In unusual times such as what we are experiencing today, we have to resort to unusual plans and unusual actions...

We need to readjust and reinvent ourselves...

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- Tajudin Ramli, Chairman, EDARAN -

These were the pertinent and urgent messages emphasised by YBhg Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli at a gathering of senior members of the staff of the EDARAN and affiliated companies of the Group at the beginning of this year.

The forum which was appropriately themed MINDS MEETING was organized in light of the imminent impact of the global recession precipitated by the financial meltdown in the USA. Minds Meeting sought to tap cross-sellable ideas and mutually beneficial initiatives within the Group of Affiliates in anticipation of the onslaught of the economic crisis on businesses throughout the world.

The forum which included members of the Board of EDARAN and senior members of EDARAN, Kauthar Sdn Bhd, ar-Raudhah Biotech Farm Sdn Bhd, AUF Properties Sdn Bhd, Signforce Hospitality, Juteras and other affiliate members of the Group, took the opportunity to assess the level of human resources, capabilities and material resources that are within the Group.

Addressing the Group, Tan Sri Tajudin said that judging from the world situation, the global pattern of a downswing will prevail for an extended period of time and Malaysia will be affected like so many other countries.
“The wave which started in Wall Street New York will reach our shores in no time. The greed which started the meltdown has been driven no less than by high powered figures who hail from the Ivy league Institutions of America. Unfortunately Malaysia, like many other countries will be affected because America is, after all, our biggest trading partner. The slowdown will continue until the economy of our trading partners recover. Even then can we be assured that they will resume trading with us?” said Tan Sri Tajudin.

“The challenges faced by the financial sector represents only a small aspect of the economic catastrophe we are looking at. US$1 trillion may not be enough to ensure economic stability throughout the world. The impact of the financial meltdown has gone beyond the financial sector. We are witnessing big sectors of the economy in trouble – the automotive industry, the housing industry, the aviation industry and so on,” added Tan Sri Tajudin.

Unusual Times Call For Unusual Action
“These are unusual times. They call for unusual thinking, unusual planning and unusual actions. Human beings are lazy and they do not exercise their brains enough. This is the time we should optimize our resources within the Group, seek new knowledge, information and new ideas to stay afloat if not move ahead,” said Tan Sri Tajudin.

Calling upon the Group members to identify new ideas and opportunities and to establish networks and smart alliances, Tan Sri Tajudin said we shall need to find ways to defend ourselves against the tidal wave of economic turmoil.

“Individually we may be a little helpless but as a Group, we have a greater chance of staying in good stead. This is the reason for the meeting of minds as we are doing today,” he said.

Tan Sri Tajudin cited the example of a slowdown in our trading activities to drive home the seriousness of the impact. He said that when the trading volume with our biggest partners such as China, Japan, India, USA and Europe decline, the impact will be felt down the line beginning with our ports and airports, the logistics and forwarding companies, the transport companies, the warehouses, the people in the employ of these organizations and eventually the whole society in the country. Tan Sri Tajudin reminded the Group that the trading of I.T products represent a big sector of our trading activities. As such EDARAN which is involved in I.T services will need to be alert on the situation.

“In an economic downturn, people stop investing in new things especially in computers and handphones and other such “less urgent” items. We must resort to alternative plans, we must readjust and reinvent our companies and ourselves to have a fighting chance of overcoming the onslaught,” said Tan Sri Tajudin.

Getting To Know The Group and The Directors
The meeting continued with a presentation from every individual company within the Group. Another high point of the meeting was the introduction of members of the Board of EDARAN who shared their respective experiences with the Group. Recognising the wealth of valuable experience and potential held by the individual Directors, the exercise was held to establish more communication between the Group members and the Board of Directors of EDARAN.

The inaugural session of MINDS MEETING saw a dynamic exchange of views and comments pertaining to the business activities of the individual companies. For many, the meeting represented the first time they learnt about the activities of their member companies in greater detail. A positive suggestion arising from the meeting was that the good communication dynamics should be sustained in various ways possible such as setting up follow up meets, linking the websites of the members and projecting themselves under a common umbrella.
Edaran IT Services Sdn Bhd was recognized at the MDeC, MSC Malaysia’s Capability Development Achievement Night held at the Sheraton Imperial in December 2008.

The event which was held in celebration and recognition of MSC Status companies who have achieved global standard certification in various competencies, honoured a total of 45 companies. Edaran IT Services was among the 14 who were recognized for their achievement in the area of the prestigious CMMI certification.

