



Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY YANG BERHORMAT PEHIN ORANG KAYA SERI UTAMA DATO SERI SETIA AWANG HAJI YAHYA BIN BEGAWAN MUDIM DATO PADUKA HAJI BAKAR, MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND PRIMARY RESOURCES, BRUNEI DARUSSALAM, AT THE WORLD OCEAN DAY SEMINAR, EMPIRE HOTEL AND COUNTRY CLUB, THURSDAY, 9TH JUNE 2011

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Yang Mulia Dayang Hajah Hasnah binti Ibrahim, Director of Fisheries as the Chairperson of the organising Committee,

Your Excellencies High Commissioners and Ambassadors;

Yang Mulia Dato Paduka Dr. Haji Mohd Amin Liew bin Abdullah, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources;

Yang Mulia, Dayang Hajah Normah Suria Hayati binti Pehin Jawatan Dalam Seri Maharaja Dato Seri Utama (Dr.) Haji Awang Mohd Jamil Al-Sufri, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources;

Yang Mulia, Awang Mohd Riza bin Dato Paduka Haji Md. Yunos, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources;

Distinguished speakers and participants of the seminar;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

And a very good morning and thank you for joining us here again

Let me begin by thanking the organiser for inviting me to be the Guest of Honour for today's seminar and it gives me great pleasure to be here today to deliver a key note address and later be with you all to listen to the various presentations. Let me also welcome our international speakers who have come from afar to Brunei Darussalam.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Yesterday, in opening our celebration of World Oceans Day, I emphasized that on this occasion we were called upon to learn, adapt and change our policies, practices and behaviors, and gain new perceptions to ensure a secure and productive future for our coastal and marine resources. In today's seminar we have the opportunity to hear from several local and foreign experts in marine stewardship who will share additional information and insights on how marine conservation is being practiced around the world, and what lessons we may consider from those experiences to improve our conservation programmes in Brunei Darussalam.

Brunei Darussalam is not a large country, but we are blessed with rich natural resources - resources that can provide for a sustainable and secure future for our nation.

Now, we have the opportunity to enhance our knowledge in marine research and management, and to guide our participation and leadership on addressing global matters in marine stewardship. The Department of Fisheries, for example recently has partnered with international organizations to study the rich biological diversity of our coral reefs - an asset that Brunei Darussalam can share with and add on as part of the global natural heritage for which we are responsible to conserve. We hope this initiative will expedite regional action to prevent destructive Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported fishing practices.

I look forward to the many interesting topics we are going to hear about today. In many areas of management and development we are discovering new ways of approaching old problems, and identifying new solutions. In fisheries management, for example, we are looking to new ways to recover core stocks and ensure sustainability. We also have new opportunities to protect critical marine habitats and at the same time also increase fishery productivity and protect the health of the environment, and human safety as well.

The future of the state of our coastal and marine areas appears to be potentially very bright indeed, and their protection can provide a foundation for a secure and productive future for the productivity and diversity of Brunei's marine life.

The Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam emphasizes the need to wisely develop our natural resources. With this guidance, the Department of Fisheries has worked to ensure that we develop our fisheries resources sustainably.

Brunei Darussalam has great opportunities to advance the science of marine stewardship nationally, regionally and globally. Our success to date is an impressive achievement by international standards, and one for which the Director, and the entire Department's staff deserve our thanks.

Over the many years people have fished off our coast, our demersal fishery stocks have declined to around one fifth of the size they once were. In this regard, we are no different than any other nations in the region, indeed almost all coastal countries of the world have similarly depleted their fishery resources. The good news is that by properly managing and monitoring those stocks and protecting their essential habitats, we can restore our nation's fishery stocks.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to share with you all today that the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, through the Department of Fisheries intent to establish a network of marine protected areas, or better known as MPAs for Brunei Darussalam's near shore marine environment, in order to ensure the conservation of the rich biological diversity of our coral reef ecosystems, and fisheries productivity. The establishment of these MPAs will be a contribution to our food security.

Scientists worldwide have concluded, and many other nations have moved to act, to protect places in the ocean to improve the abundance, diversity, productivity of marine life, and fishery yields in their nations' waters. I am hoping that with the Department's leadership over the coming year, we will be able to conclude a plan for the new MPAs that provides for this very positive change and improvement in our nation's coastal and marine resources.

As we prepare the next 5 year National Development Plan, I want to see greater national emphasis on the wise use and protection of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Experts worldwide are documenting the decline in global biological diversity. Brunei Darussalam has much to offer in the international efforts to reverse this decline, at home and through our active participation in the international work to be better stewards of the marine environment.

As a nation limited by area and population, we can only have our voice heard through working closely with our neighbours and through collaboration with regional and international bodies. Currently we are working closely with our neighbouring countries to protect the precious biological diverse Borneo Island. Together with Indonesia and Malaysia, we have embarked on a trans-boundary protection of our natural resources through the Heart of Borneo (HoB) Initiative. Similarly, to protect and manage our marine biodiversity, we in Brunei Darussalam are hoping to join the Coral Triangle Initiatives (CTI), an initiative undertaken by a few countries bordering the Pacific Rim to maintain and enrich their coral population and marine biodiversity.

I hope you enjoy today's program, highlighting many of our current and future international collaborations, and that it contributes to your perspectives to how we can all work together to realize an even greater future for Brunei.

Lastly, I would like to applaud the Department of Fisheries for their great effort to organise this important seminar and for their enthusiasm and excellent leadership in shouldering the task.

In closing, once again I would like to thank the organiser and others, who are involved in organising this seminar. I hope this seminar will spur awareness of the importance of the oceans and the marine living resources and have the blessings from Allah Subhanahu Wataala.

To our international visitors, as tourism is also under my portfolio, I would like to urge you to take sometime off to explore our country, a nation of unexpected treasures!

Wabillahitaufik Walhidayah Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullah Hiwabarakatuh,

Thank you all.