



KEMENTERIAN PERPADUAN NEGARA

SPEECH

**YB DATUK AARON AGO DAGANG
MINISTER OF NATIONAL UNITY**

FOR

**LAUNCHING CEREMONY EXHIBITION:
40 YEARS OF THE LOOK EAST POLICY
MALAYSIA – REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

24 OCTOBER, 2023 (TUESDAY)

2.30 PM

MAIN HALL, TUN HUSSEIN ONN MEMORIAL

Good Afternoon, Greetings of Unity, Salam Malaysia Madani and Annyeonghaseyo!

SALUTATION

APPRECIATION

1. First and foremost, I would like to convey my heartfelt gratitude to all those gathered here this evening for the launching ceremony of the **Exhibition 40 Years of The Look East Policy Between Malaysia and The Republic of Korea**.
2. It is my great pleasure and honour to thank all parties involved, especially the **National Archives of Malaysia and the Embassy of the Republic of Korea**, in making the exhibition a success.

MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM IN FURTHER ENHANCING THE STRONG BOND OF UNITY

Your Excellency and distinguished guests,

3. In 1983, Malaysia's fourth Prime Minister launched Look East Policy (LEP) which aimed to gain knowledge of best practises from East Asian countries namely Japan, Korea dan Taiwan.

4. This nation building exercise sought to decode the secrets of success in East Asian countries and translate it into Malaysia's development plans. **The belief in East Asian labour ethics, management capability, foresight, technological skills and high morale contributed to the formulation of LEP.**
5. Today's auspicious gathering serves not only to celebrate the exhibition and mark the 40th anniversary of the Look East Policy (LEP) between Malaysia and Korea but also, more significantly, **to sustain the momentum in strengthening the robust bond of unity between our two nations.**
6. The Malaysia-Korea LEP in 1983 laid the foundation for forging deeper bilateral relations between the two countries. It served as a catalyst, fostering closer cooperation across various sectors, particularly in the fields **of economy, education, culture, and tourism.** This achievement was undoubtedly born from the unity that transcends the borders of religion, culture, and race within this nation. Unity unites us amid the diverse and unique aspects that exist.
7. **Malaysia takes pride in being the 12th foreign country that established diplomatic relations with Korea,** judging from the conferment of "Number 12" to the Malaysian diplomatic car registration number. It is a clear testament to the status of Korea to Malaysia, which should act as an impetus towards

the elevation of bilateral relations to strategic partnership in the future.

Your Excellency and distinguished guests,

STRENGTHENING BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

8. It is estimated that there are **approximately 15,000 Koreans and 5,000 Malaysians who live and work in Malaysia and Korea**, respectively. The numbers are increasing each year, and it is a sign of warm and cordial people-to-people relations between the countries. To understand the heart of Koreans, their ways of thinking, and the methods that transform a conservative nation into an innovative and dynamic one, we must dive deep into Korean culture and society.

9. I would like to take this opportunity, to highlight few of success stories through from the implementation of LEP such as;
 - In 2009, the establishment of the Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KOCHAM) was reciprocated with the setting up of the Malaysia Industrial Development Authority (MIDA) by SME Corporation of Korea (SBC) in 2010

- BERJAYA group a Malaysian company was invested USD100 million in a resort complex in Jeju island
- Currently, there is 1,800 students in 26 secondary school learning Korean language.
- Military training as well as biennial visits between the Korean Naval War College and its Malaysian counterpart continue to forge closer people-to-people exchange.
- The Korean Plaza in Malaysia houses the Korean Tourism Board and runs regular free classes- hanbok trial, beauty, cooking, language, tourism, culture. It also promotes korean heritage sites, culture and food.

10. Recent developments have also enhanced bilateral relations between Malaysia and South Korea through **cultural diplomacy**. **The Korean language course offered by the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR) offers** Malaysian government officials and diplomats the opportunity to further strengthen cultural diplomacy between both countries. This represents a significant milestone in the history of the institute's academic offerings and continues a longstanding relationship.

