



Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources

SPEECH BY
YANG BERTHORMAT
PEHIN ORANG KAYA SERI UTAMA
DATO SERI SETIA AWANG HAJI YAHYA
BIN BEGAWAN MUDIM
DATO PADUKA HAJI BAKAR
MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND PRIMARY
RESOURCES OF
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

AT THE LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF
iCUBE WORKSHOP

LECTURE THEATRE ILIA
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Yang Mulia,
Associate Professor Dr Azman bin Ahmad
Chair of iCUBE Scientific Committee and
Chair of iCUBE Workshop Organising
Committee.

Your Excellencies,
High Commissioners and Ambassadors.

Yang Mulia, Permanent Secretaries, Deputy
Permanent Secretaries, and Senior
government officials.

Principal Officers and academic staff of
UBD, Workshop facilitators, speakers and
participants, Invited guests, ladies and
gentlemen.

First of all, allow me to express my sincere gratitude to Universiti Brunei Darussalam, for inviting me as the Guest of Honour and to officiate the launching of the iCUBE Workshop on the “Impact of Climate Change and Innovations for a Sustainable Future” this morning.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to all overseas experts and participants to our country, Brunei Darussalam, The Abode of Peace. I hope that you will have a memorable, comfortable and an enjoyable stay in our country. Let me also take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy and prosperous new year.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

2012 is going to be another important year for those working on research and education on biodiversity, climate change, and the environment such as iCUBE. As it is the year when the Kyoto Protocol ends and a new international framework that can deliver the stringent emission reductions, as indicated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), needs to be negotiated and ratified. In my view, commitment to shared responsibilities by all countries could lead to concerted action in addressing the rise in greenhouse gas emissions.

In acknowledging that anthropogenic, or human induced, greenhouse gas emissions will have significant and negative impacts on the climate, it is also our shared responsibility to explore workable solutions to minimize the potential disruptions in the life and livelihood-sustaining natural systems in our communities. Increased water stress, food insecurity, changes in population dynamics, vulnerability of human settlements, and repercussions on health status of millions of people are some of the complex challenges the world is facing.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe that sustainable forest resource management is an important solution to climate change.

We understand that forest loss contributes as much as 12-15% of annual greenhouse gas emissions. This is about the same as the entire global transport sector. When forest degradation and peat land degradation are included, emissions from deforestation and forest degradation are estimated at up to 20% of total global emissions.

We therefore value the role of our forests as natural sinks, in absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Tropical rainforests account for less than 6% of the earth's land area. But they store up to half of the carbon locked inside the earth's terrestrial vegetation, behaving as a critical sponge for greenhouse gases, playing an immense role in climate change.

Brunei Darussalam is blessed to be able to maintain a high forest cover. Due to its relatively small population and economic stability, coupled with a very strong forest conservation policy support from all levels of stakeholders especially the young generation, around 76% of our land area is still forested. Currently, we are in the process of reviewing our national forest policy, to make sure that the policy is attuned to current developments and responsive to the challenges faced by the forestry sector in the country.

For instance, one of the efforts towards that is increasing the conservation areas of the reserved forests.

Thus, I certainly welcome the collaborative research by iCUBE partners on climate change and its impact on biodiversity and environment. In his regard, I particularly appreciate UBD's efforts in trying to gain greater insights into the dynamics of our tropical rainforest, including peatland forests.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

2012 is also the year for Brunei Darussalam to embark on a new National Development Plan.

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, in conjunction with His Majesty's 65th Birthday on the 15th July 2011, said that economic development has

placed extraordinary pressures on the world's limited natural resources and ecosystems. This has brought about negative impacts such as unstable weather conditions, global warming, floods, forest fires, droughts and pollution. Thus, in realizing the goals of the new national development plan, our choice is towards a balanced development approach.

A balanced development may have different interpretations, but this notion has often been absorbed within the concept of 'sustainable development' in recent years. Whilst we pursue economic growth in our National Development Plan agenda, we also need to consider sustainable utilization and conservation of our natural resources.

For example, Brunei Darussalam through the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources has set the sustainable biodiversity management as one of the core strategic thrusts to support economic growth. This strategic thrust is manifested in the tri-lateral Heart of Borneo initiative (HoB) with Indonesia and Malaysia. By declaring 58% of its land area under HoB, we are demonstrating the country's desire to remain committed to the principles of sustainable development. This involves optimizing the use of its land and forest resources through research and development activities, protection, education and training, and gathering of funds.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Through the Heart of Borneo National Council, we are aggressively working on the policy for Material Transfer Agreement, and we consider this as an important agenda in 2012. It will lay out the procedures for collaboration and sharing of research findings that will provide emphasis on the benefits of knowledge exchange as well as balanced development of local human resource.

We understand that universities and research institutions, like UBD and its iCUBE partners, consider a Material Transfer Agreement as crucial to the evolution of a mutually rewarding partnership. By having an understanding of

how proprietary materials can be used and providing the recipient a licence to use those materials, both parties can benefit from the research and innovation activities that creates new knowledge, new products and services as well as new processes for the betterment of local, national and global communities.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On a final note, thank you once again to UBD, for inviting me as the Guest of Honour to this auspicious occasion, and wish everybody an excellent two weeks of fruitful sharing and learning towards attaining the objectives of this workshop.

With the kalimah “Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim” it gives me great pleasure to officially launch the iCUBE Workshop on the “Impact of Climate Change and Innovations for a Sustainable Future”.

Wabillahi Taufik Walhidayah
Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi
Wabarakatuh and Thank You.