

DATO' SRI MOHD NAJIB BIN TUN HAJI ABDUL RAZAK
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6TH INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ANTI-CORRUPTION AUTHORITIES (IAACA)
CONFERENCE

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

1. Terlebih dahulu izinkan saya mengucapkan berbanyak-banyak terima kasih kepada pihak Suruhanjaya Pencegahan Rasuah Malaysia dan juga IAACA yang telah sudi menjemput saya ke majlis perasmian pada petang ini. Saya amat berbesar hati dapat bersama dalam persidangan ini, yang saya kira amat penting dalam rangka perjuangan kerajaan Malaysia dan rakan-rakannya di peringkat antarabangsa untuk membanteras gejala rasuah.

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

2. I am delighted to join all of you today at the 6th International Association Of Anti-Corruption Authorities (IAACA) Conference and Annual Meeting - I know many of you have travelled thousands of miles to be here, and I want to thank you for your dedication and commitment to our common cause in fighting corruption.

3. Allow me also to personally thank the President of IAACA, for giving Malaysia the opportunity to host this event. I was made to understand that this conference and annual meeting of IAACA over the next 4 days aims to enhance international collaboration especially among its members in implementing the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. I hope this meeting of minds will yield tangible results and that all of us would benefit from new thoughts and ideas in the battle against the corruption scourge.

Ladies and gentlemen,

4. All of you here are the experts on fighting corruption and I will not attempt to lecture you on a subject which all of you will discuss in great detail during your time at this conference. Suffice to say that the fight against corruption appears to be a perpetual one. Despite the enduring war against this social menace, and the fact that it is a crime condemned by the public, it still remains widespread in many societies. It has in fact flourished in some places, in spite having been proven to be one of the most powerful barriers to social and economic progress.

5. A high level of corruption often renders public policies ineffective, and draws investment and economic activities away from productive pursuits. It rewards instead those engaged in underhanded activities. Left unchecked, it can become endemic and even lead to the proliferation of organized crime which in turn further weakens governments, their institutions and society at large.

6. It is for this reason that, as the Chief Commissioner of the Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission elaborated at some length just now, the Malaysian government takes the curbing of corruption as a national priority. The steps we have undertaken reflect the seriousness with which we view the problem. However, the Malaysian government does not believe that these efforts are an end in themselves. Battling corruption is part of a larger whole; and that is, to ultimately create a truly ethical and responsible progressive society.

Ladies and gentlemen,

7. Often, when people speak of 'corruption' the first thing that often springs to their minds relates to the abuse of power by those serving in government and the public service. What is often neglected however is the fact that corruption extends far beyond that sphere. What should be disconcerting to us all is how corruption and corrupt behavior is entangled deep within the moral fabric of all societies. If we view corruption as truly unethical and immoral behavior, we cannot stop at just looking at the public officials and politicians who abuse their powers - we must go much further than that.

8. We must be able to take an unrelentingly honest look at the values prevalent in our societies. For example, we rightly demand greater scrupulousness from those in public office; yet, we live in a world where the public culture endorses the pursuit of greed and unmitigated material success, at least until someone is caught breaking the law. In other words, we forgive greed, until that greed spirals out of control and the effects reach beyond the handful of individuals perpetuating it. We only have to witness the impact of the recent collapse of the international financial system and its devastating effect on the lives of millions of people across the globe to understand the dangers of greed.

9. Today we condemn those responsible for the financial fiasco but it wasn't too long before their wrongful acts were exposed that we applauded the very same people for achieving their record breaking profits. Is the unbridled and ruthless pursuit of extraordinary profits a form of corruption? In my estimation, the answer would be in the affirmative. Because I believe that if we see corruption as fundamentally a moral problem, therefore anything that promotes selfish interest at the expense of the well-being of others is morally wrong. And I am convinced that it is this vapid self-interest and greed which is truly at the heart of that phenomenon we call corruption.

Ladies and gentlemen,

10. As I am sure most of you here are aware, 'corruption' is not in any way a recent or, even a modern phenomenon. What we know of ancient civilisations provide ample evidence that even in those times, many of their leaders and thinkers had pondered about widespread corruption, and what can be done to stop it. Some produced considerable literature on the ways of reducing corruption, especially amongst those in power and holders of public office.

11. Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen asks the fundamental question - correctly to my mind - what is 'corrupt behavior'? No doubt corruption involves the violation of established rules for personal gain and profit. It is also the greed and selfishness that I spoke of earlier. And often, it is tempting to think that the solution lies ultimately in an ideal system of inspection and penalty which would eradicate the problem of corruption. But it is my considered opinion that this alone is insufficient. While an effective system would be an invaluable ally in the fight against corrupt practice, it is only part of the solution.

12. As Sen suggests, any system entirely dependent on an instrumental approach - which emphasizes either a system of incentives, punishment, or a mix of the two - in dealing with the problem of corruption will inevitably find itself unsuccessful. Why? Because if we depend on a system of incentives, then it may create the problem of escalating incentives where the behavior of any individual in performing a task will not be based on best or most optimal practices but rather it will depend on who can give them the most rewards. It also encourages, as the experiences of some societies have shown, the tendency towards social apathy, where corruption is no longer seen as a serious crime, but as 'normal' behaviour.

