

OPENING ADDRESS

**BY
YANG MULIA HAJAH HASNAH BINTI IBRAHIM
DEPUTY PERMANENT SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND PRIMARY RESOURCES
(PRIMARY RESOURCES)**

Delivered at

**MAJLIS SESI DIALOG KEUSAHAWANAN YEAB
"EMPOWERING YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP"**

**Tuesday
9 Zulkaedah 1433H / 25th September 2012M
The Rizqun International Hotel, Gadong**

Bismillah Hirrahmannir Rahim

Yang Mulia

Ms. Hafimi binti Abdul Haadii, President of Young Entrepreneurs Association of Brunei (YEAB), as Chairperson of the organizing committee,

Representative of the US Embassy in Brunei Darussalam,

Dr. Harry Harris, Our invited speaker

Colleagues and fellow officials from the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources,

Members of Young Entrepreneurs Association of Brunei ,

Distinguished guests and participants,

Ladies and gentlemen

Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakaatuh

and a very good afternoon and salam sejahtera.

Praises be to Allah Subahanahu Wataala, selawat and salam to our prophet, Nabi Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wassalam.

Alhamdulillah, with the gracious blessings of Allah Subahanahu Wataala, we are able to gather here at this meaningful event this afternoon.

Let me begin by thanking the organiser for inviting me to be the Guest of Honour and to officiate the inaugural YEAB SME Dialogue Series with the theme of "Empowering Youth Entrepreneurship". I am indeed honoured to grace the occasion and it gives me great pleasure to be here today.

I like to take this opportunity to congratulate the organizer for bringing together our young entrepreneurs from companies in the country as well as members from the government sector. The presence of these stakeholders should provide a more lively atmosphere for a dialogue. I was informed that Dr. Harry Harris, our distinguished speaker this afternoon is indeed a well-experienced entrepreneur, who is also a well-sought expert internationally. So we look forward to hear about his invaluable experiences throughout his journey in the world of entrepreneurship and certainly his feedbacks are very much welcome. I also like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation and thanks to the US Embassy for their support in the organization of this dialogue, especially in bringing our distinguished speaker to this event.

Distinguish participants, ladies and gentlemen,

In Brunei Darussalam, SMEs constitute around 98% of business establishments and are engaged in businesses across all industry sectors. They have the potential to contribute significantly towards the national objective of sustainable economic diversification. It is stated that one of the main focus in the National Development Plan is to spur the development of the SMEs, which is also in line with the efforts to realise the National Vision 2035 (Wawasan Negara 2035).

The Minister of industry and Primary Resources, in his opening remarks during the Brunei Business Forum, organised by Asia Inc. last year, has also mentioned that it is the Ministry of Industry and Primary resources' intention to spur the development of SMEs in Brunei Darussalam by declaring and associating the present decade (2010 – 2020) as the Decade To Spur SME Development in Brunei Darussalam. He reiterated that by declaring this, the various stakeholders would be engaged in realizing the aspirations of continued growth of the SMEs and an increase in the number and quality of SMEs penetrating in regional, international or global markets. He also assured that government agencies will continue to assist and facilitate the development of the SMEs so that their potential contribution towards sustainable economic diversification objective can be realised. In this respect, as one of the agencies responsible for entrepreneurs' development in the country, the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources has continuously embarked on various programs and activities for SMEs, encompassing all major areas that relate to SMEs development. These include the provision of infrastructure facilities such as industrial sites, capacity building programmes in the form of short courses, seminars and workshops, product promotion and market access and as well as providing financing facilities. MIPR, through the Entrepreneurial Development Centre are also continuously reviewing our programs and organisational capacity so as to further enhance our services and outreach to the SMEs.

Distinguished guests and participants, Ladies and gentlemen

I was made to understand that the main objective of this SME Dialogue Session on "Empowering Youth Entrepreneurship" is to provide a platform for young people in Brunei to interact with their fellow entrepreneurs and gurus, and share their thoughts and entrepreneurial experiences. In this regard, I sincerely hope that our participants will truly benefit from this dialogue session, as insights gained from the dialogue are invaluable and are one of

the major sources of first-hand information. Participants could share and learn from each other's experiences as well as establishing contacts and networking.

At this juncture, once again I would like to applaud and congratulate The Young Entrepreneurs Association of Brunei (YEAB) for the great effort in organising this dialogue in collaboration with the Entrepreneurial Development Centre, Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources. It is certainly an important and timely initiative in advancing the young entrepreneurs' development and progress in this country, since the entrepreneurs are really the engines of growth.

We, in the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources are very proud to have been associated with this kind of program, and we value highly the synergistic cooperation and partnership between The Young Entrepreneurs Association and the Entrepreneurial Development Centre, especially in co-organising sessions like this. Development programmes such as this dialogue session, conducted through a stakeholder partnership is undeniably of great significance in today's business activities and the closer relationship between stakeholders has increasingly played a fundamental role in aligning the government's initiatives, policies, rules and regulations in providing a conducive business environment. The continued partnership between the government and the private sector is also crucial in realizing our national economic diversification's aspiration and only through such engagement and partnerships can we realize the vision and its full benefits to our country.

In closing, once again I would like to thank the organiser for inviting me to be the Guest of honour and to officiate the inaugural YEAB SME Dialogue Series.

And, on that note, With the kalimah Bismillahir Rahman Nir Rahim and Bertawakal to Allah SWT, I declare this SME Dialogue Session on "Empowering Youth

Entrepreneurship” officially open. May Allah bless this Dialogue Session, and to make it a source of knowledge and inspiration for us all, Amin ya rabaalamin.....

Wabillah Taufiq Wal Hidayah Wassalamualaikum Warahmahtullahi Taala Wabarakatuh.

Thank you and I wish you all a successful dialogue.