

**By : DATUK SERI SYED HAMID ALBAR**  
**Venue : HANOI**  
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**Title : OPENING STATEMENT AT THE FOURTH MALAYSIA - VIETNAM  
JOINT COMMISSION MEETING**

His Excellency Nguyen Dy Nien

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Socialist Republic of Vietnam,

Members of the Vietnamese and Malaysian Delegations

Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. On behalf of the Malaysian delegation and on my own behalf, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Your Excellency and to the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for the warm reception and generous hospitality that have been extended to us.

2. I wish to say that it is always a pleasure for me to be back in this beautiful city where I never fail to be touched by the warmth and friendliness of the Vietnamese people. I am also happy that we are able to convene our Fourth Joint Commission Meeting. The convening of this meeting is indeed timely. We believe the Joint Commission is an important mechanism in enhancing our bilateral relations and cooperation. The JCM provides us with the opportunities to consult and discuss on various strategies and approaches that would foster closer cooperation between our two countries.

3. Indeed relations between Malaysia and Vietnam have always been excellent, not only bilaterally but also within ASEAN and the multilateral fora. Our relations have improved and strengthened significantly over the years. I am confident that the existing close and friendly relations will continue to flourish in the coming years for the benefits of the future generation, This meeting is thus most appropriate since the last meeting was held in 2002.

4. In previous years, we have witnessed significant high-level visits by leaders and officials from both countries. The most momentous ones were the exchanges of visits by our Prime Ministers in 2004. These visits have contributed tremendously towards greater cooperation particularly in the areas of education, tourism, information technology and media communications and economic activities.

5. I strongly believe that in order to maintain the momentum of our bilateral cooperation, more exchanges of visits should be taking place at all levels which

would help the ongoing efforts to create greater awareness about each other and in identifying new areas of cooperation.

6. The signing of the Joint Declaration on the Framework for Comprehensive Cooperation in the 21st Century during the visit of Prime Minister Phan Van Khai to Malaysia in April 2004 is a manifestation of the desire and commitment of both sides to maintain the momentum and set the direction of bilateral cooperation in the years ahead for the mutual benefit of our two countries.

7. I would like you to know that Malaysia remains committed in our efforts to increase bilateral trade and investment in Vietnam. For 2005, total bilateral trade between our two countries has reached USD2.2 billion and Malaysia is currently the ninth biggest foreign investor in Vietnam with total cumulative investments of USD1.5 billion.

8. Malaysia believes that opportunities for both countries to increase further bilateral trade and investment are indeed vast. I hope this Meeting will act as an important platform for us to explore the opportunities and at the same time resolve issues and problems impeding these activities. I would like to reassure Your Excellency that Malaysia will continue to encourage its private sector to participate actively in investment and other economic activities in Vietnam. Given the excellent state of bilateral relations, I hope the Government of Vietnam would give opportunities to Malaysian companies to participate in the economic activities.

9. In Malaysia, we give great importance to human resources development as we are convinced about the long term benefits to be gained from investment in the human capital. Malaysia has been active in assisting Vietnam in its capacity building. Our records have shown that up to 2005, a total of 585 Vietnamese officials have undergone either short or long-term courses under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) at various training institutes in Malaysia. We welcome more Vietnamese officials to take part under the programme in the future.

Your Excellency, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

10. The Agenda for our Meeting today will cover a wide spectrum of issues such as trade, investment, defense, education, air services, oil and gas, finance and banking, agriculture, training, science and technology and efforts to combat transnational crimes. I am pleased to note that our Meeting today would take into account the issues which have been agreed to by our two countries in the Joint Declaration on the Framework for Comprehensive Cooperation in the 21st Century. I am confident that we will be able to reach understanding and agreements on the issues before us.

Your Excellency, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

11. I would like to extend my appreciation to the senior officials of both sides for their preparatory works and efforts at ensuring that our meeting today will be fruitful. It is now our responsibility at the Ministerial level to review their work and further deliberate on the agenda before us.

12. In conclusion, on behalf of the Government of Malaysia and on my own behalf, I would like to extend my sincere thanks for the generous hospitality extended to me and members of the Malaysian delegation.

13. Last but not least, allow me to take this opportunity to introduce the members of my delegation.

Thank you.