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Title : LAUNCHING OF THE ARABIC VERSION OF THE HON. DATO SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD'S BOOK "A NEW DEAL FOR ASIA"

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Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen.

At the outset, I would like to thank the organizers, the Al-Bukhary Foundation and Pelanduk Publication for giving me the honor to officiate the launching of the Arabic version of the Hon. Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad's book, "A New Deal for Asia".

2. The launching of the book's Arabic version today on the margin of the 9th Session of the Islamic Conference in this beautiful city of Doha could not have been more appropriate and timely. Dr. Mahathir Mohamad himself is a well-known and strong proponent of the OIC activities and an advocate on Muslim and global Islamic issues. It is indeed a privilege and honour to be given this opportunity to launch a book authored by a well-known Malaysian who is none other than my own Prime Minister.

3. The translation of "A New Deal for Asia", as I understand it, was initiated by the Al-Bukhary Foundation while the translation was carried out by a well-known figure, Mr. Farouk Lokman of Saudi Arabia early this year. On this auspicious occasion, I take the opportunity to congratulate both the Al-Bukhary Foundation and Mr. Lokman warmly for their untiring efforts. I also thank the publisher for its important role in the publication of the book's Arabic version. The effort is indeed noble and goes a long way in helping Arab speaking communities to understand some important aspects of globalization from an Asian perspective.

4. The book, which is a collection of Dr. Mahathir's articles that appeared in the Japanese Newspaper Mainichi Shimbun, in my view is thought-provoking. It offers a new and critical sway of looking at Asia and a new perspective on its future. The book has since been translated into the Japanese and Malay languages and it has been widely read in both Japan, and of course in Malaysia.

5. I have been made to understand that the book is presently in the process of being translated into Chinese and the Thai languages. There are also requests for it to be translated into other popular languages. This is a clear testimony to and manifestation of the interests generated by the book since it was first published last year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. As we all know, being a Prime Minister is a full time job. Yet despite his busy schedule and responsibility, Dr. Mahathir has found time to write this book and several others which he has authored earlier namely "The Way Forward", "The Malay Dilemma" and "The Challenge". He has also co-authored another thought-provoking book with the present Governor of Tokyo, Mr. Shintaro Ishihara, entitled "Voice of Asia".

Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, the fourth Prime Minister of Malaysia is one of the most well-known figures in our part of the world. He is the architect of modern Malaysia who is known for being forthright and bold in propagating his unconventional yet practical ideas and policies. He is frank in his observations and criticisms on issues such as unbalanced economic relations between the First and Third Worlds, unfair trade practices by the developed world, the imposition of western values, standards and democracy on the developing world, and issues negatively affecting the poor and the oppressed.

8. More often than not, these ideas are met with severe criticisms especially from the Western world. Perhaps it is still fresh in our minds when he was labeled as a menace for being bold and frank on the negative impacts of unregulated world's financial system. As you are aware, Prime Minister Mahathir was proven to be right and subsequently vindicated by some of his adversaries. Ladies and gentlemen, it was against this backdrop that he wrote "A New Deal for Asia".

9. To put simply, the book is a modest attempt by Dr. Mahathir to give an account of the background to the Asian financial crisis. It also highlights the causes and impacts of the crisis on the real sector of the Malaysian economy. Most important of all, Dr. Mahathir shares the Malaysian experience in tackling crisis successfully, very much to the dismay of his critics abroad. In addition, he also offers his perspective and critical views on the western media whose reporting is always biased against the developing world.

10. I believe that the Arabic version of the book will enable Arabic speaking readers to share Malaysia's economic experience, and to understand the measures taken by the Malaysian Government to overcome the impacts of the financial crisis. It is hoped that the experience would serve as a useful lesson to enable Arab countries to be more vigilant and to be better prepared in facing a similar financial turmoil.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. Once again, I wish to reiterate my sincere congratulations to the organizers for allowing me to grace this auspicious function today. Many thanks also go to those whose contributions have made this function a reality.

12. With the phrase "Bismillahirrahmannirrahim" and with great pleasure, I now have the honour to officially launch the Arabic version of the book authored by the Hon. Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia - "A New Deal for Asia".

I thank you.

Wabillahhi taufik walhidayah, wassalamu'alaikom warahmatullahi wabarokatuh.