

SPEECH BY DATO SERI DR SITI HASMAH BINTI HAJI MOHD ALI
THE OFFICIAL RESIDENCE, TOKYO
THE DINNER HOSTED BY THE SPEAKER
03 APRIL 2001

I would like to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Hon. Speaker and Madame who have kindly invited us for dinner tonight. It is gracious of you to take time off from your busy schedule to be with us tonight and we are deeply honoured.

2. My delegation are wives of members of Parliament elected by the people, and appointed by the Prime Minister to be members of the Cabinet and Government. Since 1977, we founded a welfare organisation with the main objective of assisting the community who are in need of help. In this way, we hope to express our appreciation to the people who had elected our husbands during the General Elections. The short name of our organisation is "BAKTI" and now has 65 members, comprising of wives of Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries, Speakers' wives of both Houses of Parliament and the Senate, and 62 Associate members who are wives of former Cabinet or Government members.

3. Our main concern is education and welfare of the poor and special people. The orphans, the disabled people, the sick are our main concern and we help children, the adults and the aged of all races in Malaysia.

4. Apart from this, we try to help charity organisations, educational and medical institutions in getting special equipments for their use e.g. computers and printers for schools with computer classes especially in rural areas, and special equipments like dialysis machines, or foetal monitoring machines for use by ante-natal mothers in Hospital.

5. Our funds are sourced from very kind corporate bodies and individuals who are generous at heart and wish to donate to charity. BAKTI is fortunate to have many kind friends who recognize our objectives to help the poor and the needy.

6. Apart from welfare activities mentioned just now, BAKTI gives assistance to victims of natural disasters occurring in the country e.g. floods, fires and storms, and select poor children from the rural areas for BAKTI's educational scholarships.

7. BAKTI is here in your beautiful country today to observe and learn from your women's organisation the various activities that you have in helping the children, the aged and special people to live a meaningful life. We are very pleased with the programmes organized by Mrs Hashimoto and her members in Peace-Link Organisations and we will certainly learn a lot from this visit.

8. As wives of the Cabinet and Parliament Members in Malaysia, we extend to you and Madame again our sincere appreciation for hosting this dinner and the warm

hospitality that you, the Government and the people have extended to my delegation and me since our arrival. We wish you well and I am sure visits like this will bring our two countries and peoples closer for peace and good relations.