

**SPEECH BY Y.B. DATUK DR. MAXIMUS JOHNTY ONGKILI  
MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION,  
MALAYSIA, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION  
CENTRE FOR SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION (ISTIC) OFFICE  
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF UNESCO  
26 MARCH 2009**

**TO BE READ BY  
Y.BHG.DATO' ABDUL HANAN BIN ALANG ENDUT  
SECRETARY GENERAL  
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**

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**Y.Bhg. Academician Dato' Ir Lee Yee Cheong  
Chairman, International Science Technology and Innovation  
Centre for South-South Cooperation (ISTIC) under the Auspices  
of UNESCO Governing Board**

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

**Members of ISTIC Governing Board and STI Advisory Council**

**Dato' Dr. Samsudin Tugiman  
Director, ISTIC**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

1. I am deeply privileged for being given the honour to address a distinguished gathering this morning on the auspicious occasion of the official opening of ISTIC Office. I would like to take this opportunity to thank ISTIC for inviting me here today.

2. I wish to also extend a warm welcome to Prof. Dr. Walter Erdelen, Assistant Director General for Natural Sciences, UNESCO to Kuala Lumpur who is here with us this morning to witness the official opening of the ISTIC office today. We are indeed pleased by your presence here today. I was made to understand that prior to coming to Kuala Lumpur, you had spent a few days in Sarawak, addressing the Institution of Engineers Malaysia's Golden Anniversary, the International Conference on Engineering and Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. I hope both your stay in Kuching and Kuala Lumpur will be a memorable one.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. The Government of Malaysia and UNESCO signed an agreement on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2008 for the establishment of ISTIC and it is still fresh in my mind that in May last year, I had the honour to launch ISTIC and its inaugural meeting of the Governing Board in Kuala Lumpur. Today, less than a year after its launching date, we are gathered here to witness the official opening of the ISTIC office. I would therefore like to congratulate all parties involved, namely the ISTIC Governing Board under the leadership of its Chairman, Academician DatoqIr Lee Yee Cheong and the Academy of Sciences Malaysia with the support of my Ministry for realizing the setting up of the ISTIC office within the ASM building.

4. As ISTIC is an UNESCO Category 2 Centre, we have the responsibility, as host government, to provide office space for ISTIC

as well its operating and administrative expenditure. I am very pleased to emphasize that not only have we fulfilled all our obligations to date but most importantly the opening of the ISTIC office today clearly shows the Malaysian Government's commitment to ISTIC towards realizing South-South cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation in partnership with UNESCO.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. I would like to reiterate that my Ministry will continue to support ISTIC and perform its role as a key advocate for South-South cooperation through the genuine commitment of developing countries themselves. The impact of the current global financial crisis underscores the urgency of developing countries to work closely together for mutual assistance to uplift our economies. New challenges have emerged which not only need to be addressed at the national level but also globally by all countries. Innovation through science and technology is a vital component. The way forward is to see how cooperation among countries in the South could be enhanced. Through ISTIC, I hope that all stakeholders will join hands to strengthen this partnership to achieve the common goal of national development through science, technology and innovation.

6. ISTIC was given the mandate to develop South-South Cooperation programmes aimed at facilitating integration of a developmental approach into national science, technology and innovation policies. The mandate also covers the enhancement of

STI capacity building, provision of policy advice and exchange of experience and best practices, and to conduct research and problem solving in STI in developing countries. With this mandate ISTIC is expected to play a pivotal role in the enhancement of STI for development especially in developing countries.

7. I understand that ISTIC has already formulated its draft biennial programme for 2009-2010 covering broad areas of national STI policy, energy, natural disaster mitigation, science, engineering and technology for national development & poverty eradication and reinforcing South-South Cooperation in basic sciences within the framework of the UNESCO Programme for Natural Sciences. The ISTIC draft programme is also focused on STI institutional capacity building in the South.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. In realizing its programmes, once again I would like to reiterate that ISTIC will have strong support from the Malaysian Government. However, I would also like to suggest that ISTIC embarks on serious efforts to attract resources in terms of expertise and funding from member countries and other sources. In this respect, I would therefore like to request UNESCO to support ISTIC financially and likewise under its current programme on natural sciences. Hopefully, funding for ISTIC will become a permanent item in UNESCO's budget line. Strong commitment from all parties concerned together with the

support of South-South countries is critical for sustaining the momentum shown by ISTIC thus far.

9. It is my fervent hope that ISTIC will act as the international platform for South-South cooperation in science, technology and innovation and make use of the network of the G77 plus China and the Organization of the Islamic Conference in achieving its overall objective which is to increase in the capacity for management of science, technology and innovation throughout developing countries. This could be accomplished by fostering cooperation among governments, academia and industry in order to facilitate the transfer of knowledge between both public and private sectors, and the development of well-planned and relevant knowledge-based programmes and institutions in participating countries.

10. On this note, it is my pleasure and honour to officially open the office of the International Science Technology and Innovation Centre for South-South Cooperation under the auspices of UNESCO.

Thank you very much.