

**The Official Dinner Hosted By H.E. Dr Edmund Stoiber Minister
President Of Bavaria**

Munich, Germany 18 March 2002

On behalf of my wife, my delegation and on my own behalf, I wish to thank Your Excellency and the State of Bavaria for this sumptuous dinner and the warm hospitality accorded to us. I am indeed happy to be here more so as I had to postpone my earlier trip due to the tragic events of September 11.

2. We are experiencing at first hand the wonderful charm and hospitality that Bavarians are famous for. Munich is a beautiful city which has managed to blend history and tradition with its modern status as the hi-tech centre of Germany.

3. I have brought a large delegation with me, both from the Government and the private sector, because there is much to learn from Bavaria. The fact is that over a relatively short period of time, Bavaria has transformed from an agricultural economy to the most dynamic and modern industrial state in Germany.

4. Today Bavaria is still known for its picturesque mountains and rolling farmlands, its cuckoo clocks and the October Fest. But Bavaria is today also the most prosperous state in Germany. Bavaria accounts for 32 percent of the total German GDP and is the ninth largest economy in the E.U. Your Excellency, I am told that under your stewardship, Bavaria has continued to grow in importance. Your encouragement to new industries particularly in the IT sector has resulted in the growth of a vibrant IT industry. Apart from world class companies such as Siemens, BMW, Infineon, Wacker and many others which are headquartered in Munich, the policies of your Government and your foresight have resulted in the establishment of a host of very efficiently run, innovative and profitable SMEs. These SMEs, or 'mittel stand' as I believe they are called in German, now constitute the backbone of Bavaria's prosperity.

5. I congratulate the State of Bavaria for its success.

6. I have brought with me a number of business leaders from Malaysia. I hope that in the short time that we have in Munich there can be some interaction between them and Bavarian business leaders which could lead to business and investments in Malaysia.

7. There is much that Malaysia can offer investors from Bavaria. While we are open to all value added and hi-tech

ventures, we are particularly interested in ICT and the multimedia.

8. In fact Malaysia is already quite well known to many investors from Bavaria. I can assume that they feel Malaysia offers a profitable and safe place for their investments. We would like to assure you that Malaysia will continue to be a safe and stable place for your investments.

9. My delegation and I have had a most enjoyable and fruitful stay in Munich. I personally have learnt much from my short stay here after discussions with the business community and briefings by your officials.

10. Once again, I wish to express my deepest appreciation to Your Excellency and to the State of Bavaria for the warm hospitality.