

**Remarks by the Ambassador of Japan to Malaysia,
H.E. Mr. Shigeru Nakamura, at the 30th Anniversary Of The Look East Policy
International Seminar: Sustainability And Achievement
23 June 2012**

Yang Amat Berbahagia Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad

The 4th Prime Minister of Malaysia

Mr Soe Pil-Eon

Vice Minister I, Ministry of Public Administration and Security, the Republic of Korea

Yang Amat Berbahagia Toh Puan Dato' Seri Hajah Dr Aishah Ong

Pro-Chancellor, University Malaya

Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Dr Ghauth Jasmon

Vice-Chancellor, University Malaya

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to be here this morning to say a few words on behalf of the Government of Japan at the International Seminar for the 30th Anniversary of the Look East Policy: Sustainability and Achievement. Let me extend my sincere appreciation to Tun Dr Mahathir for his presence today to deliver a keynote

address on the Look East Policy, which, as you know, is one of Tun's revolutionary measures and has guided fellow Malaysian to explore untapped Far East for study. Being unveiled as early as when he took office as Prime Minister, this signature policy has cemented foundation to establish closer partnership between Malaysia and Japan and, to our great pleasure, benefitted both countries ever since in every facet of our relationship.

This long-cherished friendship through the implementation of the Look East Policy, was paramount during our difficult time when a massive earthquake and tsunami hit Japan on 11 March 2011, resulting in the loss of thousands of lives and great damage to the region. Since then, we have received innumerable donations and kind messages from all over Malaysia. Terima kasih Malaysia. One year has passed since the disaster, while such rumors still exist as worrying the devastated situation remains in severely affected area. However, let me assure you that in most part the life is back to normal and safe, and reconstruction is underway. I hope many Malaysians will visit Japan because that will be of great encouragement to us Japanese.

I am pleased to mention that Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda and Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak exchanged congratulatory messages this March in conjunction with the 30th anniversary of the Look East Policy. Prime Minister Noda referred in his message that the good and close bilateral relationship between Japan and Malaysia was supported by "kizuna" - the bond of friendship nurtured under the Look East Policy. In order to strengthen "kizuna" in Asia and prosper together, he emphasized that it was extremely significant that Japan and Malaysia thought hard and continued to make efforts

under the Look East Policy in developing human resources responsible for the future of Asia. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Najib in his message responded that the Look East Policy had produced highly-skilled Malaysian engineers with Japanese style industriousness and work ethics and contributed immensely to Malaysia's growth, development and technological advancement over the last 30 years. He pointed out that Malaysia highly valued Japan's continued cooperation and commitment towards the Look East Policy which will definitely be vital in contributing and supporting Malaysia's Economic Transformation Programme in transforming the country into a high-income nation by 2020.

It is heartening to note that to-date about fifteen thousand Malaysian students and trainees have studied or trained in Japan under the Look East Policy. Some 268 students went to Japan this year to start academic life under the policy. In addition, the Japanese government awarded 33 scholarships to Malaysian students to study in Japan. Many have returned to become successful professionals contributing towards Malaysia's development into a high income nation. They have also been playing important roles in cementing the strong bridge of friendship between our two countries throughout these 30 years.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In this regard, the Malaysia-Japan International Institute of Technology (MJIT) was initiated under the Look East Policy. The MJIT, which opened in September last year, is an academic institution established under UTM to introduce

Japanese-style engineering education. The concept of the MJIT project was initiated by Tun Dr. Mahathir in 2001.

