

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS  
YABHG DATIN SERI JEANNE ABDULLAH  
WIFE OF THE PRIME MINISTER  
MALAYSIAN LAUNCH OF THE  
“STATE OF THE WORLD CHILDREN 2008” REPORT  
HILTON HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR  
15<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2008, 8.15PM**

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**BISMILLAH HIRRAHMA NIRRAHIM  
ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH  
AND GOOD EVENING**

**YANG BERTHORMAT  
DATUK LIOW TIONG LAI  
OUR MINISTER OF HEALTH**

**MR. YOUSOUF OOMAR  
UNITED NATIONS ACTING RESIDENT COORDINATOR AND  
UNICEF REPRESENTATIVE, MALAYSIA**

**EXCELLENCIES  
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS  
MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN**

- 1. IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO JOIN ALL OF YOU ON THIS SPECIAL EVENING COMMEMORATING THE MALAYSIAN LAUNCH OF THE “STATE OF THE WORLD’S CHILDREN 2008” REPORT. AS YOU KNOW THE S.O.W.C IS UNICEF’S FLAGSHIP REPORT RELEASED EACH YEAR TO FOCUS GLOBAL ATTENTION ON THE CURRENT CHALLENGES FACED BY CHILDREN ALL OVER THE WORLD.**
- 2. I AM VERY HONOURED AND TOUCHED TO BE ASKED BY UNICEF TO BE THE PATRON OF THE MALAYSIAN LAUNCH FOR THIS IMPORTANT REPORT.**
- 3. LET ME CONGRATULATE THE MANY PEOPLE WHO HAVE WORKED TIRELESSLY TO PRODUCE THIS REPORT. YOUR WORK PLAYS A CRUCIAL ROLE RAISING AWARENESS OF THE PLIGHT FOR THE WORLD’S CHILDREN SO THAT DECISIVE ACTION CAN BE TAKEN TO ENSURE A BETTER AND BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR THEM.**

4. EVERY YEAR THE S.O.W.C HIGHLIGHTS A PARTICULAR THEME. THIS YEAR THE REPORT ASSESSES THE STATE OF CHILD SURVIVAL AND PRIMARY HEALTH CARE FOR MOTHERS NEWBORNS AND CHILDREN AND HOW IMPORTANT THESE ISSUES AFFECT HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

5. MANY OF US HERE HAVE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF WATCHING OUR CHILDREN GROW UP, BUT DO YOU KNOW THAT, ACCORDING TO UNICEF REPORT, EVERY YEAR OVER 10 MILLION CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD UNDER THE AGE OF FIVE DIE FROM PREVENTABLE AND TREATABLE DISEASES.
6. MORE THAN A THIRD OF THESE DEATHS OCCUR WITHIN THE FIRST 28 DAYS OF A CHILD'S LIFE AT HOME, WITHOUT EXCESS TO ESSENTIAL HEALTHCARE SERVICES THAT MIGHT HAVE EASILY SAVED THESE LIVES.
7. OVER THE LAST 40 YEARS, ADVANCES IN HEALTHCARE HAVE HELPED REDUCE THIS NUMBER BY HALF, BUT THERE IS STILL SO MUCH MORE TO BE DONE.
8. HERE IN MALAYSIA, WE HAVE DONE WELL FOR OUR CHILDREN, STANDING SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH MANY INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS. OUR HEALTHCARE PROGRAMS ARE AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY, AND TODAY SOME 90 PERCENT OF MALAYSIANS LIVE WITHIN 5 KMS OF A STATIC HEALTH FACILITY. FOR THE REST, THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDES OUTREACH SERVICES, INCLUDING THE FAMED FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE IN SABAH AND SARAWAK.
9. THESE MEASURES HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO A STEADY DECLINE IN PRE-NATAL, INFANT AND TODDLER MORTALITIES IN OUR COUNTRY. MALAYSIAN PARENTS, TOO, HAVE BECOME MORE AWARE OF THE NEED TO SEEK APPROPRIATE HEALTHCARE FOR THEIR CHILDREN.
10. DESPITE OUR SUCCESS IN DELIVERING GOOD HEALTHCARE, 7000 MALAYSIAN CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 5 CONTINUE TO DIE EACH YEAR, MOSTLY FROM PREVENTABLE AND TREATABLE DISEASES SUCH AS BLOOD POISONING AND PNEUMONIA. AS A MOTHER, MY HEART GOES OUT TO ALL THE MOTHERS WHO HAVE TO ENDURE SUCH A PAINFUL LOSS, BUT WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHY WE ARE LOSING OUR

**CHILDREN SO YOUNG AND TAKE POSITIVE STEPS TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM.**

- 11. ENSURING OUR CHILDREN GROW UP HEALTHY IS NOT EXPENSIVE GIVEN OUR COUNTRY'S HEALTHCARE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUPPORT. AS PARENTS, WE KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD HEALTHCARE SERVICES, VACCINATIONS, NUTRITION AND SANITATION, AS WELL AS A CARING NURTURING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT.**
  
- 12. PROMOTING CHILD SURVIVAL IS NOT JUST A TASK FOR PARENTS – IT IS A RESPONSIBILITY THAT MUST BE SHARED BY PARENTS, EDUCATORS, THE COMMUNITY, HEALTH OFFICIALS AND THE MEDIA. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE WORK OF PROSTANITA A MALAYSIAN NGO IS HIGHLIGHTED IN THIS YEAR'S S.O.W.C'S REPORT, KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK AND LET THIS BE AN INSPIRATION TO OTHER NGOS AND VOLUNTEER GROUPS TO FOLLOW SUIT.**
  
- 13. I FEEL IT IS TIME FOR ALL OF US TO START BEING A MORE CARING COMMUNITY, AS WHAT OUR COUNTRY NEEDS RIGHT NOW IS A SOCIETY THAT CARES ABOUT OUR CHILDREN AND EACH OTHER. THERE IS A SONG SONG BY DIANA ROSS AND I COULDN'T HELP BUT THINK OF IT AS I REFLECTED ON THIS EVENT TONIGHT THE WORDS ARE SELF EXPLANATORY. THE SONG GOES "REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMEBODY'S HAND, MAKE THIS WORLD A BETTER PLACE IF WE CAN".**

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

- 14. I WOULD LIKE TO SAY A BIG THANK YOU TO UNICEF FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE MANY SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS HELPING CHILDREN IN MALAYSIA AND ACROSS THE WORLD.**

**WASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAH HIWABARAKATUH AND THANK YOU.**