

The Official Launching Of The Construction Of Malaysian Trade and Distribution Centre (MTDC) .

Bahrain, 21 April 2002

I am most delighted to be here today with the presence of prominent business leaders of Bahrain.

2. We are honoured to have with us His Excellency Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa. What we are witnessing today is a testimony of a concrete form of collaboration between Malaysia and Bahrain. This collaboration is the establishment of Malaysian Trade and Distribution Centre (MTDC) in Bahrain. When it is completed and operationalised, it will be Malaysia's first comprehensive trade exhibition and distribution centre in West Asia.

3. This project is realised through the collaborative efforts of both countries. The Government of Bahrain is providing the land for the Centre, while the Government of Malaysia is responsible for the design and construction as well as the management and operation of the Centre.

4. Bahrain was selected for the establishment of the MTDC because: - it is gaining importance as a re-export and distribution centre in the West Asia and the neighbouring countries with well developed port and airport facilities, as well as logistics facilities for warehousing and distribution. - its status as the hub of banking and insurance services in West Asia.

5. The Centre will complement the services sector on banking, insurance and port facilities that are made available by Malaysian companies in Bahrain. With this package of facilities, Malaysian exporters to Bahrain and its surrounding region will be able to obtain benefit from a network of services and facilities offered by Malaysian companies.

6. For Malaysia, the Centre will serve to promote Malaysia as a manufacturer and exporter of quality products and services in Bahrain and its surrounding region. This is in tandem with the promotion of Bahrain as a trade, services, distribution and industrial centre in the region. Therefore, we are working together to promote, facilitate and expand trade between Malaysia and Bahrain and the neighbouring countries.

7. With a total floor space of more than 37,000 square metres, the Centre will have two main buildings for retail and warehouse facilities. The emporium/hypermarket will form

an important component which will provide retail space for a wide range of "Made-in Malaysia" products.

8. For Malaysian companies, the Centre provides a platform to explore and familiarise themselves with potential and emerging markets in West Asia. There will also be facilities to showcase Malaysian products and services that are available for export. The Centre will also facilitate export through bulk shipment to Bahrain and the surrounding markets which will help reduce costs of transportation and handling. The warehousing facilities are conducive for bulk-breaking and repacking of smaller orders for redistribution to buyers and importers in the region.

9. The strategic location of this Centre provides easy accessibility to the public and business community. For the business community in Bahrain and the neighbouring countries, the Centre will provide opportunities for them to view and inspect samples as well as make enquiries on Malaysian products and services that are available for export.

10. To make it a Centre that will also be attractive to families, the Centre will have entertainment facilities for the family, food outlets, individual specialty shops, cineplex, sales and service centre, and health center / gymnasium.

11. Other facilities that are available include: - Floor space for individual Malaysian exporters to undertake special events and company promotions, product launches and demonstrations. - A resource library which will be equipped with on-line databases on Malaysian exporters and product information. - Audio-visual facilities with adequate equipment for business presentation and also to view corporate and product information. - Conference and seminar rooms for hosting business presentations and meetings, particularly for Malaysian companies to promote their products and services. - Offices for the Malaysian External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) and Malaysian Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB).

12. By incorporating Malaysian architecture and design features, this Centre will soon become a new landmark building in Bahrain, particularly Manama.

13 In line with the "Malaysia Incorporated Concept", the management and operation of MTDC Bahrain will be conducted by a Malaysian private sector entity jointly with their Bahraini partner.

14. With the establishment of the MTDC, I am confident that the business community of both our countries will be able to enhance business linkages and collaboration for their mutual benefit. Consumers in Bahrain and the region will have opportunities not only to know more about Malaysian products and services, but also able to purchase them direct from the retail outlets at the Centre. For the traders, purchases can be made from the centre for distribution or re-export to the countries in the region. This will certainly lead to more exchanges of trade between the two countries.

15. On this note, I would like to thank Prime Minister Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and the Government of Bahrain for the strong support and assistance in making the establishment of this Centre a reality. The construction of the centre will commence soon. And Insya Allah, it can start operation at the end of 2003. Thank you.