YBhg Dato’ Badlisham Ghazali, CEO of MDeC said that global standard certification gives companies the edge when venturing into the global arena. He said that having these certifications not only help the companies in terms of upgrading their skills and competencies, but also set them apart from the others in terms of buyers’ confidence.

Representing Edaran IT Services at the award ceremony was Executive Vice President Encik Mustafa Rawther Bin Mohamad Rawther.

“Receiving the recognition of MDeC for attaining CMMI Level 3 certification is a tremendous boost for Edaran IT Services. We are confident that with the CMMI certification to our name, Edaran IT Services will be able to compete even more effectively and be more competent in delivering software development products and services of superior quality. We are proud to be included in the select circle of MSC companies in Malaysia,” said Encik Mustafa Rawther.
Big Turn Out at the 7th Edaran Endurance Classic 22-24 May, 2009

Edaran Endurance Classic 2009 saw the largest number of participants in the Championship which has been held for the past six years since 2003. The Ride which was held at the Terengganu International Endurance Park in Lembah Bidong, Setiu, Terengganu from 22 to 24 May, registered a total of 118 entries for the five ride categories featured this year. The categories included a CEI 3-star 160KM, a CEI 2-star 120KM, a 1-star 80KM, a 40KM and a 20KM (VIP) ride. The 80KM ride with 36 riders registered the highest number of participants while the more challenging 160KM had a total of 5 participants.

“The large number of riders in this year’s Championship shows the growing popularity of the sport. We had a good number of young riders in the 120KM ride which was sanctioned as a qualifying ride for the World Junior Endurance Championship to be held in Hungary later this year. The 160KM ride was in turn a qualifying ride for the World Equestrian Games to be held in Kentucky, USA next year,” said Dato Abdul Hamid Mustapha, Chairman of the Organising Committee.

The 160KM and 120KM Rides were flagged off by YTM Tengku Seri Panglima Raja Terengganu amid a cheering crowd of spectators. Among those present at the ceremonious flag-off were YAB Dato’ Ahmad Said, the Right Honourable Chief Minister of Terengganu and other state dignitaries.

His Majesty Seri Paduka Baginda Yang Di Pertuan Agong took to the tracks on the 120KM trail. His Majesty withdrew from the ride after deciding that Gelding Jakim Murphy was not in the condition to continue.

VIP RIDE
The 20KM VIP Ride category registered a total of 8 entries, among whom were YABhg To’Puan Seri Wan Hidayah, wife of YTM Tengku Seri Panglima Raja Terengganu and YBhg To’ Puan Noor Intan Zurina, wife of YAM Tengku Sri Temenggong Raja Terengganu.
AND THE WINNERS ARE.....

Bremervale Jessie James finished in first position in the 160KM ride, bagging the coveted top prize of RM15,000. Zainuddin who represented Bukit Kiara Equestrian and Country Club finished with a total riding time of 11 hrs 43min 34 sec at an average speed of 13.63Km/hr. Bremervale Jessie James owned by Norlaily Bunyiyamin took the title of Best Condition Horse together with the cash prize of RM2,000.

In the Adult Riders category of the 120KM ride, Mohd Nizan Bin Muda from Royal Terengganu Endurance Stables, astride Camelot Retreat Basra finished in first place with a total riding time of 7hrs 53min 50 sec at an average speed of 15.9 km/hr. Mohd Nizan won a cash prize of RM7,000.

Faten Nur Ain Syakira Bt Mohd Yusoff from TMKN stables astride mare Janor Fee grabbed the gold for the FEI Junior Championship Qualifier category of the 120KM ride. She finished with a total riding time of 8hrs 14min 55 sec at an average speed of 14.55Km/hr.

Shamsuddin Roni of ar-Raudhah Equine Centre beat 35 other riders to grab the gold in the 80KM ride. Roni astride Malin completed with a total riding time of 4 hrs 27min 05 sec at an average speed of 17.98 km/hr. Roni won RM5,000.

In the 40KM ride, which recorded the highest number of participants, Mohd Syazmi Rahim astride mare Lady World, beat Mohd Rudy Razari by a mere second to finish in first place. Mohd Syazmi who rode at an average speed of 13.95km/hr finished with a total riding time of 2hrs 52min 02 sec. Prizes for the 40KM ride were in kind.

ROYAL PRESENCE AT PRIZE PRESENTATION
This year's Championship which was jointly organized by EDARAN Berhad and the State Government of Terengganu, culminated with a Prize Presentation Ceremony and Luncheon graced by His Majesty Seri Paduka Baginda Yang Di Pertuan Agong. Accompanying His Majesty at the luncheon and prize giving ceremony was EDARAN Chairman YBhg Tan Sri Tajudin Ramlil and other Terengganu State dignitaries.

