

**OPENING REMARKS BY  
YANG BERHORMAT DATO' SAIFUDDIN ABDULLAH  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MALAYSIA  
AT THE 33<sup>RD</sup> ASIA-PACIFIC ROUNDTABLE  
HILTON KUALA LUMPUR  
TUESDAY, 25 JUNE 2019**

Yang Amat Berhormat Tun Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad  
Prime Minister of Malaysia

Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Rastam Mohd Isa  
Chairman and Chief Executive  
Institute of Strategic and International Studies Malaysia and  
Chairman, Organising Committee of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Asia Pacific  
Roundtable

Professor Dr Aileen Baviera  
Chair of ASEAN-ISIS Network, and  
President, Asia Pacific Pathways to Progress Foundation  
The Philippines

Heads of ASEAN-ISIS,  
Your Excellencies and Deputy Ministers,  
ISIS Board members,  
Honoured Guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It gives me great pleasure to moderate today's keynote session with the Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

2. The Prime Minister is certainly no stranger to the Asia-Pacific Roundtable, having first addressed the 3<sup>rd</sup> APR almost exactly 30 years ago on 17 June 1989. In that speech, the Prime Minister had welcomed participants to, and I quote, “a meeting in this small capital of a small nation in the Western Pacific.”
3. Well, 30 years on, Kuala Lumpur can hardly be called a small capital. Malaysia as a nation has earned its place in the world. This is thanks to the vision and leadership of Tun Dr Mahathir himself, who served as Prime Minister for 22 years in his first tenure. The APR, of course, has grown in stature over the years.
4. It has become trite to say that a distinguished person needs no introduction. And to say that about the Prime Minister is clearly an understatement. So instead of giving you a biographical sketch of the man, let me just outline some of the ways that Tun Dr Mahathir has reshaped the way Malaysia positions itself in the international arena.
5. Most of you will know how Tun Dr Mahathir has once again become the Prime Minister. For almost a decade until last year’s General Election on 9 May 2018, the government of this nation was hardly that of the people, by the people and for the people. Instead, it was a government of the few, by the privileged, for the corrupt.

6. It was a desire to bring the country back from the precipice, to restore the dignity of this nation, that drove the people of Malaysia to vote into power the *Pakatan Harapan*, which in English means the “Alliance of Hope”.
7. And it took a coalition led by none other than Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to do so. Decades after what many of us would consider to be a sensible retirement age, Tun Mahathir felt compelled to form his own party and save this country from ruin.
8. And over the past year, the Prime Minister’s chief priorities have been unmistakable: it is to work to restore this nation’s integrity and its reputation both in the eyes of its electorate and international partners. It is to send a clear signal to the rest of the world that Malaysia is open to business for all.
9. More broadly, it is to ensure that Malaysia is a country where due process and the rule of law is applied to all without fear or favour—to right the wrongs that have taken place over the last few years.
10. Most of us you here will be keenly aware that Tun Dr Mahathir is never hesitant to speak his mind, especially when it relates to the nation’s interests or concerns the subjugated and the oppressed.

11. Nobody can ever say that age has mellowed the Prime Minister in this regard. In dealings with nations big and small over the past year, he has characteristically been forthright in pursuing Malaysia's interests.
12. And in keeping with the Prime Minister's outspokenness, the New Malaysia will not shy away from stating Malaysia's position on international issues like peace, human rights, free and fair trade, and environmental protection for sustainability.
13. I have no doubt that most of you in this hall eagerly anticipate the Prime Minister's address. So let's get on with it. Tun is prepared to take a few questions at the end of his speech and I will moderate this process.
14. With this, it is my honour to invite Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to deliver the keynote address of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Asia-Pacific Roundtable.

Tun, the podium is yours.