11. Moreover, through the LEP, the Malaysian Government **consistently incorporates the best practices and role models from the Republic of Korea**, adapting them to the Malaysian context. This is because Korea is experiencing rapid development, making it a valuable example for Malaysia to achieve its national development goals, enhancing the performance of both the public and private sectors.

12. From 1980 to current times, **a total of 386 manufacturing projects with direct participation from Korea were implemented with total investments of \$9.4 billion**. As such, Korea has consistently ranked among Malaysia's top 10 major investors for many years, and it is a true reflection of the importance of Korean investment to Malaysia's economy.

13. **Korea is Malaysia's eighth-largest trading partner and seventh-largest foreign investor**, while Malaysia ranks as Korea's third-largest trading partner and fourth-largest investment destination among ASEAN countries. Malaysia currently hosts numerous prominent Korean multinational companies, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises, including;
 - **Lotte Chemical-** *chemical*
 - **Samsung-** *smartphones, & digital appliances*
 - **Hanwha Q-Cells-** *energy solution provider*

- **Oriental Chemical Industries (OCI)**- *chemical*
- **Lotte Energy Material**- rechargeable lithium battery material
- **Kiswire**- steel wire industry
- **Posco** - steel

14. Additionally, SPC Group has announced plans to establish its halal manufacturing hub in Malaysia, solidifying Malaysia's position as a preferred investment location for Korean companies. Recent foreign direct investments by Korean companies are particularly significant, as they focus on ESG (environmental, social, and governance) and advanced, high-value-added industries, aligning with the priorities championed by the Malaysian government.

15. Malaysia has strong, stable relations with the Korea. **This policy remains very relevant and has not only contributed to the broadening of bilateral cooperation but has been vital in increasing regional cooperation.** Further cooperations that should taken in count are:

- Providing avenues for cultural and intellectual dialogue
- Re-visit the Look East Policy and increase the number of high level engagements and summits

- Continue efforts in peacekeeping operations
- Further explore avenues for better cooperation and management of heritage
- Expanding exchange of workers from different sectors- journalist, teachers, diplomats, and civil society
- Increase youth exchange programmes, post university work placement and cross country internship

COLLECTION OF ARCHIVAL MATERIALS RELATED TO LOOK EAST POLICY PRESERVED IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF MALAYSIA

16. The National Archives of Malaysia has a **vital role in strengthening the nation's historical and cultural resources through its documentation and advocacy programs.**
17. This exhibition serves as a comprehensive introduction to approach and explore the history, journey, and achievements of South Korea in its quest to become a major economic power in the world. Exhibition materials include items stored and preserved in the National Archives of Malaysia, as well as materials in the custody of related institutions.

18. I also hope that the National Archives of Malaysia can establish cooperation with the Republic of Korea to further disseminate its role so that advocacy programs like this, can have a **positive impact among the younger generation who will be the torchbearers of the nation's legacy.**
19. This effort is in line with the development concept of Malaysia MADANI, which will also utilize a 'whole of government approach'. The Ministry of National Unity will consistently provide support for ongoing initiatives and recognize intellectual programs that have the potential to become platforms for **fostering community unity, strengthening consensus, and preserving our cultural traditions.**

Your Excellency and distinguished guests,

CONCLUSION

20. To take this policy further, there needs to be institutional structures that comprehensively monitor such exchange in order to develop it further. Greater understanding of cultural and social traditions contribute to better mutual understanding and play an important role in maintaining peace and stability in the wider region.

21. Before I conclude, I want to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to all those, whether directly or indirectly involved, for their contributions in ensuring the success of this program. **I look forward to witnessing many more years of our successful and enduring economic partnership between Malaysia and South Korea.** With the continued commitment from both sides, **I am confident that both Malaysia and Korea will soar to greater heights.**

22. With these words and well-wishes, I officially launch the Exhibition on the 40 years of the Look East Policy between Malaysia and the Republic of Korea.

Thank you, Khamsa-ham-nida.