

Ladies and gentlemen,

Maybe I am naïve to hope for a world without terror, intolerance and all of the hatreds and miseries that man inflicts on man – but the price of failure if we dream too small is simply too high to pay. So let us dare to dream big, let us dare to imagine what was once thought unimaginable, and yes, let us dare to answer the clarion call to action. Oppression and tyranny can only win out if good men and women stand idly by, unwilling to turn rhetoric into action and opinions into deeds.

So let us here, today, together, commit ourselves to change and begin the task of building a new coalition of the moderates for our times – and may I thank you once again for coming and wish you well in your discussions over the next few days. There has never been a more important conversation, and it is one that we must undertake with temperance, fortitude and courage.

**‘Human Capital Development: The Key to Moderation’
Speech by the Former Prime Minister of Malaysia
Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi
(Kuala Lumpur, 18 January 2012)**

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests.

First of all I would like to thank the organiser for inviting me to share my thoughts on the topic, “human capital development as the key to moderation.” It is a real delight for me to see so many renowned scholars and thinkers assembled here in Kuala Lumpur – a gathering of the moderates – to promote the subject of moderation, peace, harmony and cooperation.

Approximately six years ago, I had an opportunity to raise the question, “Who speaks for Islam? Who speaks for the West” at an international conference held in Kuala Lumpur.

In my speech then, I held the view that “those who deliberately kill non-combatants and the innocent, those who oppress and exploit others, those who are corrupt and greedy, and those who are chauvinistic and communal do not speak on behalf of Islam”.

Likewise, I do not regard “those who invade and occupy someone else’s land; those who systematically cause innocent children, women, and men to be killed; those who oppress other people and exploit their resources for their own selfish ends; or those who are racist in outlook and bigoted in their religious beliefs. Anyone who seeks to dominate and control, who attempts to establish global hegemony, cannot

claim to be spreading freedom and equality at the same time” as the defenders of Western civilisation.

I asserted that certain voices, both in the West and in the Muslim world, are not given the prominence or attention they deserve. It is only too apparent that these two groups – one in the West and the other in the Muslim world — share a common perspective on some of the critical challenges facing both civilisations and the world at large. Both are opposed to hegemony. Both reject violence and terror. Both yearn for a just and peaceful world. Both are united by a common bond. It is this common bond that makes them bridge builders.

It is therefore reason for me to be happy to see many of the ‘bridge builders’ here tonight – fine men and women who are capable of reaching out to one another, who are willing to transcend the civilisational divide, a willingness which we need badly at this juncture in history.

Moderation evidently acquired renewed significance in the wake of the ‘clash of civilisations’ thesis, the 9/11 attacks and its regrettable aftermaths. Restoring balance to many of the disturbing realities we witness has become a pressing calling of the moderate forces of the world. The Muslim community and Malaysia are not an exception, even though Malaysia took the initiative to appeal for a ‘Global Movement of Moderates’. Moderation is the shared advice of most of the world’s leading religions and moral philosophies, some even preceding Islam.

The Mecca Declaration of the OIC Islamic Summit in December 2005 thus declared: “We affirm our unwavering rejection of terrorism, and all forms of extremism and violence.” The Summit Communiqué further added: “Islamic civilisation is an integral part of human civilisation, based on the ideals of dialogue, moderation, justice, righteousness and tolerance as noble human values that counteract bigotry, isolationism, tyranny and exclusion. It is therefore of paramount importance to celebrate and consecrate these magnanimous values in our Muslim discourse within and outside our societies.”

Ladies and gentlemen,

Poverty and extremism are the two arch enemies of moderation. Poverty is certainly not a problem afflicting only poor Muslim countries. Global poverty is a grave threat to global stability and provides breeding grounds for extremism. I strongly believe that the elimination of poverty and the provision of good governance are key in the fight against extremism and violence.

Moderation or *wasatiyyah* can eliminate and cast aside extremism that can lead to aggression and make way for friendship, cooperation, development; mutual understanding of doing things together that creates an environment or condition that encourages economic development.

The Qur'ān emphasises the importance of *ummat^{an} wasaṭ^{an}*, which means Muslims are meant to be an *ummah* which is justly balanced in nature between the legal aspect of religion and the spiritual dimension, as well as between the internal and the external aspect of life.

Wasaṭiyyah is not something new. It has been in the Qur'ān, and when the six *muṣḥaf* (the early copies of the Qur'ān) had been sent to various centres of learning, people read the Qur'ān, and sought to be guided by the Qur'ān.

But unfortunately today we see Muslims fighting among themselves. Allah gave them the Qu'ran. God shows the way to live in peace, stability, harmony and prosperity. Yet the Muslims continue to dispute and to fight and to wage war among themselves. To those people, I like to ask, “Have we forgotten the Qur'ān and its teachings? Have we forgotten Allah?”

