

**SPEECH BY  
YB TAN SRI RAFIDAH AZIZ  
AT THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE  
MALAYSIA-EUROPE FORUM  
ON NOVEMBER 12, 2009  
AT THE BERJAYA TIMES SQUARE HOTEL**

YAB Dato Seri Mohd Najib Tun Razak  
Prime Minister of Malaysia

Her Excellency Helena Sangeland  
Swedish Ambassador to Malaysia representing the Swedish EU Presidency

Our Speakers and Panelists

MEF Board of Trustees

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Malaysia-Europe Forum (MEF), I would like to welcome all of you to the official launch of the Malaysia-Europe Forum, and the opening of the Dialogue today.

In particular, I wish to thank the Prime Minister, YAB Dato' Seri Najib Tun Razak, for taking time today to do the honours. Your presence, Sir, will spur the MEF to move forward to help promote Malaysia's global agenda.

The Malaysia-Europe Forum was established as a company limited by guarantee, and as a not-for-profit organization. It serves as a vehicle to organizing high-level forums, dialogues and networking sessions, in both Europe and Malaysia, and the key objective of the MEF include:

- 1) To ensure that Malaysia has continued access to the expanding EU market
- 2) To support and complement, the government's efforts, to facilitate inbound business, trade and investment and
- 3) To enhance Malaysia's international reputation, and expand Malaysia's economic outreach in Europe.

The MEF has its motto "Building Bridges Through Dialogue", which reflects the approach it takes when undertaking the various events, both in Europe and in Malaysia.

The MEF is also a Civil Society Organisation, in that it was set up by a group of Malaysians and Europeans, who believe there is value in forging strong relationships between Malaysia and Europe, outside of the government sphere.

The MEF is well-positioned to provide the platform for building and strengthening Malaysia's reputation as an Asian success story, besides facilitating the forging of relationships at various levels, and help secure Malaysian's position vis-à-vis

one of the world's largest economic entities.

A number of events have so far been organized successfully in London and Brussels. These include the Annual Emerging Markets Summit, inaugurated in August 2008 in London, and the Spring Roundtable Series, launched in Brussels in April 2009. Events are being planned for 2010, which will include a series of roundtables in London and other EU capitals.

The MEF has enjoyed the support, and patronage of many Malaysian and European enterprises. In particular, the Delegation of the EU to Malaysia has given strong support to the MEF.

The Board of Trustees of the MEF comprise of professionals from Malaysia and the EU, who serve on a voluntary basis.

Certainly, while support from the private sector has been forthcoming, it is hoped that the Malaysian Government can support the MEF, to undertake its activities over the longer term. I hope that YAB the Prime Minister will lend support to the MEF, in its efforts to help strengthen economic ties between Malaysia and the EU.

Ladies and gentlemen,  
Malaysia and the EU have a continuing dialogue which focus on a number of issues, including amongst others, trade agreements, sustainable business, the Green agenda, governance and transparency, human rights, agricultural policies, [delete comma] and intellectual property rights.

These issues require continuing and sustained engagement and discourse in order to find common grounds and to achieve common understanding for mutual benefit. In this context, the MEF can provide an effective platform to assist the government to address these issues in an open and constructive manner.

It is hoped that with the government's support, the MEF can expand its role, and offer its services out of secretariats being planned for in London and Brussels.

These secretariats, will function amongst other things:

- 1) To assist the government to address the broad range of issues of common interest to Malaysia and the EU;
- 2) To focus on information-sharing dialogue, consultation, engagement and forging relationships in a constructive, consistent and transparent manner;
- 3) And, to forge better understanding of Malaysia in the EU and conversely of the EU in Malaysia, through events and programmes in the political, economic and socio-cultural spheres.

The MEF is encouraged by the support received from over various partners, which include entities such as Sime Darby, and companies which have business interests in the EU, such as Texchem Resources and Top Glove. Bursa Malaysia, Maybank, the Ambank, the Kuok Group, and MITI have been very helpful in supporting MEF's activities. I would like to inform that the MEF has been granted Tax-Exempt status by the government and it is hoped that we will continue to receive support from the private sector.

In conclusion, I would like to record our deepest appreciation to YAB Dato' Seri Najib, our Prime Minister for consenting to officially launch the Malaysia-Europe Forum and to declare open the Dialogue.

Thank you.