

By : DATUK SERI SYED HAMID ALBAR
Venue : KUALA LUMPUR
Date : 13 FEBRUARY 2001
Title : FOURTH IRANIAN SOLO EXHIBITION

ASSALAMMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH,

YOUR EXCELLENCY MORTEZA HAJI,
MINISTER OF COOPERATIVE AFFAIRS OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN,

YOUR EXCELLENCY MOHAMMED KASEM MOHEB ALI,
AMBASSADOR OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN,

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

ALHAMDULLILAH, WE ARE GATHERED THIS MORNING GRANTED BY ALLAH WITH THE GIFT OF GOOD HEALTH, PEACE AND STABILITY. I AM HAPPY TO BE GIVEN THE HONOUR TO OFFICIATE AT THIS TRADE EXHIBITION BY IRANIAN COMPANIES UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN.

2. LET ME TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY THEN TO CONGRATULATE AND APPLAUD THE GOVERNMENT OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN FOR TAKING THE INITIATIVE TO ORGANISE THE 4TH IRANIAN SOLO EXHIBITION IN COLLABORATION WITH THE NATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF MALAYSIA. THE EXHIBITION, THE FOURTH IN THE SERIES HELD HERE IN KUALA LUMPUR, I AM CONFIDENT, WILL BE ABLE TO PROMOTE THE IRANIAN PRODUCTS IN THIS COUNTRY. THIS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE STRENGTHENING OF BILATERAL AND ECONOMIC TIES BETWEEN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN AND MALAYSIA. PREVIOUSLY THE EXHIBITION WAS CONSISTENTLY HELD ON AN ANNUAL BASIS BEGINNING IN 1993 CONTINUED IN 1994 AND THE LAST WAS IN 1995.

3. I AM SURE THE EXHIBITION WITH ITS ARRAY OF MADE-IN-IRAN PRODUCTS WILL STIMULATE AND GENERATE A LOT OF INTEREST AMONGST MALAYSIAN CONSUMERS AND GIVE TWO WAY TRADE THE MUCH-NEEDED BOOST. WHEN WE TALK ABOUT IRANIAN PRODUCTS, WE ALWAYS THINK OF PESTACHIO AND PERSIAN CARPETS. MALAYSIANS ARE GENERALLY FAMILIAR WITH PERSIAN CARPETS, WHICH ARE MUCH SOUGHT AFTER AND SYNONYMOUS WITH ITS INTRINSIC DESIGN, QUALITY AND VALUE FOR MONEY. HOWEVER THIS EXHIBITION WILL DEMONSTRATE THE DIVERSITY OF IRANIAN PRODUCTS WHICH ARE BEING DISPLAYED INCLUDING CERAMICS, JEWELRY, AUTOMATIVE PARTS, CHANDELIERS. UNDOUBTEDLY, THIS WILL CREATE INTEREST AMONGST MALAYSIAN CONSUMERS AND RETAILERS.

4. I CONSIDER THE HOLDING OF THE EXHIBITION AS TIMELY. IT IS EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT AS MALAYSIA HAS RECOVERED FROM THE ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN IN 1997 AND 1998. THE PRESENCE OF 38 IRANIAN COMPANIES TAKING PART IN THIS EXHIBITION, IS INDEED A POSITIVE SIGN AND INDICATIVE OF THE CONFIDENCE OF FOREIGN COMPANIES AND IN PARTICULAR THE IRANIAN COMPANIES IN THE POTENTIAL OF THE MALAYSIAN MARKET FOR IRANIAN PRODUCTS. I BELIEVE THE PRIVATE SECTORS FROM BOTH COUNTRIES ARE READY TO RENEW AND REBUILD OLD TIES AND SEEK NEW OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM THE IMPROVED ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY AS WELL AS THE REGION.

