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ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE REGIONAL ISLAMIC ORGANISATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC AT THE HOTEL EQUATORIAL, KUALA LUMPUR ON 10TH NOVEMBER, 1980

Bismillahir-Rahma-Nirrahim.

Assalamu 'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

Yang Teramat Mulia Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, Yang Amat Berbahagia Tun-Tun, Yang Berhormat Menteri-Menteri dan Timbalan-Timbalan Menteri, Dif-dif Kehormat, Tuan-tuan dan Puan-puan sekalian.

Saya mengucapkan berbanyak terima kasih kepada Yang Teramat Mulia, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, Pengerusi Pro-tem kerana jemputan dan penghormatan yang diberikan kepada saya untuk membuka persidangan yang bahagia ini. Saya mengambil kesempatan ini untuk mengalu-alukan kehadiran para peserta sekalian terutamanya mereka yang datang dari luar negeri.

Saya menyanjung tinggi terhadap langkah untuk menggabung dan menyelaraskan usaha-usaha pertubuhan-pertubuhan sukarela Islam di rantau Asia Tenggara dan Pasifik. Ia membuktikan wujudnya hubungan persaudaraan Islam sebagaimana kehendak ugama suci kita. Di samping itu juga ia dapat memperkukuhkan lagi azam dan usaha untuk meningkatkan syiar Islam.

Distinguished Guest,

I would like to thank Yang Teramat Mulia Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, the Pro-tem Chairman of the Regional Islamic Organisation of South-East Asia and the Pacific for inviting me to open this inaugural meeting. I am informed that this meeting is being attended by representatives of about forty voluntary muslim organisations from sixteen countries.

To those representatives, I would like to extend to them a very warm welcome to Malaysia. I also understand that this meeting will discuss the constitution and other matters relating to the

setting-up of the Regional Organisation. I am also informed that the Organisation has decided to have its Regional Headquarters and Islamic Training Centre in this country.

Although the Malaysian society is multi-religious, Islam has been made the official religion of the country. The Federal and State Constitutions guarantee the freedom of worship. Our National Ideology, the Rukun Negara, provides for the belief in God. Malaysia has always supported the causes of Islam. It takes an active part in the Islamic Conference and the Islamic Development Bank. It is also active in the propagation of Islamic faith. We believe that material development alone cannot ensure a healthy nation; we also attach great importance to spiritual development.

Islam is one of the great religions of the world. Every true and great religion teaches its followers to be humble, tolerant and God-fearing. Islam is such a religion. Allah has given us His religion which is Islam. His teachings and guidance are fully inscribed in the Koran. He has chosen Mohamed as the Prophet to teach and spread the religion. And we, 1400 years later, have the same duty as our Prophet, to teach and spread Islam. This is the purpose of your meeting to-day. Our religion, however, has been misinterpreted and exploited by ill-informed, misguided and unscrupulous people. This has caused a lot of harm to us Muslims. Further, it has brought our religion into disrepute. It is, therefore, very necessary that we fully understand the true teachings of Islam.

#### Distinguish Delegates,

I am glad that this meeting has brought together representatives of Muslim organisations in countries of South East Asia and the Pacific, with the wise guidance of Tunku Abdul Rahman, I am sure that your Organisation will grow in strength. With your great faith and dedication, Islam will become more known and understood in this part of the world so that it will attract more followers. May Allah bless all your endeavours. It is with great pleasure that I now declare this meeting open. Thank you.