



**OPENING STATEMENT**  
**By:**



Honorable Dato' Dr. Ali Bin Hamsa  
Deputy Director General II  
Economic Planning Unit  
Prime Minister's Department, Malaysia  
(Head of Malaysian Delegation)

**At the 15<sup>th</sup> IMT-GT Senior Officials Meeting (SOM)**  
Palembang, South Sumatera, Indonesia

Honorable Mr. Firman M.U Tamboen  
Head of Delegation, Republic of Indonesia,

Honorable Dr. Porameteer Vimolsiri  
Head of the Thailand Delegation,

Honorable Mr. Arsyadjuliandi Rahman  
Indonesian National Director of IMT-GT Joint Business Council,

Dr. Richard Green  
Representative from Asian Development Bank,

Dr. Hassan Ibrahim  
Interim Director of CIMT,

Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum Warrahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and a very Good Morning.

1. Allow me to begin by expressing our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended by our host, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and in particular our local host, the Honorable Prof. Dr. H. Mahyuddin NS, the

Governor of South Sumatera. My delegation and I attending this 15th IMT-GT Senior Officials Meeting feel very honored and appreciative of the excellent arrangements that have been put in place to make our stay here pleasant and memorable. Malaysia's attendance in this Meeting indicates our support and full commitment in realizing the objectives of IMT-GT, especially to narrow the development gap within ASEAN.

2. It is indeed an honor for me to come back into the IMT-GT's fold of the Senior Officials' Meeting. I am also glad to see familiar faces amongst the delegates present here today both from the public and private sectors. The continued participation of the members of the private sector, particularly the individuals and personalities present here who have been involved for a long time, shows that this kind of sub-regional cooperation in the IMT-GT is beneficial and can bring about more economic opportunities.

3. As for the public sector or the Government, we are here to facilitate and provide support services for the private sector to further enhance economic and business activities in the sub-region especially during this time of considerable global financial flutter that started in the United States of America and has spread across Europe and to the rest of the world. It is therefore, timely and all the more compelling for us to further strengthen our commitments and put forward our maximum collective efforts to meet current challenging scenario.

## **Private Sector Participation**

4. Under the ambit of IMT-GT, the private sector has been tasked to drive economic growth based on the Roadmap that has been drawn up with the assistance of ADB. It is very crucial for the private sector to translate strategies and plans contained in the Roadmap into viable business and investment engagements to boost economic growth. Flagship projects that have been identified such as the IMT-GT Plaza, Border Township Development, Transport Linkages, Harbour City, Halal Parks, Visit IMT-GT Year 2008 and IMT-GT website, should be pursued relentlessly to ensure their success. I am aware that the Joint Business Council (JBC) is actively working to realize these plans. In order to achieve that, the public sector will need to provide and facilitate the required support and assistance to enable the private sector investors to conduct their businesses successfully. For Malaysia, we will continue to provide the private sector with a more conducive business environment for them to expand and grow.

5. The JBC that has been set up must play a bigger and encompassing role in getting broader participation from the business community. By encouraging more relevant associations and organizations from the business community, the JBC should be able to share expertise, network and create synergy for successful ventures. The enlarged market in IMT-GT is indeed a good incentive for investment in the region. The Tourism sector for example, should take advantage and leverage on this situation which has vast potential for development.

6. On this, I am pleased to note that initiatives on developing tour packages for the IMT-GT sub-region are now under way as an outcome of the Workshop on IMT-GT Tour Packages for the IMT-GT Area held back-to-back with the recent 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Working Group on Tourism in Malacca in May 2008. I also take this opportunity to commend JBC for successfully organizing a number of educational, cultural and tourism-related activities in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand this year as part of the Visit IMT-GT Year 2008, the outcome of which further inspired the JBC to continue the Visit IMT-GT Year 2008 to IMT-GT Celebration Year 2009. I am confident that more interesting and worthwhile activities are in store in the sub-region in 2009.

### **Centre for IMT-GT Sub-Regional Cooperation (CIMT)**

7. Recognizing the latest development on the legalization process of the establishment of the Centre for IMT-GT Sub-regional Cooperation (CIMT), all member countries' commitment to have CIMT legally established with an International Organization status has now become reality. CIMT is expected to operate full pledge after the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of CIMT in December 2008 during the IMT-GT Summit in Bangkok.

8. The monumental responsibilities placed upon CIMT, will require full commitment, assistance and cooperation from all stakeholders of the IMT-GT. I therefore urge stakeholders in the IMT-GT, from ministries to agencies, from the Federal or Central Government to State and Provincial Governments, and the private sector to provide full support and cooperation to CIMT.

## **Development Partners**

9. We recognize the untiring efforts of our development partner, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), for continuously supporting IMT-GT members in terms of technical assistance and consultations from the experts group. We would like to record our appreciation to ADB. I hope ADB will conduct more studies and research that are more relevant to the regional need and the local context, and to provide or facilitate the funding required in implementing the projects, especially those listed under the Roadmap for Development, 2007 - 2011.

## **Security in the IMT-GT**

10. While we talk about economic growth and development, we must realize that it can only take place in a stable and conducive environment. Security of the region should not be compromised to ensure our business community that their investments are safe. Security here is not only confined to conflicts but also policies and social stability. We must work together to ensure the presence of peace and stability in the IMT-GT sub-region so as not to jeopardize the vast economic potential that we can tap here. Following the directive of our Leaders during the 3<sup>rd</sup> IMT-GT Summit on 19 November 2007, in Singapore, on our resolution and commitment to strengthen and accelerate cooperation in security, we need to focus our minds more concertedly to realize this effort.

## **Impending Mid Term Review (MTR) of the IMT-GT Roadmap 2007-2011**

11. As the year 2008 draw to a close and ushering in the year 2009, we need to take stock on the progress achieved and results realized in the implementation of the IMT-GT Roadmap as well as analyzing the policies and directions that has been carried out thus far. Given the current challenging economic scenario, it becomes all the more imperative that current strategies be aligned accordingly so that the implementation issues and constraints are identified and consequently, solutions are formulated to address them. The outcome of this MTR entails the adoption of a more focus and results oriented action plans and directly contribute to achieving the Roadmap goals and targets.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

12. Once again, I would like to express my appreciation to the Government of Indonesia for the excellent organization of this meeting and warm hospitality extended to me and all delegates.

Thank you.

21 October 2008.