13. An effective punitive system will deter some; but even in the case of countries where the transgression of these laws could lead to the most severe of punishments, it does not follow that it is an entirely effective means of eradicating such illegal activities.

14. Having said that, I hasten to add that these limitations should not prevent us from constantly making improvements to our system of governance; I will touch on what Malaysia has done in terms of our anti-corruption framework in a while and I am certain all of you here are doing your part in your respective countries. I am simply putting forth that over and above what we are continuously doing, we must look at the bigger picture to see how we can instill a natural abhorrence of corruption into the very conscience of society. Indeed there is strong evidence to suggest that in societies that have managed to

reduce corrupt behavior, the reliance is to a great extent dependent on entrenched codes of behavior and a strong civic consciousness as opposed to purely legal deterrents or financial incentives. This forces our attention on to the ethics, norms and values which prevail in different societies.

15. Understanding the social norms and the values which underpin a given society plays a critical role in helping us deal with the problem of corruption. Plato had suggested that a strong sense of duty would help in preventing corruption. But he also wisely noted that cultivating these values would be no easy task. The importance of cultivating the appropriate social norms and values therefore are critical for the war against corruption. How people behave - and the decisions that inform this behaviour - often depends on their perception of others in their social environment.

16. It is critical therefore for people in positions of power and authority to exemplify the values they wish their constituents would follow. This makes the behaviour of those in positions of leadership, be it in politics, government, business, civil society, education and perhaps most critically, the home, especially important in instilling the right values and basics of ethical conduct.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

17. Coming back to Malaysia's anti-corruption framework, We have been cognizant to the threats posed by corruption and corrupt behavior since the earliest days of the Federation. In 1952 the High Commissioner for the Federation of Malaya set up a Commission of Enquiry into the Integrity of the Public Service with a particular focus on incidences of corruption. This was followed by with the 1961 Prevention of Corruption Act (POCA), and eventually led to the establishment of the Anti Corruption Agency (ACA) in 1967.

18. The most recent and perhaps the most significant step in this regard is the establishment of the Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission (MACC). In December, 2008 the Parliament approved the MACC bill which has also paved the way for the establishment of an independent advisory board, a parliamentary committee, a complaints committee and two other panels-all responsible for scrutinizing and advising MACC. Headed by the Chief Commissioner, the MACC will report to the Special Parliamentary Committee on Corruption. The Committee will examine the report on the discharge of MACC functions and submit its report to the Prime Minister who, in turn, would table it to the parliament. Our move to establish the MACC has evidently been a correct one given the results the MACC has produced since its inception. Meanwhile our relentless battle against corruption continues as we have made it one of our National Key Results Areas (NKRA) as part of the national Government Transformation Programme (GTP) and Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) launched in 2009.

19. As part of these efforts, as I have said earlier, it is critically important that we develop the intellectual, educational and informational resources to increase the effectiveness of our combined efforts to combat corruption. And so it was heartening that On 30th September 2010, Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail, Attorney General of Malaysia on behalf of the Government of Malaysia has signed an agreement for establishment of the International Anti Corruption Academy (IACA) as an international organization in Vienna, Austria.

20. Prior to the signing of the agreement, on 30th July 2010 IACA signed a Letter of Exchange with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Academy (MACA) on the cooperation in training and research, to based here in Kuala Lumpur. Both institutions are mandated to provide training programs on anti corruption with the objective to enhance the skills and capabilities of anti corruption practitioners worldwide in order to eradicate corruption effectively. I have been informed that IACA also requested MACA to send one of its officers to assist the academy to formulate a training program on anti corruption known as IACA Summer School: Science Meets Practice on Anti Corruption, which was successfully held in summer 2011. In return MACA sent its Head of International Studies Center to Vienna for that purpose.

21. In this context, I would also like to welcome and commend on the launching of the world's first international Master Programme in Anti Corruption Study, which was recently launched by the IACA. Not only this Programme complies with the UNCAC and other regional instrument, but it takes a great

pleasure to mention that Malaysia through its MACA is one of the strong supporter of this Programme and to the extent of conducting one of the seven modules here in Kuala Lumpur. I, for the foremost wish the Programme and the MACC together with MACA all the success.

22. To further complement to the IACA and MACA, the Malaysian Government has agreed to contribute Ringgit Malaysia One Million to the International Anti-Corruption Academy for its future endeavour. This reflects our continuous commitment towards eradicating corruption not only here in Malaysia but also internationally.

Ladies and gentlemen,

23. It is critical for the Government of Malaysia to continue to invest, along with other like minded nations, into developing the intellectual and knowledge based resources which are integral to the fight against corruption. For such as this would be critical towards that end, and I am glad that Malaysia has many friends who share its commitment towards the elimination of corruption.

24. To all delegates and members of IAACA, I urge you to share your knowledge and experience and build upon the ideas that are discussed in the forthcoming sessions. I hope that you may bring back some of these ideas and implement them in your respective countries and organizations. I wish you every success in your deliberations and on this note, it is my great pleasure to officiate the 6th International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities' (IAACA) Conference and Annual Meeting.

Thank you.

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