Ladies and gentlemen,

Moderation implies a proper development of one's psychology and soul through proper acquisition of knowledge and wisdom. Hence, a man must undergo a proper process of education and training which is necessary and a prerequisite for the inculcation of moderate virtues in his self. He must also acquire sufficient knowledge that is relevant to his different psychological faculties, be it intellectual, spiritual or emotional in order for him to have a balanced and justly proportioned psychological stature. The disharmonious and disproportionate acquisition of proper knowledge will definitely lead to negative effects, and at times, even fatal. We have seen many real cases where individuals with an imbalanced human development have caused a lot of problems either to organisations or to the nation.

In the context of the development of a nation, a proper and systematic process of inculcation of moderation in every member of the nation at every level is very crucial. This is where human capital development becomes the key factor to the inculcation of moderation.

Therefore, *wasatiyyah* and human capital development are like twins that promote cooperation, mutual respect, mutual help among peoples and communities.

But *wasatiyyah*, in my view, must have content for it to be able to be promoted and to eliminate extremism. I want to say this: *wasatiyyah* must have a *manhaj* – a guide – and the *manhaj* is *Islam Hadhari*.

All of us must hold to certain common principles that we have to follow. Those principles should be compatible with the values of our religion. When we begin to hold on to these principles, we will be together. Cooperation based on understanding will encourage development that can benefit all.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Islam Hadhari provides a set of ten principles that arise from the mainstream teachings of Islam and widen the scope of the Islamic discourse toward its broader civilisational goals. *Islam Hadhari* promotes inclusivity and people's welfare objectives regardless of race, gender and religion, and it is grounded in the conviction that Islam can tap into its own rich intellectual tradition to challenge extremist and partisan doctrines.

Islam Hadhari aims at both promoting a progressive developmental outlook and also building a moral society with strong religious and spiritual values. It calls for Muslims to be progressive, modern and dynamic in thinking and practice, which essentially encompasses the spheres of economy, politics, society, culture, education, defence, technology and science. These comprehensive characteristics are pertinent ultimately in reinstating Islam not only as a true religion but also a great civilisation.

Indeed *Islam Hadhari* can serve as a common platform on which Muslims and non Muslims can come together, holding the principles as values in common that can create unity and stability within society. I have spoken about *Islam Hadhari* on many occasions locally and internationally. It is well received by Muslims and non-Muslims – both can come together for peace and cooperate through stability.

The ten principles laid down in detailing *Islam Hadhari* should be seen as the fundamental in achieving the aims mentioned. They are:

- i. Faith and piety in Allah
- ii. Just and trustworthy government
- iii. Freedom and independence of the people
- iv. Mastery of knowledge
- v. Balanced and comprehensive economic development
- vi. Good quality of life for all
- vii. Protection of the rights of minority groups and women
- viii. Cultural and moral integrity
- ix. Protection of the environment
- x. A strong defence policy

Looking at these ten principles, it is obvious that they serve as important foundations for producing a developing and progressive moderate human capital. It begins with the strong religious basis, belief in God, which is fundamental in strengthening the internal, psychological dimension of a human being. A strong theological foundation will also be the basis of strength in other dimensions of life.

From the Islamic perspective, human capital development does not only aim at the enhancing the economic progress of a country. More importantly its final end is to produce a good man with good ethical conduct and balanced understanding of both

his religion and his worldly life. Once this is achieved, not only the economic progress, other dimensions of life such as social and political aspects will also share the benefit.

At this stage, it is important for me to emphasise that education and development based on the principles of *Islam Hadhari* are not intended for the Muslims alone. The ten principles of *Islam Hadhari* are for all irrespective of race or gender in Malaysia. The ten principles are actually guidelines for education and development which are based on values that are acceptable to the religious practices by Malaysians such as Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism. Therefore such principles will bring us together – so that Muslims and non-Muslims of Malaysia accept our policy on education and development that ensure us a future of progress and prosperity while enjoying cultural diversity and racial harmony in our country.

I had the opportunity on many occasions to give a talk on *Islam Hadhari* overseas. I must say that I was delighted and thankful to God that the principles are easily acceptable because they are compatible with their country's development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to repeat to you again, *wasatiyyah* can be an instrument to eliminate and cast aside hatred and adversaries. In turn it can promote peace, stability, harmony, cooperation.

There is a groundswell of realisation, I believe, of the futility of seeking solutions to issues through military, extremist and violent means. This is shown to some extent by the return to the ballot box of many Islamic parties and movements in recent years, some of which have won sizeable votes or formed governments. The Arab Spring too manifests a public demand for democracy and good governance. Malaysia's call for a 'Global Movement of the Moderates' and the wide support it has received since September 2010 is also a good indication in the same direction.

For peace we adopt what is good for us. *Inshā' Allāh*, if we are willing to hold on to what is in the Qur'ān, God will be with us.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I conclude with an earnest prayer and hope that the Muslim world and the whole of humanity enter a new phase of peace and prosperity through better understanding and cooperation in a more peaceful environment. The power of love, not the love for power, can bring peace.

Thank you.