



**Environmental Governance
in Malaysia:
*Insights and Reflections***

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PREFACE

During my public service as Parliamentary Secretary, Deputy Minister and Minister in charge of the environment, I have witnessed the emergence of many environmental issues that affect various aspects of our lives and nation. The topic of my book on environmental governance comes to me as an appropriate subject for some analytical insights and reflections on my tenure in the environmental scene.

The scope of environmental governance is wide. It is about how societies cope with the environment, how environmental problems are identified and defined, and how environmental issues reach the political agenda and policies are finally formulated and programmes implemented. I have tried to select from my numerous speeches, to synthesize the hard work that goes into the making of what constitutes environmental governance in the country. Unfortunately, not all the speeches could be included, as indeed there are just too many and inevitably, I could only include some major ones to reflect on various aspects of environmental governance. However, I do hope that this will give a synoptic view of our environmental governance in the country.

This book is a compromise between my original aspirations and the realities of publication. In opting to concentrate on environmental governance, my other portfolios, science and technology, are played down and excluded although they are no less important. They will be subject to a later publication.

Wherever possible, I have included excerpts of speeches that I have given at national and international conferences, seminars and fora to reflect Malaysia's stand on major international environmental issues that affect the nation. Some of the speeches are in our national language, *Bahasa Malaysia*, but I do hope that international readers may forgive me for not giving a translation in the book.

As the book is on my insights and reflections, I have abstracted excerpts from the speeches so as not to bore the readers. The readers will find that during my early years in the Ministry, many of my speeches were lost when the Ministry was transferred from place to place. Thus, most of the speeches were from 1990 onwards.

I have divided the book into five parts, each reflecting special themes on environmental governance.

Part I provides a global perspective of environmental governance and my own induction into the subject which I relate closer home to the Asian and Malaysian scenarios.

Part II provides some landmark events at the national and international levels where Malaysia has been signatory to a number of agreements, conventions and protocols related to green and brown issues for environmental improvement such as sustainable development, climate change, energy conservation, ozone depleting substances, re-afforestation, land and water resources.

Part III delves into domestic environmental issues and challenges that our country faces, notably sustainable development, water pollution, oil spills, air pollution, haze and forest fires, soil erosion and management of hazardous and toxic wastes. Major policy decisions and implementation actions taken to address these issues are reflective of the diverse types of work being carried out in my Ministry.

Part IV deals with the soft side of environmental governance, specifically, on programmes, activities, campaigns, promotions, sponsorships and patronage for the purpose of educating and creating awareness among all levels of civil society and stakeholders regarding the environment. I personally feel that the softer strategies of environmental governance will in the long term reap the most rewarding and enduring returns.