



**Speech by The Honorable  
Dato Paduka Awang Haji Ali bin Apong,  
Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism  
as the Guest of Honour**

***at “The 3<sup>rd</sup> International Consortium of  
Universities for the Study of Biodiversity and  
the Environment (iCUBE) Launching  
Ceremony of the iCUBE Pagon Expedition  
Book, iCUBE Report and iCUBE Exhibition in  
conjunction with The 3<sup>rd</sup> iCUBE Governing  
Board Meeting”***

PAAPRSB Institute of Health Science Extension Building, UBD

Saturday, 14th May 2016

8.30 am

Bismillahir Rahmannir Rahim

Alhamdulillah Rabbil 'Aalameen, Wassalatu  
Wassalamu 'Alaa Asyrafil Mursaleen, Sayyidina  
Muhhammadin, Wa 'Alaa Aalihie Wasahbihie  
Ajma'een

Yang Mulia Datin Dr. Hajah Anita Binurul Zahrina  
binti Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Wijaya Dato Seri  
Setia Haji Awang Abdul Aziz, Vice-Chancellor,  
Universiti Brunei Darussalam and Advisor for the  
iCUBE Organizing Committee;

Dr Joyce Teo Siew Yean, Assistant Vice  
Chancellor (Global Affairs) and the Chairperson of  
the iCUBE Organizing Committee;

Distinguished Governing Board Members of the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
iCUBE Governing Board Meeting;

Excellencies;

Senior Government Officials;

Principal Officers and Academic Staff of UBD;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

**Assalamualaikum**

**Warahmatullahi**

**Wabarakatuh and a very good morning to all**

1. First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Organizing Committee for inviting me as the Guest of Honour for the “3<sup>rd</sup> International Consortium of Universities for the Study of Biodiversity and the Environment (iCUBE) Launching Ceremony for the iCUBE Pagon Expedition Book, iCUBE Report and iCUBE Exhibition in conjunction with the 3<sup>rd</sup> iCUBE Governing Board Meeting”.

2. I would also like to express my warmest welcome to the distinguished Governing Board Members of the 3<sup>rd</sup> iCUBE Governing Board Meeting and invited guests. I understand that some of you are in Brunei Darussalam for the first time. Selamat Datang! I am confident that you will have an excellent and enjoyable stay.

3. I was told that this year's Governing Board Meeting will cover intensive topics in the areas of biodiversity, climate change, the environment and in the social science and policy aspects. Nevertheless, please do take time to walk around and visit our landmarks in Brunei Darussalam.

### **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

4. Increasingly, human livelihoods and human health depend, to a larger extent than we may imagine, on biodiversity and the health of our

natural ecosystems. We cannot do without the gifts provided by nature: fresh water and fresh air, pollination of crops, dispersal of seeds, soil fertilization, pest control and valuable plant, animal and microbe based medicines to cure some of the threatening diseases. Sadly today, biodiversity faces imminent threats that require concerted efforts and a genuine understanding of the challenges and issues causing its loss. The recent climate talks in Paris have highlighted these threats. The scale of human impacts has become so large that the International Commission on Stratigraphy will deliberate later this year on whether our planet has entered a new geological epoch or era, which should be called the “Anthropocene” – the human epoch.

5. We, in Brunei Darussalam, are blessed with a wealth of biodiversity and extensive intact forests, as well as our National Forestry Policy of Brunei

Darussalam that is committed to protecting our natural biological heritage.

6. I am delighted to hear that iCUBE is now entering its fifth year. It can be proud of its achievement in research and teaching in the core areas of Biodiversity and Environment in a time of great global upheaval and change. I congratulate the iCUBE for inspiring, stimulating and working together to protect our earth and creating a more sustainable and green future.

7. Knowledge and understanding of the key issues and challenges in biodiversity conservation are crucial to enable informed decisions to be made and to benefit from nature's wealth. I am confident that this Governing Board Meeting will set the trajectory for even more cross-institutional collaboration and that this will enhance our ability to study and protect our environment for the next

generation. Undoubtedly, a network of leading universities can make this a difference.

### **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

8. I am pleased to note that Universiti Brunei Darussalam considers Biodiversity & Environmental Conservation a very important research thrust, and it continues to prioritise research on biodiversity and the environment, and actively seeks out collaborative partnerships with like-minded institutions abroad.

9. I am also happy to hear about the successful implementation of the Dual Degree Program between UBD and Korea University as the first such program offered under the iCUBE initiative, and some of our own students are currently in Korea University pursuing postgraduate studies under the auspices of iCUBE. I have no doubt that

other members of the iCUBE too will create such collaborative programs to further strengthen links among the iCUBE partner universities.

10. In the past four and a half years, a total of 134 researches and students have been collaborating under different iCUBE initiatives. I encourage the iCUBE member institutions to build on this momentum already created and to further leverage on your respective strengths to meet the demands of our rapidly changing world.

11. Another breakthrough of iCUBE was the realisation of a full expedition to Brunei's highest peak, Bukit Pagon, in 2012 and the post expedition activities that took place at the Kuala Belalong Field Studies Centre. I am very pleased to witness the launch of the Bukit Pagon Coffee Table Book today as an outcome of this expedition, and delighted that my Ministry: the Ministry of Primary Resources and



Tourism has actively contributed to the expedition and also to the production of this book.

12. I firmly believe that multidisciplinary fundamental work conducted in the broad areas of Biodiversity and Environment among the partners in the iCUBE will lay a solid foundation for future innovations, linking industry partners and entrepreneurial skills among the young generation.

13. This Governing Board meeting would not have been possible without the strong support and prudent education policies of the member countries. We are also grateful to their embassies in Brunei Darussalam for their continuous support all these years.

14. I constantly stumbled upon a statement, which said, “We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children”. This is

indeed true. The Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism will continue to support Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation related research and educational initiatives of the UBD and iCUBE.

15. To the members of the Governing Board, I hope the bonds that you will undoubtedly develop with your fellow colleagues, will expand the opportunities to collaborate further.

16. Lastly, I wish everyone a successful meeting and fruitful discussions ahead to further strengthen links under the auspices of iCUBE. With this, **I officially launch the iCUBE Pagon Expedition Book, iCUBE Report and iCUBE Exhibition.**

**Wabillahi            Taufik            Wal            Hidayah,  
Wassalamua'laikum            Warahmatullahi  
Wabarakatuh.**