

SPEECH BY DATO SERI DR SITI HASMAH BINTI HAJI MOHD ALI
SAKURA-NO-MA ROOM IMPERIAL HOTEL, TOKYO
THE PRESIDENT OF BAKTI AT THE DINNER HOSTED BY PEACE-LINKS
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On behalf of my delegation, I would firstly like to thank the Peace- Link Organisation of Japan, especially, Mrs Hashimoto, for their kind invitation to BAKTI to visit Japan during the Cherry Blossom season.

2. There are many of us who have visited this beautiful Land of Cherry Blossoms in the past, but missed the crucial period when the beautiful blossoms are in full bloom. So despite various commitments at home, we felt that we should not miss the opportunity to visit Japan at this time, especially when Mrs. Hashimoto herself has guaranteed and promised that there would be cherry blossoms for us to see.

3. I would also like to express our grateful thanks to Mrs Hashimoto and Peace-Link Members for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to us on our arrival this morning and the well-planned programmes for our stay here.

4. BAKTI believes in the concept of fostering good relationship with peoples, nationally and internationally. As a multi-racial country with diverse cultures, language and religion, Malaysia believes in this concept as an important and essential factor for racial unity, harmony, political stability and peace. We find it easier to understand each other by direct contact, as we develop a sense of tolerance, sincere understanding and appreciation of the different cultures and sensitivities. Through such understanding, we are able to dispel every negative information we may have previously received, and thus better able to adapt ourselves to the real situation that we have found out from direct personal contact.

5. This also applies to our relationship with foreign countries with whom BAKTI is happy to have friendly contacts. We are therefore very happy when Peace-Link Japan made the first initiative to visit BAKTI in Kuala Lumpur in November 1999 and had discussions with us on subjects of common interest to both sides. In the 1980's, BAKTI visited Brunei and Indonesia, and today we are indeed extremely excited as we touched down in Narita, Japan. We look forward to a very pleasant and enjoyable visit of your country and see the interesting and beautiful places while we are here. Also, we look forward to the discussions, which we shall exchange with Peace-Link members on common social programmes. BAKTI will have a lot to learn from you and this is also one of our objectives of returning your visit.

6. On behalf of the BAKTI delegation and myself, I again express our heart-felt thanks to Mrs Hashimoto, the Peace- Link members, and all those who organise our arrangements during this visit and make it a successful one.