

**SPEECH BY  
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OPENING CEREMONY OF  
MALAYSIAN INTERNATIONAL COCOA FAIR 2009  
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Salam sejahtera dan selamat petang.

Yang Amat Berhormat Tan Sri Dato' Haji Muhyiddin Bin Mohd. Yassin,  
Timbalan Perdana Menteri Malaysia.

Yang Berhormat Datuk Hamzah Zainuddin,  
Timbalan menteri Perudusahaan Perladangan dan Komoditi Malaysia.

Yang Berbahagia Datuk Wira Ismail Salleh,  
Ketua Setiausaha  
Kementerian Perusahaan Perladangan dan Komoditi Malaysia.

Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Abi Musa asaari Mohamed Nor,  
Pengerusi Lembaga Pengelola Lembaga Koko Malaysia.

Yang Berbahagia Dato' Dr. Azhar Ismail,  
Ketua Pengarah Lembaga Koko Malaysia.

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. First and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all who are present here today. My special thanks and appreciation to Yang Amat Berhormat Tan Sri Dato' Haji Muhyiddin Bin Mohd. Yassin, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, for agreeing to grace the auspicious Malaysian International cocoa Fair (MICF) 2009. Yang Amat Berhormat Tan Sri's presence is indeed a reflection of the strong support and commitment of the Government to the development of plantation industries and commodities sector, especially the cocoa sub-sector.
2. The Plantation Industries and commodities sector has been a major contributor to our national economy. Last year, the export earnings of the commodities and commodity-based products amounted to RM 112 billion, an increase of 26% compares with RM 89 billion in 2007. Out of the total exports, about 3.4 billion or 3% is attributed to the cocoa industry.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. Presently, cocoa is the third most important commodity crop after palm oil and rubber in Malaysia. To ensure that cocoa industry in the country remains competitive and continue to be developed in a sustainable manner, the Malaysian Cocoa board was established in 1988. Among others, the Board is involved in undertaking R & D activities, including new product development, providing extension services to smallholders as well as mounting market development and promotion programs in both domestic and international markets.
4. In terms of market development, one of the efforts given emphasis by the Malaysian Cocoa Board is to increase the domestic consumption of cocoa. In this regard, the present per capita consumption of cocoa in the country of about 600 grams per year is still much lower than those in countries such as Switzerland and Belgium which consume more than 5 kilograms per year.
5. One of the promotion activities organized by the Cocoa Board is the Malaysian International Cocoa Fair or MICF. First held in 1994, the main objective of MICF is to promote Malaysia as a centre for production technology, processing, manufacturing and trading of cocoa and cocoa based products both in Asia and the world. The fair comprises three main activities namely the international exposition, conference and dinner.
6. MICF 2009 which is going to be held for five days until the 12<sup>th</sup> of May is expected to attract 30,000 visitors, including 110 foreign participants from Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, the United States of America and the United Kingdom. I do hope that through the various events that would be organized, all participants would be able to exchange information, particularly those on new developments in the Malaysian Cocoa Industry.
7. Once again, my sincere thanks to all of you for supporting this event, particularly to yang Amat Berhormat Tan Sri. Last but not least, I would like to congratulate the Malaysian Cocoa Board for its great effort in organizing this Malaysian Cocoa Fair (MICF) 2009.

Thank you.