Calendar of Events
October - December 2005

1 October 2005
Governor delivered a luncheon address at the inaugural World Islamic Economic Forum that was held in Kuala Lumpur and organised by the Asian Strategy & Leadership Institute (ASLI). In her speech, Governor shared Malaysia's experience in evolving a comprehensive domestic Islamic financial system which has increasingly become a more internationally-integrated financial system.

13 October 2005
The Bank and the Securities Commission jointly announced that the framework on investment banks announced in March 2005 has been extended to universal brokers. This will further enhance the capacity and capabilities of domestic capital market intermediaries in contributing towards the development of a more resilient, competitive and dynamic financial system.

14 October 2005
Bank Negara Malaysia and the Bank of Korea renewed the two-way Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA) agreement under the Chiang Mai Initiative for another three years. The BSA involves the swap of US dollars against local currencies, where the respective Central Banks will be able to request each other to provide US dollars against the local currency of the drawing bank. The swap size in the renewed BSA was increased to US$1.5 billion with a 20% limit for initial withdrawal without IMF conditionality. The BSA agreement is part of regional cooperative efforts towards contributing to greater financial stability in the region.

31 October 2005
The Bank announced the establishment of the Credit Counselling and Debt Management Agency to undertake credit counselling and loan restructuring for individuals. This measure was introduced pre-emptively to provide a channel to resolve potential credit issues that may be faced by households. The Agency is scheduled to commence operations in the first quarter of 2006.

8 November 2005
In helping to promote the orderly development of the financial planning industry, the Bank and the Securities Commission jointly announced that the regulatory framework for the licensing of financial advisers has been established, with the enactment of the amendments to the Insurance Act 2005 and Insurance Regulations 2005.

16 November 2005
The Bank announced the commencement of construction of the Financial Services Resource Centre (FSRC). The FSRC represents Malaysia's investment in a knowledge centre with learning

and research facilities to support the development of a high performance culture for the country's banking and financial sector.

21 - 22 November 2005

The World Bank, The Economic Planning Unit of Malaysia and Bank Negara Malaysia jointly organised the Regional Conference on Investment Climate and Competitiveness in East Asia. The conference which was held in Kuala Lumpur brought together international experts, private sector representatives and policy makers from the East Asian region to share experience and best practices on ways to design and implement policies aimed at enhancing further the investment climate in the region.

28 - 29 November 2005

The Bank organised the country's first Payment Systems Forum and Exhibition, themed "Migration to E-Payments" that included discussion of issues and challenges in migrating to e-payments, developing a common payment standards as well as enhancing consumer awareness in the usage of e-payments instruments.

In her keynote address, the Governor said that measures to encourage more active use of e-payments would need to go beyond building the electronic payment infrastructure, and also stressed on the broader issues such as building public awareness and confidence, promoting greater convenience, reviewing business and operating practices as well as addressing the commercial interfaces between the customers and the service providers.

30 November 2005

The Malaysian economy grew by 5.3% in the third quarter of 2005. Private sector activity continued to provide the main impetus to growth. Growth for the first and second quarters were revised upwards to 6.2% and 4.4% respectively. The Bank also announced an increase in its Overnight Policy Rate by 30 basis points to 3 percent, with the monetary policy stance remaining accommodative and supportive of economic growth.

3 December 2005

At the 26th Annual Dinner of the Association of Merchant Banks in Malaysia, Governor in her speech stressed the need for the merchant banking industry to confront the emerging challenges from the rationalisation of domestic capital market intermediaries towards investment banking, and seize the new opportunities that will emerge with the new intermediation structure.

6 December 2005

In her opening address at the Banking Industry Competency Framework Study Focus Group Discussion, Governor said that the industry needs "a new generation of professional bankers who

are more customer-centric, technology-savvy, highly qualified, flexible and agile, with skill sets that are more comprehensive than previously."

7 December 2005

The RM1 coin ceased to be legal tender effective 7 December 2005, after the completion of a three-month withdrawal period.

8 December 2005

Bank Negara Malaysia and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of a large-value payment system link between Malaysia and Hong Kong, as part of the efforts to increase the efficiency and safety of payment systems in Malaysia and in the region, particularly in managing the risk exposure for foreign exchange transactions involving the US dollar and Malaysian ringgit.

10 December 2005

The Government of Malaysia announced the establishment of the International Centre for Education in Islamic Finance (INCEIF) to develop and provide a pool of professional talents in Islamic finance, to sustain the market competitiveness of the global Islamic financial industry. An endowment fund of RM500 million was established by Bank Negara Malaysia to support this initiative.

12 December 2005

Governor delivered a special address at the Second Citigroup-INSEAD Financial Education Summit 2005 that was held in Kuala Lumpur, in which she spoke about the issue of financial literacy from the perspective of the Central Bank.

14 December 2005

During the Third International Forum on Financial Consumer Protection and Education hosted by the Bank, Governor delivered the keynote address which focussed on the consumer protection and education from the perspective of maintaining financial stability and development of a progressive and sustainable financial system.

15 December 2005

As part of the efforts to enhance communication and transparency in order to promote greater understanding of monetary policy, the Bank released the decisions of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) beginning with the eighth meeting for 2005. The schedule of MPC meetings and press releases for 2006 was also made public.

16 December 2005

The fourth meeting of the National Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Development Council, chaired by the Prime Minister, discussed the following:

- National SME Development Blueprint 2006, containing 245 programmes that will be implemented in 2006 aimed at strengthening the enabling infrastructure to support SME development, building capacity and capability of SMEs and enhancing further SMEs' access to financing. An allocation of RM3.79 billion has been committed by the Government for the implementation of these programmes.
- Profile and Contribution of SMEs to the Domestic Economy
- SMEinfo Portal: Centralised online information on SMEs and SME Directory
- Annual Report on SME Development 2005
- Promoting Malaysian Products through the "Taste of Malaysia" Roadshow
- Progress of SME Bank in Supporting Development of SMEs

The Bank is the Secretariat to the National SME Development Council.

28 December 2005

As part of the efforts to liberalise the country's financial sector, the Bank announced that locally-incorporated foreign banking institutions will each be allowed to establish up to four additional branches in 2006.

29 December 2005

The Bank announced the release of the 2006 edition of the *Buku Wang Saku (BWS)* and *Buku Perancangan dan Penyata Kewangan Keluarga*. The publication of these books is part of the Bank's on-going efforts to enhance public awareness on the importance of management of personal finances and financial planning. The theme for BWS in 2006 is "Financial education as a foundation for financial planning".