I am pleased to say that the MJIT was officially launched with much fanfare on 1 June. In his speech at the launch, Prime Minister Najib said the MJIT was a potent symbol not only of Malaysia's rich and burgeoning relationship with Japan but of its confidence in Japanese technology, admiration for Japanese work ethic and a desire to gain a window onto the Japanese way of life. He also said that MJIT had an important part to play in helping Malaysia take its place at the heart of the global economy. Meanwhile in his speech, Former Prime Minister Dr Hatoyama said MJIT should play a key role in terms of the bilateral cooperation in the area of youth exchange. He said the MJIT would introduce Japanese-style engineering education to Malaysia and would significantly contribute to the development of the entire region as a centre of excellence of engineering education not only for Malaysia but also for ASEAN. Furthermore, Prime Minister Noda described MJIT as culmination of the Look East Policy in his message to Prime Minister Najib. Currently, almost 100 students including post graduate students are taking up four courses – Electronics System Engineering, Mechanical Precision Engineering, Environmental and Green Technology and Technology Management and Business – in the institute and this will increase to about 2700 students in 2017. There are seven Japanese professors presently teaching in MJIT and in two to three years time more than 30 Japanese professors would be installed in the institute.

Nevertheless, after 30 years of the Look East Policy, someone might reconsider further necessity of Look East Policy for Malaysia to continue to learn from Japan. It is my belief that Japanese typical work professionalism and unrelenting quest of precision continue to be our huge advantage, especially at a time of turbulent global economy and under resource constraints; those values will never fade or shatter but simply be revaluated to serve as guidance for our future generation. MJIIT will develop to be one of such showcases here in Malaysia, but back home Japan remains to be ready to always welcome those ambitious Malaysian youths share and cultivate together what we have uphold so far as an integral part of our national resilience.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me touch upon some other area than educational exchange. Nowadays Japanese culture, not only classic but also popular – modern one, is esteemed and prevailed around the world. I am very much pleased to see many young people in Malaysia and other parts of Asia adore Japanese pop culture, from classic anime and manga series to J-pop. This was demonstrated by the huge turnout of over 40,000 fans at the first ever Anime Festival Asia Malaysia 2012 held this June in KL. And a lot of Malaysians and foreign tourists visit the Tokyo Street at shopping complex PAVILION, which showcased Japanese cultural goods, foods, commodities and so on.

In terms of trade and investments, according to the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) statistics, Japan was the biggest foreign investor

to Malaysia in manufacturing sector with 77 approved projects totaling 10.1 billion ringgit last year. The trend continues this year also, that the same MIDA statistics for January to March 2012 indicates that Japan is the leading foreign investor in Malaysia with 12 approved projects totaling 1.2 billion ringgit. There is a common understanding in Malaysia that the foreign direct investment plays a vital role in Economic Transformation Program and to achieve the Vision 2020 eventually. However, given the intensifying competition with other ASEAN countries and others to attract more Japanese investment, it is about time for us to consider how we can upgrade and further strengthen our win-win relationship in trade and investment.

Another fine example of the success of the Look East Policy is the Alumni Look East Policy Society or ALEPS which is an alumni association of students of Japanese universities under the Look East Policy. Beside supporting the government in the implementation of the Look East Policy and pursuing the policy's objectives, ALEPS also plays an important role in strengthening the friendship between Japan and Malaysia. After the earthquake and tsunami in Japan in March 2011, some members of ALEPS visited the affected Tohoku area to volunteer their services. From March to May this year, the Japanese government invited 130 students, members of the Alumni Look East Policy Society and Japan Graduates' Association of Malaysia to visit the Tohoku disaster area as part of the Japan – East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths, or JENESYS Programme. The JENESYS Programme is a large-scale youth exchange initiative launched in 2007 to invite about 6,000 youths mainly from East Asia Summit member countries to visit Japan over a period of five years.

I believe Prime Minister Najib's support for the Look East Policy is paving the way for a second wave of the policy as Malaysia continues to "Look East" for the future. I hope that this symposium will enable us to reflect on the 30 years of the Look East Policy's implementation and generate new ideas to further enhance ties and cooperation between both our countries in future. Today's symposium will have 18 paper presenters for the Parallel Session of which 10 are Japanese presenters who will speak about the Look East Policy. I am proud to say that four of the Japanese presenters are youth scholars from the JENESYS programme while two are prominent professors on Malaysian studies thus providing us with various diverse viewpoints and insights.

Before I conclude, I would like to thank the organizers of this international seminar who have worked hard in making this event a success. I hope this seminar will be an enlightening and informative experience for you.

Thank you.