

PARLIAMENT

MALAYSIA

FIRST MEETING OF THE FOURTH SESSION
OF THE THIRTEENTH PARLIAMENT
7 MARCH 2016

THE ROYAL ADDRESS BY HIS MAJESTY
SERI PADUKA BAGINDA
YANG DI-PERTUAN AGONG
ALMU'TASIMU BILLAHI MUHIBBUDDIN
TUANKU ALHAJ ABDUL HALIM MU'ADZAM SHAH
IBNI ALMARHUM SULTAN BADLISHAH

Bismillaahir Rahmanir Rahiim
Alhamdulillah Rabbil 'Alamin
Wassolaatu Wassalaamu 'Ala Asyrafil Anbiyaa
Wal Mursalin
Wa'ala Aalihi Wa Sohbihi Ajma'iin
Assalamualaikum Warahmatullaahi Wabarakaatuh
and Greetings

**President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Members of the Senate and Members of the House of Representatives.**

Alhamdulillah. We express Our deepest gratitude to Allah the Almighty for it is with His Munificence, and with His Leave, we are gathered here today for the Opening Ceremony of the Fourth Session of the Thirteenth Parliament.

Honourable Members,

2. We are grateful to Allah the Almighty for bestowing continuous good health that has enabled Us to reign over our beloved country. Words cannot describe the peace and progress this nation has achieved thus far. We feel very blessed to have been able to witness from this very same throne the country's achievement in two different eras. We hope this administration will continue to realise the country's objective of becoming a high-income advanced nation that is not premised solely on economic achievement but also on the wellbeing of the people.

3. We are also thankful to Allah the Almighty for protecting this country from major disasters and perils throughout the year 2015. Let us all pray for this situation to remain.

4. Our Government is well aware that disasters such as floods occur almost every year and may have become a phenomenon, due to global warming and climate change. Therefore, preparations for pre-, during

and post-disaster will be intensified continuously. The establishment of the National Disaster Management Agency will reinforce the level of preparedness to deal with disasters through creative and innovative approaches using science and technology to monitor, predict and manage flood risks.

5. The threat to national security is real. The rise of militant and terrorist activities within the country must be taken seriously as it can destabilise the nation. We hereby support any form of proactive action through the enactment of laws and upgrading of security assets to curb the spread of extremist and militant ideology.

6. Our Government is committed in improving the infrastructure and border security assets to strengthen security along the national boundaries by setting up the Border Security Agency. The country's participation in the Regional Digital Counter-Messaging Communications Centre to combat terrorism and transnational crimes, as well as measures to prevent human trafficking has received international recognition. This has led Malaysia to improve its position in the US Department of State's Annual Report on Trafficking in Persons.

7. We congratulate the Prime Minister for the country's achievements in 2015. The successful chairmanship of the ASEAN Summit that witnessed the establishment of the ASEAN Community 2015 is indeed commendable. The Summit has elevated the country's international standing to a greater prominence, especially with the participation of major world leaders.

8. Malaysia has been elected as a member of the UNESCO Executive Board for 2015-2019, and the International Maritime Organisation council for the 6th consecutive year. Malaysia also has been ranked 18th in the 2015-2016 Global Competitiveness Report, reflecting continuous improvement in its competitiveness globally. These achievements are testaments of the confidence of the international community in Malaysia.

Honourable Members,

9. The global economic and political uncertainties, in particular the plunging prices of oil and major commodities, have affected the country's revenue and the Ringgit. However, with strong economic fundamentals and effective management of fiscal policies, supported by the implementation of Goods and Services Tax (GST) beginning 1st April 2015, the economic growth has managed to remain sustainable at a rate of 5% last year, and is expected to grow between 4% to 4.5% this year.

10. Our Government will continue to strengthen the fundamentals to ensure economic resilience. This has been achieved through economic transformation, prudent fiscal policies and diversification of the economy including less dependency on oil and gas revenue from 40% in 2009 to 21% in 2015. We also urge the private sector to continue playing a greater role in generating and spurring economic growth. The Facilitation Fund of RM20 billion would encourage investments and large scale high-impact private sector projects.

11. Deficit reduction measures will continue to be pursued to achieve balanced budget by 2020. These measures are essential to strengthen fiscal management which would affect the sovereign credit rating. A downgrade in credit rating will affect foreign direct investment, thus affecting economic growth leading to an increase in the costs of business financing, housing loans and other forms of borrowing. This must be prevented at all cost.

12. Our Government's decision to recalibrate the 2016 Budget is timely. We call upon all Government agencies, the private sector, NGOs and the people to work together to implement and support the 11 measures that have been introduced. Let us all pray and work together to improve the economy in the coming years.