SPONSORS
Official sponsors of this year's Ride included Proton Holdings Berhad who was the Official Car Sponsor and SAMSUNG Malaysia Electronics (SME) Sdn Bhd.
The Legacy of Greed

Yet, many economists sing the praises of greed, glorifying it to the status of a virtue without which the world economy will collapse. ‘Greed is good, greed is healthy’ is the mantra on Wall Street. Greed they say, drives entrepreneurial investment, produces preferable economic outcomes in most times and under most conditions. These same economists agree that ‘greed’ is one of the proven psychological launchpad for economic activity because it is, after all is said and done, a most consistent human motivation, the ‘fire in the belly’ for progress and economic accomplishment. In this context, it is not inaccurate to say that greed assumes the characteristics of ‘ambition’; and hasn’t it been said that ‘ambition’ is a noble thing. How would mankind progress without ambition?

Little do we realize that slowly but surely we are sucked into a system where greed holds sway over our actions. Greed displaces our ability to control our selfish desires and robs us of our noble nature to care for our fellow human being and our environment.

That argument makes total sense to those who subscribe to a philosophy of ‘more is better’, individuals whose minds are fixated on self-pre-occupation, the pursuit of material accomplishment and success, no matter the cost or consequence. Think Enron and WorldComs.

Virtuous greed is a fallacy. A misleading notion propagated by those who need to justify that vice for their own gain. As I said in my previous article, the greed of man has consistently been the primal cause of disorder and suffering in this world. Today’s sorry state of economic affairs as well as the deteriorating environmental health of the world, worryingly manifested in the form of global warming, point squarely to nothing else but the crippling factors of greed and avarice.

The Culture of Greed

US President Barack Obama echoed the same sentiments when he slammed greedy businessmen and irresponsible leaders in the US for creating “an ethic of greed” that has led to today’s financial crisis.

The culture of greed is not confined to the US. It is all around us. If we looked closely enough, we will realize that we too are hurting into an era of ‘get more and get it quick’, an attitude that has found its way into the vulnerable minds of our youth. Ask any young person about their ambition and you will invariably conclude that their biggest pre-occupation is how to be rich and be rich fast. After all they were brought up on a diet of get rich quick ideologies, ideologies that debunk the virtues of diligence, earned rewards and delayed gratification. Today’s society champions the quest for more money to have a posher lifestyle, one defined by bigger houses, more creature comforts, more gadgets, lavish food, snobby schools, larger spaces, luxuries, expensive entertainment, more fun. Yes, indeed, more money. The vicious cycle is set in motion. Little do we realize that slowly but surely we are sucked into a system where greed holds sway over our actions.

Often what seems like an object or a person worthy of our admiration is only so because we see it or the person in the limited context of their manifestation. Snapshot views do not tell the full story. The Taj Mahal is admired for its architectural beauty, Shah Jahan admired for his steadfast love for Mumtaz Mahal but behind that romantic facade how many remember and take into account the cruel treatment of the builders and workers who suffered torture and death in the course of creating the Taj Mahal? Many seemingly ‘noble’ acts of human beings are in fact born out of greed and self importance, albeit, disguised. It is not uncommon that many individuals who gain the admiration of others through some outstanding achievement are the very perpetrators of the vicious cycle of greed. More simply put, feats and achievements are not uncommonly driven by some form of greed - greed for admiration, for wealth, accolades, credit, titles and other shades of the vice.

Greed displaces one’s ability to control his selfish desires and robs him of his noble nature to care for his fellow human being and his environment. As the cancer of greed spreads and eats away at the very fabric of our lives, society becomes impersonal, indifferent and uncaring.

Our Lives Affect All Around Us

We are all afflicted because the whole world exists as one community, our lives are linked and intertwined with one another. It is not possible for anyone to insulate himself from the rest of society. Just as the policies and actions of one country affect their neighbours, just as the more influential communities affect the weaker ones, so too will our lives affect those around us. Our practises, our habits, our actions, our very lifestyle leave their effects, bringing either good or bad to those who must live with our legacies and what we leave behind.

Unless we remember that the way we live affects those around us, we may fail to base our actions on good ethics and principles.

How much more harmonious would our world be if we were more conscious of our relationship with our fellow human being and with our environment. How much more meaningful our lives would be if we were more vigilant and thoughtful in the way we live, in what we do and how we do them. Surely then, what we leave behind will be a blessing to those around us.

