

TIMBALAN PERDANA MENTERI

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KONGRES SEDUNIA INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR HYDRO-ENVIRONMENT
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Assalamuakaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh and good morning.

It is a great pleasure and honour for me, to welcome all of you, to the 37th World Congress of International Association for Hydro-Environment Engineering and Research (IAHR) with the theme, Managing Water for Sustainable Development Learning from the Past for the Future.

I am pleased to see participants from all over the world, We have those coming from America, UK, China, Japan, Korea, India and of course, participants from South East Asia and Asia Pacific. To all, welcome to Malaysia or in our national language, Selamat Datang ke Malaysia.

In total, 54 countries, big and small with more than 700 individuals, including professors and engineers whom I regard as the experts in this field, are involved in the congress. This clearly shows our commitment and seriousness, in learning from the past for the future, in managing water for a sustainable development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Managing water is a dynamic issue. This is simply because water is a finite and irreplaceable resource, that is fundamental to human well-being and only renewable if well managed and I mean, truly well managed. Therefore keeping abreast with the latest knowledge and technology in water management is crucial, in fact, the most crucial of all things today. Studies show that smart water management is a pre-condition of sustainable development. As consumption patterns continue to grow, the demand for clean water and costs for controlling pollution, and protecting natural ecosystems increase as well. Current population growth and urbanisation trends mean water is increasingly scarce. At the same time, extreme weather conditions can also cause situations where excess water is a problem. Globally the demand for water will increase by 55% by 2050. There is nothing to be worried about if the supply can meet the demand. But what if there is insufficient supply, and we are unable to meet the demand. This could lead to competition and struggle for water resources among states, among nations in the same region or continent and between continents.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I don't mean to scare all of us by saying that because water crisis is no fiction but a real global phenomenon. We are in an era when many scientists tell us that wars of the future will be for water. Globally and in Malaysia, all major cities are sited beside rivers, our main source of freshwater. You name it and you will locate them, London, New York, Paris, Amsterdam and a hundred more all thrived and grew alongside rivers. Likewise for Malaysia, its capital city, Kuala Lumpur, was raised at the confluence of two rivers the Klang and the Gombak River and Putrajaya, our new administrative capital has a man-made lake located right at the heart of the city, which not only enhanced and beautify the landscape and view of the city, but also functions as a key environmental and ecosystem modulating elements. In short, water will always be the key factor for life, ecosystems and environment.

Honestly, we need to manage water smartly and efficiently. We need to be innovative. Of course it is easier said than done but that is very objective of this congress which is to enhance the understanding of the complex issues in managing water for sustainable

development. The congress serves as an excellent platform to expose consultants, scientists, researchers, as well as the NGO's, to state-of-the-art and technology in water management and practices. I reckon it will be a tough job for the participants. This is because water-related issues especially shortage as a result of poor management have been identified by industries, governments, academia, and civil society, as one of the top three global risks of highest concern.

Water is one of the biggest challenges for sustainable development over the coming decades. Its effects can be felt right across all three pillars of sustainability environmental, social and economic. The IAHR 2017 "focusing on the theme "Managing Water for Sustainable Development", will be the right and an important platform that will bring together researches, policy makers and practitioners from Malaysia and across the region to share experiences and progress made in water resources management research, policies and technologies.

There will be pressure from all corners and sectors. Those in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors would demand that their interests must be looked after. Academicians including scientists would surely press for their findings not to be overlooked. Civil societies which are regarded as representing the general public may hold demonstrations if they felt they are victimised. The government meanwhile will be the one with the heaviest responsibility. We need to find the perfect balance, meaning satisfying everyone and make the right decision, meaning not being blamed for any situation by all the stakeholders. As Deputy Prime Minister, I know too well about it.

However ladies and gentlemen, all is not lost for us. With technology, we can simulate a bad situation caused by poor water management and work on resolving the issues. Besides that, we must learn for the past. The saying, those who don't learn from history are doomed to repeat it, should ring a bell. The combination of technology and history, which I believe will be discussed and deliberated by participants of this congress, should give us some comfort. In doing so, we must always bear in mind the focal point, sustainable development which has been defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

I expect the congress will focus on the central roles of river and sediment management, flood management, environmental hydraulics and industrial flows, coastal, estuarine and lake management, urban water management, water resource management and hydro-informatics, computational methods as well as experimental methods. Another aspect that we should give equal attention is education. This is because all our efforts will be in vain if the general public is not thought on the value and importance of water as well as the shared responsibility of protecting and conserving water resources.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Water is one of the biggest challenges for sustainable development in the coming decades. Its effects can be felt right across all three pillars of sustainability environmental, social, and economic. One important dimension of the social pillar of sustainability that must also be kept in mind is water for survival is a human right. So there you have it, the importance of water, and for the coming decades, we are left with no choice but to ensure those precious two little hydrogen atoms and that big oxygen atom or H_2O , is efficiently managed. I hope the participants will take this opportunity to exchange views and ideas to further improve our water management. With 12 keynote papers and more than 300 technical papers to be presented in this congress the world is expecting some significant outcomes.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Before I return to my seat, I would like to congratulate and thank the organisers, they are the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Malaysia, National Hydraulic Research Institute of Malaysia, Department of Irrigation and Drainage Malaysia, as well as the River Engineering and Urban Drainage Research Centre and Universiti Sains Malaysia for their effort in organising this important congress. To our guests and participants from overseas, I sincerely appreciate your assembling here in Kuala Lumpur. I wish you a pleasant stay in Malaysia and to all participants a fruitful deliberation.

With those words ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to officially open The 37th World Congress of International Association for Hydro-Environment Engineering and

Research with the theme Managing Water for Sustainable Development Learning from the Past for the Future. Thank you.

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