



SVERIGES AMBASSAD

Check against delivery

Kuala Lumpur

Opening remarks by H.E. Helena Sångeland, Ambassador of Sweden to Malaysia on 12 November 2009 @ the Inaugural MEF – European Union Kuala Lumpur Roundtable 2009

Yang Amat Berhormat Datuk Seri Mohamad Najib Tun Razak, Honorable Prime Minister of Malaysia

Yang Berhormat Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz, Patron & Advisor of the Malaysia-Europe Forum

Fellow Colleagues, Ambassadors of the EU Member States

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

I speak today on behalf of the European Union which Sweden currently chairs and I am grateful for the opportunity to speak today to such a distinguished audience.

Firstly, allow me to extend my very warm congratulations to the Malaysia-Europe Forum, which in partnership with the Delegation of the European Commission is organising and hosting this conference aimed at boosting EU-

Malaysia relations. His Excellency Vincent Pilet has asked me to convey his greetings from Brussels.

The EU and Malaysia have been friends and partners for many years. We have well established and ongoing relations in the fields of economy, politics and education. The EU is one of Malaysia's biggest trading partners and one of the biggest investors in Malaysia. Tourism from

Europe blooms.

As the centre of gravity of the world economy shifts to the Asia Pacific region, with ASEAN emerging as a key partner, the European Union wishes to broaden its programme of co-operation with the whole of South East Asia.

In Malaysia, in particular, the Union and its Member States have been actively engaged in bilateral dialogues with the Malaysian Government in the areas of education, climate change, environment, green technology and human rights in addition to the trade and political dialogue for mutual benefit.

As you are well aware, the Union is undergoing yet another transformation with the new Lisbon Treaty, which will enter into force shortly. The EU will now have a president who will preside the Union during 2 ½ years and

a foreign minister, who can speak on behalf of all 27 Member States. There will be an EU Mission here in Kuala Lumpur. Some of you will recall Henry Kissinger's very pertinent question in the 70s: "If I want to call Europe, who do I call?" Now, it will become easier.

You can expect a stronger, more unified, more efficient, more transparent Union than ever before and one that is well equipped to deal with challenges, both current and future ones.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In today's globalised world neither the EU nor Malaysia are immune to external forces. The global downturn has led to a decline in the EU exports globally by around 20% over the last half year. Malaysia's foreign trade has declined by a similar 22-25%.

The second common challenge arises from the devastating effects of climate change – the recent floods in the northern states of Malaysia is a case in point - which warrant immediate and precise measures from all parties. For its part, the EU has set the most ambitious climate reduction targets in the world, with binding unilateral mechanisms already in place that guarantee a unilateral 20% greenhouse gas emission reduction by 2020

compared to the levels of 1990. The EU is committed to increase this to a 30% reduction in the context of a fair and ambitious global agreement in Copenhagen if other developed countries commit themselves to comparable reductions and contribute adequately according to their responsibilities and respective capabilities.

The EU hopes that Malaysia will join its efforts to reach a comprehensive agreement at the Copenhagen summit in December. Copenhagen is a rare opportunity for global action. With world emissions still rising steadily, waiting any longer to act will make it too late to prevent dangerous climate change.

The third common challenge is security. Several matters need our immediate attention, from national security to food security, piracy, terrorism and human trafficking.

Having outlined our common challenges.... the question remains, where do we go from here and how? We are currently laying the groundwork for possible negotiations with Malaysia on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. We are already negotiating such texts with neighbouring countries. The Union and Indonesia signed its agreement as late as Tuesday this week.

The aim of this agreement is to provide a suitable framework for political dialogue, to support the efforts made by the countries to strengthen their democracies and develop their economies. Most importantly it would encourage trade and investment for our partnering country, in this instance Malaysia.

We are hopeful that the current groundwork will soon lead to the engagement into the negotiations and eventually to the conclusion of a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. And I hope that all of you here, who are great supporters of good relations between the EU and Malaysia, can support us in this effort.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Malaysia's commitment to the international trend of liberalisation and modernisation of its economy is very welcomed by the EU. This and the paused EU-ASEAN FTA negotiations indicate that a new investment and trade policy of Malaysia could also create possibility for a bilateral FTA with the EU if and when there will be political will and ambition. The EU would welcome it.

I thank you for your attention, for your interest in the EU and I wish the new Malaysia-Europe Forum the best of luck in its important work.

