OPENING STATEMENT
H.E. Ir. LUKMAN EDY
STATE MINISTER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISADVANTAGED AREAS

H.E. Mr. Weerasak Kowsurat,

H.E Dato Dr. Ali Hamsa,

Honorable Mr. Firman M.U Tamboen,

Honorable Mr. Poramittee Vimolsiri

Honorable representative of Indonesia provinces of South Sumatera, Aceh, North Sumatera, Jambi, Bangka Belitung, Kepulauan Riau, Lampung and Riau,

Honorable representative of Malaysia State Government of Penang and Melaka,

Honorable representative of Thailand Provinces of Yala and Songkhla,,

Mr. Arsyadjuliandi Rachman, Country Chairman of Indonesia Joint Business Council,

Haji Faudzi Naim bin Haji Noh, Country Chairman of Malaysia Joint Business Council,

Mr Khun Thanarak Phongphatra,, Country Chairman of Thailand Joint Business Council,

Mr. Tom Crouch from the Asian Development Bank

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at the outset, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Indonesia, extend a warm welcome to all of you and your delegation to the 15th Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) Ministerial Meeting.

As we all know, IMT-GT is a unique cooperation that embraces both local governments and private sectors. It has been fifteen years since the sub-regional economic cooperation IMT-GT was initially established in 1993. During the period, we have witnessed the remarkable achievements in various sectors of cooperation.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the 2nd Summit of IMT-GT in Cebu, the Philippines, on 12 January 2007, IMT-GT has set up a “Roadmap for Development 2007-2011” with a vision of “a seamless, progressive, prosperous and peaceful sub region”. It is indeed, a cornerstone towards the increasing of the economic growth in border areas. Nevertheless, it is essential to bear in mind that the development should be sustainable and meet the ultimate goal of the establishment of the IMT-GT, which is to develop and improve the standard of living and quality of life of the people in the IMT-GT.

In pursuing these goals, IMT-GT needs to preserve and enhance its achievements by elaborating and utilizing its resources with collaboration between public and private sector. Sustainable exploitation of natural resources, human resources capacity building and protection towards migrant workers are of important steps that needed to be carried out. More to the point, small and medium enterprises are the backbone of developing countries economy. It is therefore important to strengthen and to facilitate small and medium enterprises to enter global market. Other issues, such as trade and investment, infrastructure development and transportation, tourism and human resources, are needed to be discussed between the Joint Business Council and the established working groups.

During the fifteen years of its existence, IMT-GT has gone through many obstacles and challenges. To cope with these obstacles and challenges, we need to enhance cooperation and coordination, either among central government, local governments or private sectors.

Through the numerous partnerships and alliances, the private sectors have shown their strength. People to people contact have been greater than ever, and this helps the confidence building among people in the border areas, and thus emerges the spirit of unity as a community in the IMT-GT area. Moreover, the cultural proximity and historical background in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, have an enormous role in supporting the cooperation.

Let me reiterate, Ladies and Gentlemen, our expectation from IMT-GT as a constructive forum of cooperation to enhance the growth in the triangle. It is our common hope that this meeting will be successful in reaching its goals.

Thank you.