13. To remain competitive in an interdependent global economy, Malaysia needs to expand its market accessibility to ensure a continued increase in exports. Malaysia's participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) will provide a bigger market, spanning over 12 countries with more than USD27 trillion in Gross Domestic Products. In all trade negotiations, including the TPPA, Our Government has and will always safeguard the national interests including the economic development agenda of the *Bumiputera*. We wish to congratulate all Honourable Members for having debated and passed the motion in a special Parliamentary session for Malaysia to participate in the TPPA. Congratulations also to the negotiation team from various ministries and agencies who had worked tirelessly to secure the best possible terms for Malaysia in the TPPA.

14. As we embark on the implementation of the Eleventh Malaysia Plan, bearing the theme “Anchoring Growth on People”, We ask all parties to work together for the success of the national development agenda. All programmes and projects have to be fully implemented to realise Malaysia’s objective to become a high-income advanced nation that is inclusive and sustainable by 2020. We also offer congratulations for the successful implementation of almost 12,000 projects under the Tenth Malaysia Plan that would uplift the wellbeing of the people.

Honourable Members,

15. One of the main thrusts under the Eleventh Malaysia Plan is to pursue the Green Growth agenda especially in the reduction of carbon intensity. In this regard, an aggressive approach will be adopted to implement several initiatives such as to accelerate the generation of renewable energy, energy efficiency, low carbon townships and the expansion of public transportation through the Mass Rapid Transit as well as the use of electric vehicles.

16. Malaysia is endowed with uniquely beautiful nature and cultural diversity as well as being recognised as one of the top Muslim tourist destinations. Our Government will continue to boost the domestic tourism industry by developing and promoting creative tourism packages based on nature, culture and heritage. We are confident that the tourism industry will flourish when nature and culture are preserved, and the environment as well as cleanliness improved.

Honourable Members,

17. Our Government is attentive to the needs of all levels of society especially the bottom forty percent (B40) and the middle forty percent (M40) of household income groups. The wellbeing of these groups will be improved by increasing the minimum wage, extending the social safety net coverage, micro-financing facilities, re-skilling and up-skilling initiatives as well as expanding the *eRezeki* and *eUsahawan* programmes. In line with the people's need for more reliable information and communications technology services, Our Government will provide affordable high-speed broadband with the objective to expand internet access to at least 95% of the populated areas by 2020.

18. In the interest of the country's workforce, Our Government is constantly implementing initiatives that can be used as a benchmark for determining salary based on qualifications, skills and productivity, thus improving their wellbeing.

19. The welfare of the special needs groups, such as children, senior citizens and persons with disabilities, have never been neglected. The Government will continue to provide allowance to the disabled, aid to poor children, temporary shelter for those in dire need and medical assistance to retirees and the public. We call upon the private sector and NGOs to jointly contribute providing facilities for the needy.

20. We are pleased with the formation of the Special Committee to Address the Rising Cost of Living as well as the addition of more goods with zero-rated GST. This is testimony of Our Government's willingness to listen to the plight of the people. To protect the consumers, We urge that a stern action be taken on parties that exploit the price of goods for excessive profits. Consumers should also spend wisely and be mindful of their 'needs as opposed to wants', as well as giving preference to local products.

21. Affordable and quality public housing programmes will be increased to meet the needs of the target group. To date, more than 50% of the targeted one million affordable houses to be built within the duration of 2013 to 2018 have either been completed or in progress. Other ongoing initiatives including the Interest Free Loan Scheme for long houses in Sabah and Sarawak, more housing schemes for the Orang Asli and second generation of FELDA, FELCRA and RISDA settlers as well as *PPA1M* and *PR1MA* will continue. First House Deposit Financing Scheme introduced in the 2016 Budget would assist the lower and middle-income groups to purchase their first house.

Honourable Members,

22. The potentials of the agro-food sector can be further exploited by increasing export oriented agricultural products. We call upon the agro-food industry to be transformed thus becoming more dynamic, modern, competitive and profitable. Concerted efforts should be undertaken to

attract younger generation into this sector. The competitiveness of the commodity sector will be further enhanced with replanting incentives for smallholders and increase in the product value chain as well as research, development and commercialisation activities.

23. Our Government is committed to raise the quality of life of the rural population, the Orang Asli community and the *Bumiputera* minorities in Sarawak and Sabah. For this purpose, the Government will implement the rural transformation programme based on the needs and aspirations of the people. We fully support the initiatives to diversify the sources of income for the rural population by venturing into new high value sub-sectors, developing downstream industries and taking control of the value chain in the smallholding industry, as well as the development of idle land. The much anticipated Pan-Borneo Highway is expected to bolster economic growth in Sarawak and Sabah.

