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The Most Honourable Acting Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Kamarul Ariffin

Mr. Robert Iau

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you, on behalf of AMIC, to our Sixth Annual Conference with the theme ‘Highways, Skyways and Corridors: Asia’s Communication Challenges’.

Four years ago, when we held our 2nd Annual Conference in Kuala Lumpur, we were honoured to have the Honourable Dato’ Seri Anwar Ibrahim as our Chief Guest. We deem ourselves doubly privileged to welcome YAB Dato’ Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Acting Prime Minister, to inaugurate our Sixth Annual Conference today.

In the intervening four years, much has happened in Asia and in Malaysia. Last week the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunications Union made an interesting observation. In 1996, he said, the Asia-Pacific region accounted for just over half of the 52 million telephone lines added worldwide, and just over 40% of the 46 million new mobile subscribers. But despite this phenomenal growth, the Asia-Pacific region has more than two-thirds of all the households worldwide that are not yet served with even the most basic telecommunication facilities.

The UN Secretary-General’s message to ESCAP on its 50th anniversary earlier this year, echoed a similar thought. The Asia-Pacific region, he said, had emerged as the most rapidly growing region in the world, with impressive technological progress and economic advancement. Yet the region includes the largest number of the world’s poor and illiterate. Such contradictions are inherent in Asia.

Communications clearly have a role to play in disseminating information and knowledge, and in activating a spirit of social dynamism in the less affluent and less developed parts of the region. This is what AMIC is striving to do: to foster an exchange of ideas, information and experience, and to aid in the development of
skills, so that the potential of communication for socioeconomic development is realized by all the countries in the region.

We are glad to be in Malaysia for our Sixth Annual Conference. There is much to see and learn in Malaysia. It is viewed as a model and an inspiration by developing nations in the region and beyond. Vision 2020 and the Multimedia Supercorridor exemplify the new Malaysia, a nation stable and confident, and surging forward economically and politically, to play a leadership role in the affairs of the region and the world.

Our projects this year span a wide spectrum. We are setting up an Asia-Pacific Communication Network electronically linking 12 centres, with Bernama as our partner in Malaysia. We will bring out a series of monographs on media laws and regulations in ten countries, including Malaysia. We are embarking on an exciting new project, PRELUDE, for the Production of Electronic Teaching Aids for University Development. And we are also working on a project involving the Use of Multimedia Technologies for Poverty Eradication, initially focusing on South Asia. All but the last have a Malaysian component.

We are a non-profit organization. Our activities are made possible by the cooperation and support of a large number of partner organizations in Asia and outside. For this Conference, we are grateful to Kumpulan Utusan, our principal sponsor, for their invaluable support, to Telekom Malaysia, the Renong Group and other local and regional organizations, and to our speakers, chairpersons and participants for their interest and enthusiasm.

Above all, our Honourable Chief Guest, we are grateful to you for joining us today. For you represent the new Malaysia, pragmatic and purposeful, and your presence will be a source of encouragement to all of us to work for the success of the Conference objectives.
LEADING ASIA INTO THE INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY

Dr. Tengku Mohd. Azzman Shariffadeen
Tatsuhito Nagaya
TOPIC: Leading Asia into the Information Superhighway

* Current and future developments in communication infrastructure, their capabilities and limitations, and potential for Asia.
* Risks and rewards for new entrants to the market place.

Biodatas:

Dr. Tengku Mohd Azzman Shariffadeen bin Tengku Ibrahim

Dr. Tengku Mohd Azzman Shariffadeen bin Tengku Ibrahim is the President and CEO of Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic Systems Bhd (MIMOS) who has been awarded the Panglima Jasa Negara by the Federal Government and the PIKOM 10th anniversary recognition award by the Association of the Computer Industry Malaysia. He has been serving MIMOS from 1984 and has written, published and presented numerous papers associated with the information and communication industry. He attained his doctorate in 1974 on Automatic Control from the University of Manchester, Institute of Science and Technology.

Mr. Tatsuhito Nagaya

Mr. Tatsuhito Nagaya is the Executive Researcher, of the NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute in Japan. He has served as Editor-in-Chief for Satellite Television : NHK BS Channel 2 and as Executive Producer in charge of satellite broadcasting programming section, before taking up the current position.