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Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

The Honourable Ministers
Excellencies
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen;

Allow me, at the outset, to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the F & R Exhibition and Conference Sdn. Bhd., the organiser, for inviting me to officiate the launching of the EXPO OIC 2003.

I am pleased to welcome all the delegates and participants most warmly to Malaysia and am extending to you my appreciation for your kind presence and participation at this EXPO OIC 2003.

Malaysia is pleased to host the forthcoming Tenth Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Summit here at our new administrative capital, Putrajaya. It is hoped that the Summit will be able to further reinforce our economic, trade, investment and financial, as well as political relationships, among the Muslim Ummah within and outside the Islamic World. The Organisation of the Islamic Conference was established in answer to the call made by the late King Faysal Ibn Abdulaziz for Islamic solidarity, to which all Muslim leaders and peoples strongly responded.

Thanks to that auspicious call, we are together today, united within the framework of a single international organisation. The OIC is presently an international organisation grouping 57 states which have decided to pool their resources together, to combine their efforts and to speak with one voice to safeguard and secure the progress and well-being of all Muslims all over the world. It is important for us to make every effort to consolidate our solidarity within the OIC and to strengthen the bonds that unite us so that they may materialise in the living experience of Islamic States, peoples, systems and governments, in their relations with each other.

The hosting of the EXPO OIC 2003, in conjunction with the Tenth Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Summit, is the first in the history of OIC Summit. It is a timely event as it serves as the focal point for the convergence of business opportunities, cultural values, arts and historical fellowship, among OIC members states. The five-day event is specifically aimed at further promoting and expanding trade and investment ties and opportunities among the Muslim business community of the 57 OIC member states. I definitely believe that EXPO OIC 2003 will serve as an excellent platform, as well as a conduit for member states to further strengthen

or develop new business linkages and cooperation, for the common mutual benefit of the Ummah and the Islamic World.

EXPO OIC 2003 covers a wide spectrum of industries. It will benefit all captains of industries in manufacturing, agriculture, oil and gas, education, tourism and hospitality. The exhibition will provide a vast range of opportunities for entrepreneurs, technopreneurs, government dignitaries and ministers, to showcase their cutting-edge businesses, products and services. Without any doubt, this exhibition is the ideal platform for the Muslim business community to showcase ideas, collaborate strategies and consolidate partnership among experts and professionals, within the 57 member states of OIC. Here at EXPO OIC 2003, expert professionals from a vast range of industries such as airlines, broadcasting, film and record industry, electronic media, communications systems, Islamic institutions of higher learning, banking, fund management and investment, among others, are here to provide you with a wide range of business opportunities and cooperation.

Today's world is a different world, with multi-track new economic challenges and industrialised countries - let alone the more fragile under-developed ones - have realised that they cannot face these challenges on their own. Our Islamic World possesses vibrant economies with large markets. We are adequately supplied with considerable natural and human resources, and have maintained friendly relations with other peoples of the world. We have maintained continuous dialogue with non-Islamic countries in our region, with Europe and the United States, with Asia and Africa. It is our responsibility to use our expertise, capacities and resources, and turn them into a beneficial driving force that promotes our interests and seek to open new market avenues for cooperation with the world, and contribute to its stability, security and peace.

As we launch the EXPO OIC 2003, we reaffirm that Malaysia, with all its capacities and resources are in the service of Islamic solidarity. Malaysia has enough resources to benefit the Islamic World through purposeful bilateral and multilateral partnership. We, in Malaysia, are proud to draw genuine intellectual, spiritual and political inspiration from our great organisation. We welcome a new age of internal stability, regional détente and openness on the outside world in our international relations. This provides us with an appropriate environment to participate in the aspirations of this organisation in the field of fruitful economic cooperation for development and common interests among the various parties.

As host to the Summit, Malaysia supports the ideal and the underlying objective of the exhibition and looks forward to welcoming every member of the business delegations from all OIC member states to the EXPO and Malaysia.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to warmly congratulate F & R Exhibition and Conference Sdn. Bhd., the organiser of the EXPO OIC 2003, for their tireless efforts to ensuring this event an international success.

Wassalamu Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

