

**KL Converge! Opening Ceremony
17/09/2014**

Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, Plenary Theatre (Level 3)

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh ,
Salam Sejahtera, Salam 1Malaysia

YB Dato' Sri Ahmad Shabery Cheek
Minister of Communications and Multimedia, Malaysia

Excellencies Ministers of Communications and Heads of Delegations from the ASEAN
Members States, Japan and India

YBhg Dato' Sri Abdul Rahim Mohamad Radzi
Secretary General,
Ministry of Communications and Multimedia, Malaysia

Mr Houlin Zhao
Deputy Secretary General
International Telecommunication Union

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

1. First and foremost, I would like to thank the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia, Malaysia for inviting me this afternoon to this momentous occasion. Do allow me to extend a very warm welcome to all the Ministers of Communications and Heads of Delegations from ASEAN, Japan, India and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) who are here with us today, Selamat Datang or Welcome to Malaysia. Malaysia is indeed delighted that all of you have accepted our invitation to join us in what we hope to be the first of many editions of KL Converge.

2. I must admit to being intrigued by the idea of a festival of digital elements converging to bring together industries, content creators, content users, academicians, entrepreneurs and established names in this field. The main purpose is to challenge our minds and build new ideas to elevate the digital industry. It is also about building an ecosystem for the local content industry to maximise its real potential in the global market, as well as to explore ways to position Malaysia as a top digital media and communications hub in this region.

3. We cannot deny that everything we do today seems to have a digital element to it.

This has led to the concept of a digital lifestyle and people seemed to have embraced technology like second nature for technology facilitates their lives and has become a necessity. Hence, the need to explore this technology for the advancement of our communities, our people and our countries.

4. There are many reasons why the Malaysian Government is committed to the idea of KL Converge. Among others, we want to create a platform for Malaysians to showcase what they are capable of. We want to discover the new and unseen talent and give them the opportunity to explore and realize their potential in this digital space. I am pleased with the initiative in bringing together all experts to converge in KL, with the intend of making Malaysia as a digital hub for the benefits of the region.

5. In Malaysia, the government has come up with various initiatives which incorporate the role of both public and private sectors as we all know there's a high demand for better infrastructures and digital capabilities. I believe KL Converge 2014 will be a catalyst to further develop the dynamic market environment under the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) to fast track the country's progress towards becoming a high-income nation in 2020.

6. I must say that, it is the concerted effort of all pertinent players, namely the policy makers, the regulators and those from the industry that has resulted in increasing our broadband penetration rates. In 2006, the household broadband penetration rate was only 11%. Today, we are at 68% household broadband penetration. The National Broadband Plan launched in 2010 and the corresponding policies and regulations have helped to achieve this figure in a comparatively short time frame. What has been gratifying to us is being ranked by the Alliance for Affordable Internet as being the first amongst 46 emerging countries with affordable broadband.

7. Far from being complacent, we strive to continue with our efforts to improve. Up to now, our focus has been on providing access and raising our penetration rates; putting devices into the hands of our people so that everyone is connected. Along the way, we have not forgotten the need to improve Quality of Service to create a better digital experience. This is one of our topmost concerns today.

8. Having said that, it is most imperative for the digital inclusion efforts be implemented for rural communities, vulnerable populations and marginalized groups. While the urban populations are gearing up towards smart cities and that the urban lifestyles are increasingly becoming more digital, rural communities and those who have yet to be connected or who are less connected than others, stand to be left further behind if this digital disparity between the rural and the urban is not addressed accordingly.

9. On that note, I am pleased to share with all of you that Malaysia has embarked on a transformation initiative several years ago in order to propel our economy into a high income economy by focusing on several sectors, which we have defined as the National Key Economic Areas. One of the key areas that have been identified for transformation is the Communications, Content and Infrastructure (CCI) industry.

10. This sector spans across a wide ecosystem focusing on communications infrastructure as well as that of content and applications. What is crucial is the paradigm shift that will have to take place to move from providing infrastructure and access, to providing applications and content to create a knowledge-based economy that in turn will accelerate economic expansion and lead to the generation of income.

11. It was the recognition for the growing demand for education, entertainment and interaction on a digital platform that the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia partnering with the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission came up with the idea for KL Converge. I truly hope Malaysian can take this opportunity to learn more from their counterparts. The government's objective is not only to promote the creation of quality creative content but also making Malaysia as a preferred destination and a digital hub for the region. Furthermore, the export of creative content by Malaysia is expected to reach about RM600 million this year from RM565 million in 2013 and from just RM200 million in 2010.

12. In January 2011 at the 10th ASEAN Telecommunications and IT Ministers' Meeting (TELMIN) held in Kuala Lumpur, the ASEAN members launched their ASEAN ICT Masterplan 2015. In that Masterplan, there is an initiative called the ASEAN Digital Content Exchange which aims to develop a formal platform to facilitate and promote the exchange of content. I believe that this initiative acknowledges that once communications access is in place, there must be content to drive the next stage of development and adoption of broadband.

13. The world today is not only talking about access to broadband and high speed connectivity. The reality today is hyper connectivity and ultra-high speed broadband. People are demanding higher and higher speeds so that they can consume more content on their devices to facilitate their professional needs as well as their digital lifestyles.

14. Certainly, broadband and ICT services have added new dimensions to education. Online learning and e-libraries are almost the norm today. People don't carry books around anymore thanks to e-books. It's all getting more and more paperless.

15. I remember the huge encyclopedias that we used to refer to when we do research before. Today, the sources of knowledge stem from the Internet, from sources like the

Khan Academy, TED-talks, and from all the different types of applications. We are going to be left behind if we cannot get onto this bandwagon. In a vast country like Malaysia with a large rural-centric population, to be connected with fibre will take time and consume a lot of resources.

16. In 2009, the United Nations Population Division projected that by 2020, 46.7% of ASEAN will be urbanized, compared to 41.8% in 2010. The projection for 2030 is 52.9%. With roughly half ASEAN's population projected to be urban and an equal percentage being rural, it is not surprising that ASEAN governments are still actively trying to connect rural communities with broadband, and in the last two years or so, wherever possible, with high speed broadband. This has been the case in Malaysia.

17. I have been told that rolling-out the infrastructure is the relatively easy part, the hard work starts AFTER the infrastructure is in place - with adoption, and then comes value creation - through content and apps.

18. In Malaysia, we often talk about unity in diversity. I am glad that the organisers of KL Converge! have decided to share this concept with Malaysia's neighbours in ASEAN and the region. With the participation of all the other countries, we can celebrate and showcase each other's strengths and uniqueness whilst at the same time, work together to build a framework for the digital exchange and sharing of ideas and contents that will help us to grow and prosper.

19. I sincerely hope that KL Converge will open up more opportunities for all of us within the region to address similar issues and help us to come together and explore ideas so as to bring about changes in all aspect, particularly the economy of the region. As Don Tapscott, a successful author, consultant and speaker specializing in business strategy once said "All one needs is a computer, a network connection, and a bright spark of initiative and creativity to join the economy".

20. I am confident that this event would serve as a platform to further discuss issues that will make a significant difference to the countries industry and economy. To all our participants, I wish you a fruitful and productive discussion and deliberation to generate more new innovative ideas. I would like to once again welcome all of you to Malaysia, your digital hub and wish you a productive three days ahead! To our international participants, as this year is Visit Malaysia Year 2014, I encourage you to take some time to travel and explore the beauty of our country, to experience and enjoy the rich Malaysian culture and most of all our varieties of food, served with our warm hospitality

21. On that note, I declare the KL Converge 2014 officially open.

Thank You.