

By : DATUK SERI SYED HAMID ALBAR
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Title : CLOSING REMARKS AT THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE MALAYSIA-IRAQ JOINT COMMISSION MEETING

His Excellency Mr. Muyassar Rija Shlah
Minister of Industry and Minerals of Iraq

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have now reached the conclusion of the 7th Malaysia-Iraq Joint Commission Meeting. The deliberations have been very cordial and candid, yet constructive, benefiting the delegations from both sides of the tables. The consensual agreed minutes reflects the depth of the Meeting which I would term a success.

2. The fact that the Agenda was deliberated exhaustively in just one full working day is a demonstration that we could work together to promote our mutual interests and build a common-bridge to link our ties further.

3. Since the last session of the JCM in October 2001, we have taken stock of the progress chalked thus far. This notwithstanding, there are still areas where more efforts need to be exerted by both sides in order for us to achieve the desired results.

4. With regards to bilateral trade, we are grateful to Iraq for allowing Malaysian companies to participate in contracts of the Oil-for-Food programme (OFF). We hope that Iraq will continue to award more tenders to Malaysian companies to supply Iraq with its importation needs. On our part, the Malaysian Government will continue to encourage Malaysian companies to explore the vast trade, economic and investment potentials in Iraq including possibility of investing in Iraqi Free Trade Zones.

5. We will continue to monitor developments in Iraq as well as in the Middle East. We are concerned with the uncertainty and the looming threat of war in Iraq. We are strongly against the unilateral use of force against Iraq and will continue to support Iraq in its quest for early lifting of sanctions.

6. To conclude, I wish to reiterate that Malaysia remains committed to ensuring that the JCM continues to be a useful mechanism to advance bilateral cooperation between both countries.

7. I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the officers from both sides for their hard work that led to the satisfactory conclusion of the meeting. I also take this opportunity to convey my best wishes and sincere felicitations to His Excellency Muyassar Rija Shlah, Minister of Industry and Minerals of Iraq and members of his delegation. I hope that their stay in Malaysia had been pleasant and productive and last but not least, to wish all of them a safe journey home. I look forward to the 8th JCM in Baghdad.