

**ISTIC Office Opening Ceremony  
26 March 2009**

**Speech of Welcome**

**By Dato Academician Ir. Lee Yee Cheong, F.A.Sc  
Chairman, ISTIC Governing Board**

**YBhg Dato' Abdul Hanan Alang Endut, Secretary General, Ministry of  
Science, Technology and Innovation Malaysia (MOSTI);**

**Professor Dr. Walter Erdelen, Assistant Director General for Natural  
Sciences, UNESCO, Paris**

**Yang Bhg Dato Seri Dr. Salleh Mohd Noor, Secretary General, Academy of  
Sciences Malaysia**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**This auspicious morning marks another historic milestone in the International  
Science, Technology and Innovation Centre for South-South Cooperation  
under the auspices of UNESCO (ISTIC).**

**I would like to recall that the seed of ISTIC was sown between Professor Dr.  
Walter Erdelen and YB Dato Sri Dr. Jamaludin Jarjis, then MOSTI Minister  
during the first Conference on the History of Islamic Science, Engineering  
and Technology in UNESCO Paris in March 2006. After the approval of the  
Malaysian Cabinet was obtained to host ISTIC in Malaysia, UNESCO  
dispatched a feasibility study team to Kuala Lumpur in December 2006. The  
feasibility study was most positive in all aspects. Unanimous approval for  
Malaysia to host ISTIC was obtained from UNESCO Executive Board in  
April 2007 and UNESCO General Conference in October 2007. Meanwhile,  
lengthy consultations were carried out on the draft UNESCO/Malaysia  
agreement on ISTIC. The agreement was signed by Dato Sri J.J. and the  
UNESCO Director General Koichiro Matsuura in UNESCO Paris in January  
2008 and ISTIC was inaugurated in Kuala Lumpur on 22 May 2008 by YB  
Datuk Dr. Maximus Johnity Ongkilli, our MOSTI Minister. Barely 10 months  
after the inauguration, the ISTIC office is today being opened by YBhg Dato  
Abdul Hanan representing our MOSTI Minister.**

**The successful establishment of an UNESCO centre such as ISTIC in the short space of only 3 years is unprecedented in the annals of UNESCO. Whilst our two MOSTI Ministers and the UNESCO Director General rightly deserve the public acclamation, it was the hard work of YBhg Dato' Hanan and his hardworking teams from all Divisions in MOSTI that attended to all details and unraveled all the knotty international and domestic problems that made ISTIC up and running so speedily. I would like to convey the grateful thanks of the ISTIC Governing Board to YBhg Dato' KSU and his MOSTI staff for all their dedication and perseverance. Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in a big "Thank You" to YBhg Dato' KSU.**

**Similarly dedicated efforts under intense time pressure were made by Professor Dr. Walter Erdelen and his staff in UNESCO Paris. Walter himself has been to Malaysia 3 times and his staff Dr Mustafa Al Tayeb and Dr. Yoslan Nur several more times in the last 3 years on ISTIC business. Again Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in thanking Walter and his staff.**

**The union of Malaysia and UNESCO in ISTIC has been greatly facilitated by our two ambassadors to UNESCO from the Ministry of Education, Dr. Sharifah and Datuk Kenneth Luis. Of course, the encouragement of our Minister of Education, YB Dato Sri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein in his capacity as UNESCO Executive Board member and Chairman of the Malaysian National Commission for UNESCO has been invaluable. I gratefully acknowledge their contribution. ISTIC looks forward to a constructive partnership with our National Commission for UNESCO in fostering South-South cooperation through Science, Technology and Innovation.**

**I would now like to thank the Academy of Sciences Malaysia for sharing her premises and all resources with ISTIC. ASM has been crucial in getting ISTIC up to speed. I have left ASM to the last, not because ASM is less important but because, to me, ASM is family. I am confident that ASM and ISTIC will continue to be win-win partners in projecting Malaysia as a contributor in science, technology and innovation to the world in general and the world of the South in particular.**

**Finally, I would like to convey my heartfelt appreciation once again to YBhg Dato' Abdul Hanan, MOSTI KSU for representing MOSTI Minister in opening the ISTIC office this morning and to convey our grateful thanks to**

**YB MOSTI Minister, Datuk Dr. Maximus Johnity Ongkilli, for graciously consenting to open the ISTIC office.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you all for coming this morning to celebrate this historic event with us.**