

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

EVENT: THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF CYBERJAYA

VENUE: CYBER VIEW LODGE

DATE: 08 JUL 1999

TIME:

Terlebih dahulu, saya mengucapkan terima kasih pada pihak penganjur kerana menjemput saya untuk merasmikan pembukaan Cyberjaya pada hari ini. Sesungguhnya, ini adalah satu lembaran sejarah bagi kita kerana ianya melambangkan satu langkah penting bagi merealisasikan visi kita untuk mewujudkan sebuah ekonomi dan masyarakat bermaklumat. Ianya juga pasti memainkan peranan penting dalam membentuk kewibawaan dan kemampuan generasi yang akan datang untuk bersaing dalam arena global.

2. May I first welcome members of the MSC International Advisory Panel (IAP) who have come from all over the world to be with us today on this historic occasion. The presence of so many of the world's corporate leaders and leading thinkers in the IT and communications industries greatly encourages all Malaysians as we continue to build the MSC. We are heartened by your willingness to take some time off your busy schedules to collaborate and network with us. Your presence today will spur on the MSC initiative which will both contribute to the development of the global IT & multimedia community and help propel the region into the Information Age.

3. Less than three years ago, Malaysia set out to pursue its MSC vision as a strategy to catalyse the orderly transition of our economy and society into the Information Age. Just over two years ago, we broke ground here in Cyberjaya to set the foundation for one of the world's first intelligent cities and the nerve centre of the MSC. Our progress to this stage clearly proves our ability to develop the physical infrastructure and infostructure of the MSC at a very rapid pace. We must now work even harder to build further on the progress achieved on all the other components of the MSC Bill of Guarantees to create the ideal environment for investors in the MSC, especially here in Cyberjaya.

4. Any large and pioneering initiative will have its share of detractors and cynics. However, our success to date speaks for itself. Most importantly, there are already 32 world-class web shapers who have obtained

MSC status, many of them as regional initiatives. Compared to our target of 50 by 2003, we are clearly ahead of schedule; already some 285 companies have applied for MSC status and 225 have obtained it. We accelerated our move into Cyberjaya to 1997 when the MSC headquarters was established here. This was a year ahead of schedule. Already some 21 companies including eight MSC status companies are located here in Cyberjaya. Among them is the NTT-MS Center - NTT's second largest outside Japan. We already have in place an R & D grant scheme, as well as venture capital and marketing support for small and medium scale enterprises. These measures have already contributed to a number of enterprises born and bred in the MSC who are exporting globally as well as supporting the web shapers.

5. By any measure, the MSC has come a long way in pursuing its mission, in particular from the viewpoint of attracting investors' response. We must continue to innovate and be even more responsive to investors to attract knowledge from around the world to help create the vibrant, creative, networked society here in Cyberjaya. Given its potential and importance, Malaysia has designated MSC as its next engine of growth. Even during the recent downturn, the MSC was given priority in terms of both budget allocation and policy support. I would like to reiterate the Government's full commitment toward ensuring the continued progress of the development of Cyberjaya on a fast-track basis. Malaysians by and large know that the MSC represents their future and thus support and participation in this venture has permeated the whole society.

6. Whilst a few aspects of the MSC have been questioned, almost everyone lauds the MSC as a thrust area for sustainable growth. Our comprehensive and integrated strategy has attracted various world statesmen and business leaders who have personally visited Cyberjaya to witness the MSC experiment. The MSC, as a catalyst for growth and global test-bedding, has also spawned numerous similar initiatives around the globe. However, we do not view them as competitors but more as opportunities for networking and collaboration. We have started to build bridges with these initiatives and together hope to overcome the myriad of cross-border issues coming in the wake of the Information Age. Through such collaboration and networking we can help mankind achieve its ultimate vision of peace and prosperity through a knowledge-based society.

7. Over the recent past, I have been blessed with the opportunity to be part of Malaysia's growth - seeing its transformation from an agricultural-based

economy to one focussed on manufacturing. A key success factor in this progress was our emphasis on becoming globally competitive by creating a conducive business environment. Indeed our oil palm industry, as represented by the palms which you still see around us, still continues to lead the world. This tradition of global competitiveness continued into our industrialisation phase so much so that today, we are the world's largest exporter of microchips. It will also continue through the third phase of our development as we capitalise on the opportunities of the Information Age. Thus the MSC initiative will carry the Malaysian success story of growth and stability well into the next Millennium.

