Malaysia as a preferred venue for international conventions and exhibitions. The development of this facility will no doubt provide an impetus for other hoteliers and conventioners to become more competitive, thereby elevating the standards of services across the industry.

9. In terms of strategic location, the Sunway Lagoon Resort Hotel is well placed near the new growth centres, such as the Commonwealth Games Village, Putrajaya and the new Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang. These growth centres will be linked to Subang and Bandar Sunway through an extensive network of expressways, electric trains, and the innovative monorails that are being constructed privately within Bandar Sunway. All this infrastructure will ease public accessibility to the various places, ensuring that all the strategic locations are well connected with the Multimedia Super Corridor. In fact, Sunway City is separated from the MSC only by the new Shah Alam Expressway. One day, the MSC could even include Sunway City and this hotel.

10. This Lagoon Hotel is indeed poised to play a significant role in attracting both national and international visitors and investors to the region. Together with its related attractions -- the Sunway Lagoon Theme Park and the Sunway Pyramid Shopping Mall, I am confident that the ambience, the assorted themed suites and other spectacular features, will make this township of Sunway City a truly unique experience in this part of the world.

11. I wish to congratulate Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah for his leadership in the field of hospitality and property development. This success could only have been achieved from the pursuit of your vision, the tenacity of your people and your determination to grow with and contribute to the nation' s progress.

12. I now have much pleasure to declare officially open the Sunway Lagoon Resort Hotel.