

SPEECH BY

**Y.B. DATO' SERI SHAZIMAN ABU MANSOR
MINISTER OF WORKS, MALAYSIA**

**GALA DINNER & CONFERMENT OF
REAAA HONORARY MEMBERSHIP AWARD CEREMONY
KUALA LUMPUR CONVENTION CENTRE, 27 MARCH 2013, 8.00 PM**

YBhg. Datuk Himmat Singh
Secretary General
Ministry of Works, Malaysia

YBhg. Dato' Seri Ir. Hj. Mohd Nor Yaacob,
Director General, Public Works Department, Malaysia

Y.Bhg. Dato' Sri Ir. Dr. Judin Abdul Karim,
President of REAAA,

Y.Bhg. Dato' Ir. Baharanuddin Che Zain,
Organising Chairman of the 14th REAAA Conference.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum Waramatullahi Wabarakatuh, salam sejahtera and Good Evening.

It has been said that, “The road to success is always under construction”. Therefore let me begin by congratulating the Organising Committee for having “successfully constructed” the 14th REAAA Conference. I am indeed pleased to be invited to address delegates from all over the world at this gala dinner.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2. Your theme, “The Road Factor in Economic Transformation” is indeed apt. I am not saying this because I am the Minister of Works, but because of the crucial role played by roads and highways in stimulating, accelerating and enhancing a nation’s economy. Roads are a crucial mode of land transport for any nation and usually transport more than 90% of goods and people. The emergence of Asian economic giants like India, China and the South East Asian block has also led to increased investment on roads and highways construction with the realization that infrastructure development is a key component in unlocking potential economic activities. Today we have many nations represented here, who have plans to develop and operate roads, highways and national expressway networks in their respective countries. This forum will give you an insight into many of the issues you will encounter and provide some valuable guidelines on the successful planning and construction of roads and highways.

3. In Malaysia, we consider roads and highways as long-term investment assets that helps sustain the country’s economic growth and

competitiveness. Hence, it is imperative that we build roads to the best standards of quality and design, and place a high premium on its maintenance. Poorly designed and constructed road networks, will impose a continuous strain on the need for subsequent enhancement thereby restricting optimum economic returns. The country's successful privatisation programme coupled with its strong economic growth has induced more highway development projects over the last decade. Today, the North-South Expressway together with the Penang Bridge, the Kuala Lumpur-Karak Highway and East Coast Highway form the backbone of Malaysia's road infrastructure, contributing to the country's rapid socio-economic development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. The importance of protecting and preserving the environment is also given due consideration in Malaysia's road projects. The government encourages road contractors to focus on sustainable development through implementation of green technology in each stage of road or highway development. This approach is aimed at promoting energy efficiency, cost savings, and encouraging optimum usage of limited resources. In line with this, the Ministry of Works, Malaysia and the Public Works Department is drawing up guidelines on the usage of LED lights in Malaysian roads. Besides, low power consumption the LED lights also have long and predictable lifetime and low maintenance cost.

5. Road construction also has a long history of using industrial waste and by-product materials. The motivations of the construction industry were simple to help dispose of materials that are otherwise difficult to manage and to reduce the initial costs of road or highway construction. The challenge has been to use these materials in ways that do not compromise critical performance properties and that do not introduce substances that are potentially harmful to people or the environment. At the same time, as concerns about sustainability have become more prominent in public thinking, the incentives to use by-product materials have increased. In addition, because the reconstruction and resurfacing of highways create their own waste, recycling these construction materials makes economic and environmental sense.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. I understand that tonight we will be honoring ten highly deserving REAAA members with Honorary Memberships. These distinguished members, have demonstrated passion and commitment in promoting the science and practice of road engineering in the Asia Pacific region and have dedicated themselves in promoting REAAA within their regions. I was also informed that the honorary membership group is a small elite group in the REAAA and I wish to offer my congratulations to those who will be honored.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. I would also like to take this opportunity to encourage all delegates, particularly from overseas, to enjoy what Malaysia has to offer in terms of culture, food and landscapes. I urge you to participate in the site visit programme. I am confident that you will return home with pleasant memories of the sights and sounds of Malaysia. Finally, I wish you all a wonderful evening.

Thank you.