

Penyampai : DATO SERI DR. SITI HASMAH BT HJ MOHD ALI  
Tajuk : THE TENTH ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (OIC)  
Lokasi : PLENARY HALL, PUTRAJAYA CONVENTION CENTRE  
Tarikh : 09-09-2003

Firstly, I would like to thank the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR) and the OIC protocol and reception sub-committee for giving me the honour to say a few words and to meet with the liaison as well as personal security officers for the conference.

2. It is indeed a pleasure to see so many of you here this morning and it reflects your commitment to the organisation of the tenth session of the Islamic Summit Conference 2003, which will be held in this very hall.

3. May I also take this opportunity to congratulate all the Liaison Officers and the personal Security Officers for being selected to execute your protocol and liaison duties. It reflects the Government's confidence in your abilities to do your utmost for the nation.

4. To host an international conference of this stature is not a new phenomenon for our country. We have organised many such events in the past and this is yet another national and international event for Malaysians.

5. We have successfully organised the Thirteenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non- Aligned Movement here in February this year and eight months later, we shall be hosting yet another prestigious event, the OIC for the first time.

6. The accomplishment of Malaysia's leadership and the role it has played is something, which every Malaysian, especially Government officials like you should take pride in. It should serve as exemplary conduct on the part of the Malaysian Government to display its ability to organise an international event twice in one year, this time.

7. Following our successes in organising other international conferences like Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference (APEC), Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) and NAM, it is my earnest hope that our excellent track record would spur us on to ensure that the forthcoming OIC Summit will be a successful event. Let us all make this the best OIC Summit!

8. I am also confident that your presence here this morning is a testimony of your commitment to ensuring this event's success, especially as there are some of you here who are already experienced in carrying out liaison duties. Your experiences should be shared freely to help and guide new members in this field. Please bear in mind that learning is an ongoing process. That is why the courses have been organised for you at the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations to enable you to learn as well as share your thoughts and experiences. Even if you are experienced, please treat the courses and briefings as a learning ongoing process.

9. Sharing of experiences also include those of senior officers and I who have attended many international conferences in Malaysia and overseas. For us here in Malaysia, my personal view is that we have already the capacity to organise very big and important conferences. What we should focus ourselves on is the difference that each conference present to us and how to deal with it accordingly. The organisational administration procedures have not changed very much e.g. the protocol, the logistics, the accommodation, security etc. but it is the characteristic, personality and the idiosyncrasies of the participants that will make each conference different from each other. Very much so, this OIC.

10. Allow me therefore to share some of my thoughts relating to liaison duties in the OIC:

(i) Needs of the VVIPs Your role and function is to ensure that the needs of the VVIPs are well looked after during the duration of their stay in Malaysia. It is imperative that you work closely with the Secretariat with regards to the needs and requirements of the guests concerned so as to ensure that their needs are

cared for at all times.

(ii) **Coordinating Role** It is also important for you to act as intermediaries between the VVIPs and the Secretariat and other authorities concerned so as to ensure the smooth running of the scheduled programme. Coordination of transport matters for the VVIPs is extremely important.

You should therefore be alert, presentable and resourceful at all times.

(iii) **Punctuality** The Arabs and Africans are notably known for their indifference of time. Time is of the essence during the OIC Summit. It is your duty to ensure that the guests are always punctual for the various functions held and that they are well informed of all functions and events including last minute changes to the programme. Always ensure that you have a copy of the programme with you.

You can persuade your guests to be punctual by being punctual yourself, be firm, yet diplomatic.

(iv) **Working Hours** You will be attending to our guests from the time of their arrival until they depart after the Summit. Therefore, you will be on duty 24 hours a day in this duration. You must be prepared to work hard and long hours. You must adjust yourself to being short of sleep and personal time. If necessary, you may have to skip normal meal hours. This means that you should be prepared to take light meals at irregular times. Keep something in your pocket / handbag to munch when you are hungry.

(v) **Background Information On VVIP And Country** To get information of attachment early in the month of October because it is imperative that you familiarise yourself with the VVIP that you will be attached to - meaning, equip yourself with his/her full curriculum vitae and general information of the country's political leadership and economy. You should ensure that you are able to introduce yourself appropriately to the VVIP concerned upon arrival and to maintain visual recognition with him/her. Please ensure that you pronounce his/her name correctly and smile while you are greeting the VVIP. Not forgetting the firm handshake, which is also a reflection of one's sincerity.

(vi) **Update on Malaysia** Needless to say, you need to understand tourism-related information on Malaysia, particularly of Kuala Lumpur and the surrounding areas to be able to guide the guests accordingly. You must make it a point to know the major tourist spots and their opening hours, including shopping destinations, restaurants and local handcraft centres. This aside, you should also familiarise yourself with the current economic and political background of our country.

(vii) **Good Image** You should portray a good image of Malaysia and its people. It is vital you dress and groom well for the tasks that you have been assigned to. Your appearance and smile reflects your personality and will affect your performance. The way you dress, groom, speak and behave augurs your professionalism and personality and the quality of your work. You will invariably be under the spotlight during the course of carrying out your duties. You are, in short, the representative and reflection of our country. It is important you bear this in mind at all times.

11. Those are some of my thoughts. On that note, let me conclude by saying that there is no denying that the task ahead of you is a daunting one. I am confident, however, that you will not only be able to do the job but also to do it well. As we always say, "Malaysia Boleh". After all, generous hospitality and courtesy are part and parcel of Malaysian culture and heritage.

12. I am sure this historic event will be a rewarding experience for all of you and a good learning opportunity. Once again, may I wish you the very best of luck as you carry out your responsibilities during the OIC Summit, Insya'Allah. May I take this golden opportunity to thank Wisma Putra, INTAN, the OIC Protocol and its Sub Committees, all the staff and the participants today for your support and dedication to the Government and its leaders. We cannot thank you enough.