

SPEECH BY: DATO' SERI DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD
(PRIME MINISTER)

EVENT: MAJLIS PERASMIAN PERSATUAN INDUSTRI AEROANGKASA MALAYSIA

VENUE: DEWAN PAMERAN ANTARABANGSA MAHSURI LANGKAWI, KEDAH

DATE: 02-12-1999

TIME:

Terlebih dahulu saya mengucapkan terima kasih kepada pihak penganjur dan bersyukur kepada Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala kerana dengan limpah kurnia-Nya kita dapat berjumpa di majlis pelancaran Pertubuhan Industri Aerospace Malaysia pada hari ini.

2. Let me thank the organisers for inviting me to officially launch the Malaysia Aerospace Industry Association today. I wish to congratulate all the members of this organisation and to thank you for taking the initiative to form the first aerospace industry association in Malaysia. As you all know the Malaysian Aerospace industry has been in existence for more than 30 years and an association is long overdue. This association has therefore been set up at the right time.

3. The Government has identified aerospace as a critical industrial base for the future. We have made this a priority sector and recognised that our capability in the aerospace industry would offer us many opportunities in advanced technologies. Aerospace industry is a very technology-intensive industry and is thus suitable for the nation with a fast growing skilled labour force. This industry involves the most complex core technologies which are applicable to all other industries and provide critical technologies for the future. It is therefore important that we succeed not only for our own economic growth but also to contribute towards our competence in high technology businesses.

4. This industry requires heavy capital investment and a long gestation period. For this reason it is only right that the Government takes the initiative to lead in developing this industry. However the time has come for the private sector and individual entrepreneurs to take over this role. The opportunities are there for you to further develop and the Government will continue to provide assistance to ensure its growth and success. To ensure that Malaysia transforms itself into a regional and international aerospace player, the Government has consolidated the

key players of the industry. I am happy to note that in such a short period of slightly over two years we have made significant progress.

5. Our aerospace manufacturing sector has been able to achieve international recognition with orders now of over US40 million. The workscope has expanded tremendously from small aircraft parts to bigger and more complex parts being made. Our international customer base has also expanded and now covers the entire spectrum including military and commercial aircrafts, space and satellite equipment. I also note with pride that we have intensified our activities in capability development which encompasses Structural or Service Life Extension Programmes, Systems Upgrade and Modification, Avionics Upgrade and Systems Integration, and Aircraft Stretch Mode. I wish to congratulate the industries for taking these initiatives as they are the trend of the future. The cost of acquiring new aircrafts in the future is getting expensive, if not astronomical, and many countries including the West are now extending the service life of their present aircrafts by such programmes. It is therefore timely that you have taken these initiatives to acquire such expertise.

6. It is also strategic in the sense that should we ourselves require such programmes for the Royal Malaysian Air Force or Armed Forces, then the expertise is already home grown and available in the country. I am also very sure that the major avionic equipment suppliers are confident and would like to see that the avionics upgrade and systems integration programme or any other such programmes are done here in Malaysia to tap our capability and expertise. These initiatives and readiness of the private sector therefore complement the objectives of the Government.

7. As you all know today we are going to witness the signing of several more agreements with our overseas friends for the manufacture and supply of aircraft parts and components. I must congratulate you for this success. This is very timely in fulfilling our objective to position Malaysia as a centre of excellence in aerospace technology and aviation engineering. I believe that our commitment in developing our 'maintenance culture' would transform Malaysia into a competitive and quality aerospace and aviation centre in this region, if not the world.

8. I thank you all for the hard work. Please keep it up and intensify your efforts. Much more can be done and I urge you all to grab the opportunities. We have the capabilities and the Government will provide the necessary assistance. With that I wish the Malaysia

Aerospace Industry Association good luck and success.

9. Dengan sukacitanya saya dengan rasminya
melancarkan Persatuan Industri Aeroangkasa Malaysia.