5. THE EXHIBITION WILL PROVIDE AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE IRANIAN COMPANIES AND THEIR MALAYSIAN COUNTERPARTS TO FORGE STRATEGIC ALLIANCES AND NETWORKING FOR BENEFICIAL COLLABORATIONS. THE IMPROVED MALAYSIAN ECONOMIC AND MARKET POTENTIAL SHOULD PROVIDE A STRONG, ADDITIONAL INCENTIVE AND MOTIVATION FOR THE PRIVATE SECTORS OF IRAN AND MALAYSIA TO UNDERTAKE JOINT VENTURE ENDEAVORS IN VARIOUS SECTORS RANGING FROM TRADE AND INDUSTRY TO SERVICES SUCH AS FINANCE AND GENERAL SERVICES. BOTH COUNTRIES CAN MUTUALLY BENEFIT TREMENDOUSLY FROM THE COMPLEMENTARITY OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES AND ALSO THE DIFFERENT COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES TO MAKE FOR VIABLE COMMERCIAL VENTURES. WHILE THE IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES WOULD BE TO SERVE EACH OTHER'S MARKET, THE LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE TO PENETRATE THE REGIONAL MARKET AND USE THE REGION AS A SPRINGBOARD TO THE GLOBAL MARKET.

EXCELLENCIES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

6. TWO-WAY TRADES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES HAVE GRADUALLY DEVELOPED MAKING IRAN AS MALAYSIA'S FOURTH LARGEST TRADING PARTNER IN WEST ASIA AFTER UAE, SAUDI ARABIA AND TURKEY. HOWEVER, THE VOLUME IS CONSIDERED SMALL COMPARED TO MALAYSIA'S OVERALL GLOBAL TRADE. THERE ARE STILL ROOMS FOR FURTHER EXPANSION AND OPPORTUNITIES TO BE SEIZED UPON.

7. MALAYSIA'S TOTAL TRADE WITH IRAN IN 2000 (JAN-NOV) AMOUNTED TO RM 836.5 MILLION. EXPORT TO IRAN IN 2000 (JAN-NOV) WAS RM 443.0 MILLION AND IMPORT FROM IRAN WAS RM393.5 MILLION. MALAYSIA'S EXPORTS TO IRAN WERE MAINLY NATURAL RUBBER AND PALM OIL. THERE IS GREAT POTENTIAL TO DEVELOP AND EXPAND TRADE FURTHER. WHAT IS NEEDED IS TO GIVE OUR PRIVATE SECTORS THE RIGHT DOSE OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND INCENTIVE TO PROMOTE THE TRADE. I WOULD ENCOURAGE THE TRADING COMMUNITIES FROM BOTH THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN AND MALAYSIA TO USE TODAY'S EXHIBITION IN INTENSIFYING TRADE ACTIVITIES.

8. MALAYSIA HAS ALWAYS ENCOURAGED DIRECT TRADE BETWEEN MEMBER STATES OF THE OIC AND ALSO WITH OTHER THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES. THERE IS MUCH TO BE TRADED BETWEEN COMMUNITIES OF THE SOUTH. THE QUALITY OF PRODUCTS OF COUNTRIES IN THE SOUTH ARE NO LESS INFERIOR THAN THE NORTH AND DEFINITELY CHEAPER.

EXCELLENCIES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

9. WITH THE ADVENT OF ASEAN FREE TRADE AREA (AFTA), I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO ENCOURAGE IRAN TO USE MALAYSIA AS A REGIONAL HUB FOR THEIR GOODS INTO THE ASEAN REGION. IN THIS REGARD, THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAYSIA CONTINUES TO ENHANCE THE VARIOUS INFRASTRUCTURES, INCLUDING THE NECESSARY LOGISTICAL SUPPORT AT MAJOR PORTS, AND AT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS TO FACILITATE TRADING ACTIVITIES. I AM PLEASED TO NOTE THAT THE PORT KLANG HAS SIGNED AN AGREEMENT TO WORK WITH THE PORT OF BANDAR ABBAS WHICH WILL PROVIDE FURTHER INCENTIVES FOR INCREASED CROSS FLOW OF PRODUCTS BETWEEN THE TWO REGIONS.

EXCELLENCIES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

10. IN CONCLUSION, I WISH THE MINISTER AND HIS WIFE A PLEASANT AND ENJOYABLE STAY IN MALAYSIA AND BRING BACK FOND MEMORIES TO IRAN. I WOULD NOW LIKE TO JOIN MY BROTHER FROM THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN, HE MORTEZA HAJI, IN JOINTLY DECLARING OPEN THE FOURTH IRANIAN SOLO EXHIBITION.

BISMILLAHIRAHMANNIRAHIM – WE HEREBY OFFICIALLY DECLARE OPEN THE FOURTH IRAN SOLO EXHIBITION AND WISH ITS EVERY SUCCESS.