

**SPEECH BY TUN DR MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD AT “MALAM MUTIARA NEGARA
KILAUAN BANGSA” AT GRAND BLUEWAVE HOTEL, SHAH ALAM, SELANGOR ON
WEDNESDAY, 8 MAY 2013**

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen;

Alhamdulillah, all praise be for allah, by whose grace and blessings we are gathered here today especially with a group of full uniform harbour pilots who are representing all ports in malaysia*

Firstly, i would like to thank the malaysia harbour pilots association (mhapa) to appoint me as honorary patron of your good organization* and also thank to the malaysian government for recognizing me with master class 1, foreign going unlimited trade voyages, carries the title captain* so here i am, captain tun dr mahathir mohamad*

But before that i would like to welcome all guests which i believe come from all sectors of industry* today, we can see who harbour pilots are* harbour pilots are seen as "ambassadors of the port of malaysia" as they are first to board ships upon their arrival in malaysia* i appreciate very much that today malaysia has such a professional harbour pilot society that unites all the harbour pilots from all over malaysia as a member of malaysia harbour pilots association*

I'm sure a lot of people still have doubts about the harbour pilot profession* if we say pilot, automatically our mind refers to air pilot* but what is harbour pilot? To me, it is very simple* harbour piloting is about manoeuvre the largest moveable manmade objects on earth as they move them down relatively narrow channels than the driver of a road truck is required to do*

it is not uncommon to have an 80,000 ton vessel powered by as little as 8,000 horse power equivalent to 1 horse power per 10,000kg* it is a bit like driving an articulated lorry, power by a lawnmower engine, to park it in a parking space with a meter clearance each end and a few centimeters each side*

So pilotage is an essential service and one of the oldest professions, as old as sea travel itself, and it is one of the most important in terms of maritime safety* if we look at historical background, straits of malacca played a significant role in shaping the character of this region* the political attempts to seize dominion over the straits of malacca, has always been motivated by the desire to control and monopolize the trade that goes through it*

Today, about 30% of world's trade and 80% of japan's oil needs pass through the 600 nautical miles stretch of malacca straits (international maritime organization 2012 report)* the establishment of mhapa is timely* harbour pilots essential to ports as they ensure safety of environment and security of our ports* safe and efficient marine transportation requires that harbour pilots operate in an environment which allows them to exercise their professional judgment in an independent manner*

It is always essential to ensure safe passage of the ships and protection of environment and nearby settlements* with establishment of mhapa, like other harbour pilots associations around the world, it will be able to be involve actively with relevant government agencies and organizations to attain highest standards of safety and security*

Countries like united kingdom, european union, united states, australia and canada have concluded that the public interest and marine safety are best served through pilotage services being provided, on an exclusive basis, by a single group of pilots in any given area* due to our geographical location, security is also a great concern, as all of us know of the reason incident at lahad datu*

All harbour pilots in malaysia are former seafarers who have developed skills at sea for number of years as an officer prior joining as a pilot* it is about time the government recognize the tremendous efforts and sacrifice of these pilots*

Local knowledge of harbour pilots is indispensable* i was made to understand that it was not an easy task for mhapa to be established, but with today's inaugural event, mhapa managed to overcome obstacles* thus it will provide one voice and is very important in strengthening the malaysian shipping federation's relationships with government officials and with other members of the marine community*

For the security and safety of the port, public interest and nation as a whole, pilotage services are best served by a single independent group of pilots in any given area* the prime obligation of pilots is to provide a critical safety service by ensuring the careful management and free flow of all traffic within their pilotage area, thus protecting our valuable environment*

additionally, a pilot is in a unique position to report observed pollution and other environmental anomalies and has the potential to offer expert advice to assist in offshore shipping salvage and emergency operations where required*

I hope harbour pilots unity today under the flag of mhapa will come up with pointers on how they can become world class players in a globalised maritime world* i wish you every success*

Thank you*