24. Similarly, the wellbeing of the urban population has never been sidelined. In an effort to ease their burden, programmes and projects such as affordable housing, efficient and integrated public transportation, upgrading of roads, rail transport and several airports are currently being implemented.

25. The demand for healthcare has increased as a result of changes in demographic profile and lifestyle. In this regard, the National Health Transformation System will be able to provide greater access to quality health care which will be reinforced by the National Health Policy and the

National Community Health Enhancement Programme. Again, We would like to remind the people that prevention is always better than cure and to live a healthy lifestyle.

26. A healthy and active sports culture will definitely help increase the wellbeing of the people and productivity of the nation. Therefore, the momentum generated by the National Sports Day last year as the main event of the Fit Malaysia mass movement should be continued. We also support the implementation of the Sports Development Blueprint for 2015-2023 and the Podium Programme aimed at producing world-class professional athletes. We pray that our national contingent will create history by bringing home the country's first gold medal in the 2016 Olympics in Brazil.

27. Women play a prominent role in national development. Hence, the participation of women in the workforce should be further encouraged by providing a more conducive working environment. Continuous opportunities should be given for them to join the workforce or participate in entrepreneurship. They should also strive to expand their career potential in terms of holding top management or decision-making positions within organisations.

28. The youth are a valuable asset in charting the nation's development and progress. Hence, leadership, talent and skills development as well as volunteerism programmes will be intensified as outlined in the Malaysian Youth Policy.

29. The implementation of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (*PPPM*) is now entering its second wave from 2016 to 2020. Measures to improve the quality of education must be continued to be at par with the world's best education system. In addition, the CEO Faculty Programme under the *PPPM* (Higher Education) 2015-2025, is designed to produce quality human capital to enhance graduates' employability. Our Government will further encourage interest and aptitude in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) to spur human capital development. This is necessary to intensify research and development as well as high-impact innovation. To become a high-income advanced nation, it is crucial for Malaysia to adopt science, technology and innovation (STI) as the basis for the new economic development. Thus, the National STI Master Plan will be formulated in due course.

Honourable Members,

30. We would like to remind the people to maintain harmony and uphold peace. Attempts to incite racial sentiment and abuse of social media by spreading seditious and slanderous remarks and extremist ideologies should be contained immediately. Inability to act promptly could lead to bigger conflicts and discords.

31. We fully support initiatives to uphold Islam as the religion of the Federation, while other religions can be practised freely and peacefully. We hope all efforts taken will soon be implemented to strengthen religious institutions and enhance the administration of Islamic laws by empowering

the *syariah* courts. Religious issues should be referred to the relevant authorities, and not subjected to interpretation by any individuals or groups as this could cause unnecessary confusion and friction within the society.

Honourable Members,

32. We welcome the proposal to implement Parliamentary reforms, as put forward by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. We hope all Honourable Members will support this proposal to make Parliament more effective in discharging its functions.

33. The Public Service will continually be transformed to be more people-oriented, productive and efficient. Hence, to date, more than 80% of Government services can be accessed online. We would also like to call upon the Public Service to safeguard the secrecy of Government information and adhere to the relevant laws and regulations to ensure the country's stability.

34. The smart partnership and the National Blue Ocean Strategy approaches in the execution of programmes and projects such as *Program Jiwa Murni*, joint patrolling and enforcement, sharing of assets and facilities among agencies is an undertaking that leads to increased efficiency, cost-saving as well as producing high impact results, and therefore should be expanded further.

35. Integrity and good governance must be strengthened to ensure success of national plans and policies. This will be able to address any negative perception with regards to corruption, malpractices and misuse of power. In addition, all parties should adopt noble values and a culture of integrity.

Honourable Members,

36. Once again We call upon all Honourable Members and the people to be united and to love this country. Give it your undivided loyalty, defend and protect the country. We hope all Honourable Members will continue to exercise healthy and beneficial political aspirations for the benefit of the people. We hope all parties demonstrate exemplary behaviour by working together and offering constructive ideas that will contribute to the wellbeing of the people and the prosperity of the country. In a parliamentary democracy, differences in opinion are valued but refrain from fostering enmity and slander that can lead to the downfall of the nation.

37. We appreciate the contribution of all parties especially the Public Service, and the sacrifices of the Malaysian Armed Forces, the Royal Malaysian Police, civil defence as well as other enforcement agencies and above all the people in safeguarding the nation's sovereignty, security, peace and prosperity that we are enjoying now. Our appreciation also goes to the people for their loyalty and contribution to this beloved country of ours.

38. Lastly, the Raja Permaisuri Agong and I pray to Allah the Almighty for our beloved Malaysia to continue to progress and prosper, and for the people to be blessed with guidance, unity, peace and harmony under His protection.

Wabillahi Taufik Walhidayah, Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullaahi Wabarakaatuh.