

**THE 25TH IMT-GT SILVER JUBILEE GALA DINNER
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 24TH IMT-GT MINISTERIAL MEETING**

**SPEECH BY
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**HATTEN PLACE HOTEL, MALACCA
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**Tuan Yang Terutama Tun Datuk Seri Utama
Dr. Mohd Khalil bin Yaakob,**
Yang di-Pertua Negeri Melaka;

His Excellency Darmin Nasution,
Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs of the
Republic of Indonesia;

His Excellency Arkhom Termpittayapaisith,
Minister of Transport of The Kingdom of Thailand;

His Excellency Erzaldi Rosman Djohan,
Governor of Bangka Belitung Island;

His Excellency Adly bin Zahari,
Chief Minister of Malacca;

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is my pleasure to welcome all delegates to the 25th Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) Silver Jubilee Gala Dinner in conjunction with the 24th IMT-GT Ministerial Meeting here in Malacca.
2. If I may pause for a moment, I would like to express our concern and sympathy with the people of Indonesia for the earthquake and tsunami. Our hearts go out to the victims and their loved ones of this tragedy and we offer our sincere condolences to all the victims and their families.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. I am proud that this will be the first time that the IMT-GT Ministerial Meetings will be under the auspices of New Malaysia. And I am also proud to say that under the leadership of Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, we will continue to work towards achieving the goals and vision of IMT-GT.

4. I would like to express my deep appreciation to Tuan Yang Terutama Tun Datuk Seri Utama Dr. Mohd Khalil bin Yaakob for gracing the gala dinner tonight.

5. Special thanks to Chief Minister Adly and the state government of Malacca for hosting this dinner.

6. It is most fitting that Malacca is hosting this meeting as the state has been very active and committed in undertaking IMT-GT programmes and projects, particularly the Green City Action Plan. This initiative aims to make Malacca a liveable city, harmonising the environment with economic competitiveness towards achieving sustainable development.

7. Tonight, we commemorate the success of IMT-GT members' commitment, hard work and perseverance for the past 25 years. I would like to congratulate the member countries and our strategic partners on this achievement.

8. Malacca is no stranger to economic dynamism and greatness. It was related in the Malay Annals that, **(Quote)** “It became noted in every country that the country of Malacca was very great, populous and abundant in all the necessaries of life... All the merchants likewise, whether from above or under the wind, frequented Malacca.” **(Unquote)**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. In 1993, Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad first presented the idea of subregional cooperation during the ASEAN Summit meeting in Langkawi, which was later endorsed in June by the other leaders, namely, President Suharto of Indonesia and Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai of Thailand.

10. Today, the success of this regional cooperation is evidenced by the fact that our nations can speak with one voice and work together towards achieving our long-term strategic direction.

11. Our Vision 2036 and its Implementation Blueprints, launched last year, will guide member countries in realising our goals.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

12. IMT-GT has developed a strong economic base in tourism as well as trade and investment that drives growth in our subregion. The continuous improvements in connectivity have resulted in better movement of people, goods and services.

13. With 32 **provinces** and a combined population of 82 million, producing a labour force of 40 million, IMT-GT's economic strength represents a formidable market for robust economic growth.

14. Within five years, from 2011 to 2016, our combined GDP grew from US\$875 billion to US\$1.2 trillion, while unemployment rate and incidence of poverty declined. These are therefore clear indications of the improvement in the quality of life of the people.

15. Nevertheless, much more still needs to be done particularly in the area of economic competitiveness and integration. Being at the heart of ASEAN, IMT-GT members must work together to accelerate the implementation of community-centric programmes and projects. Trumpeting growth in terms of GDP numbers alone may sound impressive, but if these are not translated into real benefits for the people, they cannot be considered successful.

16. In addition, we need to adapt to current trends and changes of the global environment, particularly in facing the challenges of the digital economy and the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

17. Two weeks ago in Hanoi, at the World Economic Forum on ASEAN, I joined leaders from Southeast Asia and captains of industries to deliberate on how advancement in technologies are driving this paradigm change and how we could best meet the challenges going forward.

18. Let me take this opportunity to mention that just this evening, we concluded a 2-hour detailed and frank session among the ministers and among other things, we came to a consensus on the need to establish the IMT-GT Industrial Revolution 4.0 Framework. This clearly underscores the profound importance given to this paradigm change.

19. Additionally, we also agree on the significant role of JBC in driving economic and business growth in the region.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

20. In closing, I would like to express my utmost gratitude and thanks to the stakeholders and partners involved in supporting IMT-GT for the past 25 years. I would also like to applaud all parties for their contribution and hard work in realising the programmes and projects.

21. Tonight is not just the anniversary of 25 meaningful years of **co**operation, it is also an occasion to renew our commitment to closer **co**operation, collaboration and friendship between our nations in the years to come.

22. With that, I wish everybody a delightful evening ahead.

Thank you.