

**ISIS PRAXIS Conference 2019**

***“Malaysia beyond 2020”***

**Welcoming Remarks by Tan Sri Rastam Mohd Isa,  
Chairman and Chief Executive  
Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia**

**Hilton Kuala Lumpur**

**21 October 2019**

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

Yang Berhormat Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers,

High Commissioners and Ambassadors,

ISIS Board members,

Honoured Guests,

Members of the media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. On behalf of ISIS Malaysia, I have the honour and privilege to welcome everyone to the ISIS PRAXIS Conference 2019.

2. On behalf of everyone present, let me bid a warm welcome to YAB Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, our Prime Minister, and express our sincere thanks to you, Sir, for agreeing to be here this morning to deliver the Keynote Address. We are also extremely appreciative that the Honourable Prime Minister has kindly agreed to have a brief dialogue with participants following his keynote address.
3. As many of you may be aware -- the ISIS PRAXIS Seminar series was first launched in 2011. It began primarily as an economics-and-business-focused seminar. However, since then, it has grown into a full-fledged, comprehensive public policy conference, complementing the other major annual event organised by ISIS Malaysia, the security-focused Asia-Pacific Roundtable (APR).
4. The ISIS PRAXIS Conference 2019, while still keeping a keen focus on economics, also aims to promote discussions on other related contemporary issues in public policy — issues relating to environmental sustainability, society and societal development, and nation-building.
5. We have opted to offer “Malaysia Beyond 2020” as the theme for this Conference. Why 2020?; one might ask.
6. Firstly, we feel that the year 2020 holds a special significance for us Malaysians. That year will be upon us in a few weeks time. It will be Visit Malaysia Year. It will also be the year that Malaysia will chair APEC for the second time and lead APEC into a new phase of regional cooperation with the review and revision and replacement of the Bogor Goals with a new vision and set of goals.

7. More importantly, we look at 2020 as being the year which YAB Tun Dr Mahathir had set as a target back in 1991 to be the year when Malaysia should achieve the status of a developed nation. Hence, we believe that it would be timely for us to look at where Malaysia stands now and where it would be positioned beyond 2020.
8. Let us for a moment look back at the Year 1991. Yang Amat Berhormat Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, then as Malaysia's Fourth Prime Minister, had delivered a speech entitled, "*Vision 2020: The Way Forward*" at the launch of the Malaysian Business Council on 28 February 1991.
9. In his address, the Prime Minister had advocated that for Malaysia, achieving developed nation status cannot be just about material economic advancement — economic growth must not become the be-all and end-all of our national endeavours. It has to go hand in hand with moral, ethical and spiritual development.
10. YAB Tun had identified nine strategic challenges for the country and the people to overcome. ISIS Malaysia had the honour and privilege then, under the leadership of the late Tan Sri Dr Noordin Sopiee, to work on the ideas in Vision 2020.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

11. The aim of the ISIS PRAXIS Conference 2019 are two-fold. The first is to inform and equip scholars, business leaders and policymakers with novel information, rich analyses and considered

views. The second is to provide an interactive and engaging environment for the fluid exchange of ideas and opinions for all relevant stakeholders.

12. This year, we once again welcome government officials, policymakers, entrepreneurs, private sector representatives, civil society representatives, academicians, students and researchers to engage in robust discussions on a wide range of policy issues. Appropriately, in these two days, we hope to review the progress Malaysia has made in the almost 30 years since YAB Tun's momentous address and to discuss the way forward beyond 2020.
13. Perhaps more importantly, we also hope to take stock of the myriad hurdles that remain along the path towards becoming a fully developed nation. There are numerous challenges, some of which have only recently emerged. They might tend to complicate Malaysia's development story. Yet, in this story, there is a role for everyone to play – the Government, the business community, and the rakyat as a whole.
14. Indeed, the process of Malaysian economic development requires the personal involvement of every Malaysian —and for us at ISIS Malaysia, the ISIS PRAXIS Conference is one way of supporting this process. By bringing together experts and opinion-shapers to engage in robust and constructive discussions on wide-ranging issues of interest and concern, we hope to be able to contribute to nation-building and the further advancement of Malaysia.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

15. At this conference, we hope to revisit *Vision 2020 and discuss the challenges and prospects for Malaysia for 2020 & Beyond*. Here we aim to explore Malaysia's economic narratives and set the broad stage for the rest of the discussions over these next two days, also bearing in mind that the Government has recently launched the Shared Prosperity 2030 Vision.
16. We will have panel discussions on current and timely issues, including global risks in 2020 and beyond, trade and investment in ASEAN, and technology and human capital upgrading.
17. Additionally, this Conference will seek to explore how the next decade of Malaysian development can be fiscally financed, and how we can work towards achieving the "Bangsa Malaysia" which YAB Tun Dr. Mahathir had envisioned back in 1991.
18. The Conference will also explore broader issues regarding sustainable development, and how we can safeguard the welfare of the rakyat in the coming decades as demographic challenges mount.
19. Once again, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to YAB the Prime Minister for his support. We seek inspiration from his wisdom and advice.

20. On behalf of ISIS Malaysia, I would like to take this opportunity to extend our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the distinguished speakers and other role players for taking the time out of their busy schedules to be part of the conference.
21. I would also like to take this opportunity to convey our heartfelt thanks to our sponsors: Bank Muamalat and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung; our knowledge partner, PwC Malaysia; our supporters, Hong Leong Investment Bank and CGS CIMB, as well as our media partner Bernama.
22. I would like to pay special tribute in memory of the late Wolfgang Hruschka, KAS Representative in Malaysia who lent his support not only to this ISIS PRAXIS Conference but also to other ISIS Malaysia programmes. His untimely passing on 25 September 2019 is mourned by all who knew him.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

23. “Praxis”, is itself defined as the point when theory becomes practice, when knowledge becomes operation, and when thought turns into action. I hope that this spirit will guide our discussions over the next two days. I look forward to an engaging and lively debate among panellists and participants.

Thank you.