8. Our continued commitment towards developing the MSC and multimedia industry in general for the long term, is vindicated by the latest statistics coming from around the world. In the U.S., for instance, statistics indicate that although the high technology services sector accounted for only 5.5 percent of American GDP in 1997, it produced almost 40 per cent of GDP growth over the preceding two years. The Internet's growth and its global reach is opening up almost endless possibilities for e-government, e-business and edutainment. It has the potential to change almost every aspect of our lives. It has been forecast that Internet businesses will generate a turnover of USD5 trillion to USD6 trillion by the year 2003.

9. This opening ceremony, besides representing the physical readiness of Cyberjaya's infrastructure, also symbolises the success of various ongoing processes:

Firstly, it signifies yet another successful collaboration between the public and private sector; Secondly, the timely completion of this first phase of Cyberjaya's development despite our recent economic difficulties, is proof of our commitment to all investors in the MSC. Its timely completion will also contribute significantly to our ongoing economic recovery.

10. This ceremony also highlights the completion of several key complementary `soft' infrastructure. These include the various cyberlaws we have enacted and measures to catalyse E-Commerce development.

11. We have also put into place the necessary support in terms of training and human resource programmes for the development of technopreneurs and knowledge workers. The official launch of Cyberjaya, also signifies that the last major building block of the MSC is in place. Cyberjaya is one of the MSC's two

flagship intelligent cities - the other one being Putrajaya, the neighbouring Government Administrative Centre, which is also ready for occupation. These twin cities supported by the Technology Park, the Twin Towers and Multimedia University are set to form the nucleus of the new digital community for the nation.

12. Most of all, this ceremony though modest, symbolises the fact that Cyberjaya, complete with advanced infrastructure, is now ready for occupation. All MSC-status companies are now expected to move into one of the four designated cybercities within a year of Cyberjaya's opening. For those companies who have already set up operations in Cyberjaya, I would like to express our deepest appreciation for your support and confidence and for helping to pioneer this venture of ours. I would also like to call on other MSC-status companies to re-locate to Cyberjaya early to reap the full benefits of association and networking with all the other elements of the MSC.

13. There are many reasons why MSC-status companies will find moving to Cyberjaya an excellent value proposition.

14. Cyberjaya is equipped with world-class telecommunications networks to be supplemented by high quality public amenities. Cyberjaya is envisaged to create a unique eco-friendly environment and community to foster creative talent; Cyberjaya's unique and strategic location including excellent access and close proximity to the Kuala Lumpur International Airport, would certainly add to its attractions. By locating in Cyberjaya, MSC-status companies can also reap the power of association. The presence of MMU, Tenaga University and Universiti Putra Malaysia will seek to emulate the Stanford- inspired setting of Silicon Valley and create a networked, creative and productive society in Cyberjaya.

15. Cyberjaya is a greenfield development, uniquely designed to be a global test-bed. We are not held back by rigid or entrenched practices and policies. Cyberjaya will be a unique blend of the best from East and West evolving to take on its own creative culture.

16. The success of the MSC to date is due in no small measure to the advice, support and show of confidence of the IAP. Thus, Malaysians are honoured to share this historic opening of Cyberjaya with all of you. We look forward to your continued counsel on the continued development of the MSC and its crown jewel - Cyberjaya.

17. Saya ingin mengambil kesempatan di sini untuk mengucapkan tahniah kepada pemaju utama Cyberjaya iaitu Setia Haruman, dan kepada semua pemaju-pemaju lain dan syarikat-syarikat, badan-badan kerajaan dan MDC yang telah bersama-sama berganding bahu dalam usaha untuk memastikan kejayaan projek ini. Saya mempunyai penuh keyakinan bahawa Cyberjaya akan mencapai kejayaan dalam memenuhi visi negara pada masa hadapan.

18. Dengan kata-kata ini, saya dengan sukacitanya merasmikan pembukaan Cyberjaya.