Today, the world is in crisis and we should not let it happen in vain. Perhaps we should see this as a wake up call and while we still can, choose to do things the right way. While greed and ambition may motivate some people to work harder and become more productive and achieve more, greed, left to its own devices can only lead to unsavoury results and ultimate destruction. Let us remember that our achievements do not always justify our actions. Indeed we must realize that the end does not always justify the means. Ambition and desires in the absence of values and moral conscience cannot but lead to misery and disastrous endings.

Tajudin Ramli
Members of the Board and Management of EDARAN joined His Majesty Seri Paduka Baginda Yang Di Pertuan Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin at a Golf Friendly at the Kota Permai Golf and Country Club in Shah Alam early this January.

During the prize giving luncheon that followed, His Majesty was presented with a cake in the shape of a golf course, in celebration of His Majesty’s actual birthday. Present at the Golf Friendly were EDARAN Bhd’s Chairman Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli, Managing Director Dato’ Bistamam Ramli and Executive Director Datuk Mohd Shu’alib Ishak.

A day following the official royal birthday celebrations of His Majesty Seri Paduka Yang Di Pertuan Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin, EDARAN had the privilege of another golf session with The Monarch at the Impian Golf and Country Club in Kajang.

EDARAN had the honour to celebrate His Majesty’s birthday once again over a private luncheon after the game. A special chocolate creation of a horse on a treasure chest filled with hand made chocolates was presented to His Majesty. Present at the golf session were EDARAN Bhd’s Chairman Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli, Managing Director Dato’ Bistamam Ramli and senior members of the Company.
25 May 2009 - AUF Properties Sdn Bhd, a Lifestyle Partner of the EDARAN Group recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with COCO International Ltd, an international investment company to jointly develop a parcel of prime land in Tanjung Rhu, Langkawi.

Coco International Ltd will invest an initial USD 230 million in the joint venture. Director of AUF Properties Sdn Bhd Fazlan Azri Tajudin said that AUF Properties will work with Coco International to develop one of the many parcels of land designated for the development under the master plan for Tanjung Rhu.

“The Tanjung Rhu Development, when completed will comprise a luxury development of exclusive private residences, resorts and hotels, a marina and other up scale facilities. The completed product is expected to attract the super wealthy from around the world. It is anticipated that the Development will transform Tanjung Rhu into a new preferred destination for high networth individuals,” said Fazlan Azri

The investment marks the first into South East Asia for Coco International.

“We have been scouting around the South East Asia region for good investment opportunities for some time. COCO International has been seeking out investment opportunities in projects targeted at the high end market. AUF’s development plan for Tanjung Rhu more than meets our investment criteria. We recognize some very appealing aspects in their plan. Added to that are the inherent strengths of the location of Tanjung Rhu on the unspoilt Island of Langkawi. AUF Properties’ development plan for Tanjung Rhu is a winning formula,” said Donald Starkey, Director of Coco International who was here for the signing ceremony at Wisma Darul Aman, Alor Star, Kedah on 25 May 2009.

“We are looking at the highest end of the market. The state of the global economy has minimal impact on this select and niche market. In fact, there is an unmet demand for super luxury developments such as those in the plans for Tanjung Rhu. The combination of Tanjung Rhu’s natural beauty and the luxury developments and facilities that will become part of the destination will make Tanjung Rhu a very attractive place for wealthy individuals and groups,” added Mr Starkey who is also an internationally recognized designer of luxury yachts and residences.

Tanjung Rhu’s breath taking beauty comes from its unique landscape composition of sea, beach, scenic limestone hills, rich mangrove forests and flora and fauna indigenous to the site. Tanjung Rhu fronted by the Andaman Sea and fringed by more than 3 KM of white sand beach is recognizably the most beautiful part of Langkawi.

“We had not rushed with the development of Tanjung Rhu because we wanted to ensure that we had a proper plan, one that took into consideration the nature of Tanjung Rhu, the sensitive environment and the unique requirements of the prospective market,” said Tn Hj Abdul Shukri Abdullah, a Director of Tanjung Rhu Land.

“AUF Properties identifies completely with our philosophy of exercising responsibility in order to sustain and respect the natural beauty of the environment even as we are given the honour and privilege to develop this beautiful place into a resort destination,” added Tn Hj Shukri.

Tanjung Rhu Land is presently upgrading the Tanjung Rhu Resort, a luxury hotel. Upgrading works estimated at about RM220 million are currently being undertaken by AUF Properties. The works will include the addition of exclusive villas, additional facilities and landscape works.

The development of Tanjung Rhu will mark the most exclusive and expansive development project to be undertaken by AUF Properties. With Tanjung Rhu Development AUF Properties has expressed that they are ready to take luxury development to a higher level where the natural aesthetics of the land and the environment are preserved and enhanced through knowledge based building and construction technology.