

**WELCOMING REMARKS BY TAN SRI DR SULAIMAN MAHBOB ON  
BEHALF OF TAN SRI DR MUNIR MAJID,  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF THE INSTITUTE OF STRATEGIC AND  
INTERNATIONAL (ISIS) MALAYSIA  
AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE 40 YEARS OF LOOK EAST POLICY  
1982-2022 AND MALAYSIA-JAPAN FORUM  
10AM, 7 DECEMBER 2022**

YAB Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad  
Former prime minister of Malaysia

YAB Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Ali

H.E. Takahashi Katsuhiko,  
Ambassador of Japan to Malaysia

Nishida Shigenobu  
Auditor and representative for Japan Malaysia Association

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

1. Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, good morning, selamat pagi and oh-ayo gozai-masu. I am delivering the welcoming remarks on behalf of Tan Sri Dr Munir Majid, chairman of the Board of ISIS Malaysia, who sends his apologies for not being able to be here today.
2. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to today's event, commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Look East Policy and 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Malaysia-Japan diplomatic relations.
3. This event is the result of a multi-stakeholder collaboration between ISIS Malaysia, the Japan Malaysia Association (JMA), the Embassy of Japan in Malaysia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan.
4. I would like to congratulate the Embassy of Japan in Malaysia and its Malaysian counterpart for the event, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) for successfully organising a series of year-long events to mark this momentous celebration.

5. When the Japan Malaysia Association approached us almost a year ago to host a series of discussions surrounding the Look East Policy, we, of course, did not hesitate to do so. The policy was instrumental for the historical economic development of Malaysia and Japan, of course, played a major role as a model for Malaysia's development. Eventually, ISIS Malaysia has collaborated with the embassy on three events. The first two were webinars – a discussion on Japan's Society 5.0 on 28 March 2022, and an examination of the Look East Policy (LEP) on 18 May 2022. This culminated in the third collaboration, which is our event today. With the theme of past, present, and future, it comprises a book launch and a forum on Malaysia-Japan relations.
6. The book, titled *40 Years of The Look East Policy 1982-2022*, was authored by Ms Akiko Kato and by the Japan Malaysia Association. It will be officially launched shortly by YAB Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.
7. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Akiko Kato for all her hard work and determination throughout her research and writing process, especially when it comes to encapsulating the extensive elements of Look East Policy.
8. The second half of the event is a forum on Malaysia-Japan relations. It focuses on the changing regional landscape and aims to look both at developments and future directions of the bilateral relationship.

Ladies and gentlemen

9. As a (much) younger man, when the Look East Policy was first announced by its architect, our keynote speaker today, YAB Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, I felt both excitement and trepidation in equal measures. It represented a seminal change for this country. Malaysia had for decades looked towards the West as a model of development. The shift in orientation, however, would not be easy. But four decades down the road, no one can deny the significant and fundamentally positive impacts that the Look East Policy, and indeed Japan, have played in Malaysia's national and international economic development.
10. Our shared strategic interests' values on democracy, rule of law, international trade and a stable and secure maritime domain have brought us closer. The task before us is to rediscover and rejuvenate past connections, strengthen current ties, and chart a path towards the future.

11. Undeniably, the substance that contributed to the cordial friendly bilateral relations between Malaysia and Japan are economic relations, cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

Ladies and gentlemen,

12. I am anticipating the fruitful discourse layered with insights given by the speakers to be helpful in giving us some ideas on the current government policies, future directions of the Look East Policy, societal issues, and the impact of major power competition on the Malaysia-Japan relationship.

13. In closing, I would like to express my deep appreciation for the hard work invested by both ISIS Malaysia and the Japan Malaysia Association in organising this meaningful event.

14. I would also like to express my appreciation once again to the Japanese Embassy in Malaysia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan for their assistance throughout this endeavour. My appreciation, also goes to YAB Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, and YAB Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Ali for gracing us today and I wish you both the best of health. We sincerely hope that this event will serve as a springboard for future collaboration between both sides.

Thank you, terima kasih, domo arigato gozaimasu and gam-bari masu!