

**WELCOMING REMARKS BY HERIZAL HAZRI, CHIEF  
EXECUTIVE OF THE INSTITUTE OF STRATEGIC AND  
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (ISIS) MALAYSIA, AT “THE 40<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE LOOK EAST POLICY: A  
CONVERSATION WITH TUN DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD”**

**10:00AM, 18 MAY 2022**

Yang Amat Berbahagia Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad,  
Former Prime Minister of Malaysia,

His Excellency Mr TAKAHASHI Katsuhiko,  
Ambassador of Japan to Malaysia,

Mr KUMAGAI Satoru,  
Director of Economic Geography Studies Group at the Institute of  
Developing Economies of the Japan External Trade Organisation,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Good morning, *selamat pagi* and *ohayo gozaimasu*. It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to today's webinar on the Look East Policy on its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
2. It has become somewhat of a cliché to say that one's distinguished speaker needs no introduction. Well, today's speaker truly needs none. Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is synonymous with Malaysia's industrialisation and development. His life's story and political career

have been the stuff of legend; his vision for Malaysia has been as profound as it is game-changing.

3. Some forty years ago Tun Dr Mahathir launched the Look East Policy. It has become known as one of Tun's signature policy programmes. The Look East Policy has had an enduring impact on Malaysia as well as on Malaysia-Japan relations.
4. Inspired by the Japanese work ethic, Tun Dr Mahathir sought to emulate and adapt the Japanese model at home, as a path for Malaysia to follow in its quest to become a developed nation. This called for a profound change in mindset.
5. Under the leadership of Tun Dr Mahathir and his successors, Japan has remained one of Malaysia's most important partners for almost half a century and counting. It is an honour to have him with us today to deliver the opening keynote address.
6. It is also my pleasure to welcome Mr KUMAGAI Satoru as a discussant in today's webinar. His longstanding research has been on issues in the international trade and economic development in East Asia, specifically focused on the Malaysian economy and the middle-income trap. I look forward to his thoughts on the Look East Policy, and prospects of elevating Malaysia-Japan cooperation.

Distinguished Guests,

7. Over the decades, ISIS Malaysia has worked in close partnership with Japanese agencies, institutions, and experts under the guidance of the Look East Policy.
8. We held a biannual dialogue with Japanese counterparts through the Malaysia-Japan Colloquium for much of the 1980s and 1990s.
9. With the support of the Japan Business Federation, the Embassy of Japan in Malaysia, the Japanese Chamber of Trade & Industry in Malaysia and the Japan Foundation, ISIS Malaysia also established the Centre for Japan Studies from 1991 to 2002. This Centre hosted several programs including lecture series', research publications, conferences and others as part of its activities and was the leading platform for Malaysia-Japan Track 2 engagement.
10. It hosted some seminal and leading thinkers from Japan during its day, including former Foreign Minister Mr OKITA Saburo, former Prime Minister KAIFU Toshiki, and the founder of Sony Corporation, Mr MORITA Akio.
11. Additionally, support from the Japanese Embassy contributed greatly to our signature conference, the Asia Pacific Roundtable (APR) which will host its 35<sup>th</sup> edition this July.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

12. The Look East Policy has served us well in the past, and I am confident it will continue drive the Malaysia-Japan partnership to greater heights.

13. While we look back on the accomplishments of the past 40 years, let us also take this opportunity to reinvigorate Malaysia-Japan ties – to pursue more research, to deepen cooperation and re-establish close contact.
14. To this end, I am happy to have the opportunity to collaborate with the Japanese Embassy in organising this auspicious event.
15. It is my sincere hope that the insights we will get from today's discussion, will lead to an inspiration for greater engagements and initiatives, and an impetus for further growth.

*Domo Arigato Gozaimasu and Gam-bari masu (GAN BARI- MAS - Let's do this together)!*