

Speech at International Greentech & Eco Products Exhibition & Conference Malaysia (IGEM)

By : YAB TAN SRI DATO' HAJI MUHYIDDIN BIN HAJI MOHD YASSIN

Date : 19/10/2020

INTERNATIONAL GREENTECH & ECO PRODUCTS EXHIBITION & CONFERENCE MALAYSIA (IGEM) 19 OCTOBER 2020

Distinguished guests,

Fellow climate action advocates, eco-warriors and sustainability champions,

Members of the media,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim, Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

1. A very warm welcome from Malaysia to all the delegates, exhibitors, conference speakers, participants and visitors. I thank you for being with us in this 11th edition of International Greentech & Eco Products Exhibition & Conference Malaysia (IGEM), the very first virtual edition of the event.

2. None of us would have predicted that the whole world would come to a grinding standstill. Going virtual has become a new norm – in organising IGEM 2020, conducting businesses, running the economy and governing the country, to a certain extent.

3. I am very proud that, in a short time, the Malaysian Ministry of Environment and Water (KASA), along with the Malaysian Green Technology and Climate Change Centre (MGTC), have put together a grand virtual exhibition and conferences at IGEM 2020. I trust you will make the most of it in terms of growing your businesses, gaining insights and establishing new connections.

Ladies and gentlemen

4. I want to let you know that I am an ardent optimist. I have always been one and shall always remain as one. And yet, I cannot help but address the grim current reality that we all face – the hammering effect of COVID-19 in every aspect of life.

5. It is hard to find positives amidst the wreckage of COVID-19 but as an optimist, I am sure there is a silver lining. Lockdowns across the world made us reflect, made us think and we started to realise that we need to change our ways. We need to rethink our relationship with the planet and we need to build back better. Due to all of us being at home, we also noticed we had better air quality and mother earth had time to reinvigorate. But this was short-lived as we went back to our old ways once the lockdowns were lifted. But the lesson is, there is a promising path of green recovery as we wade through this pandemic.

6. COVID-19 and climate change, the “twin Cs”, are proving to be the twin engines for concerns and despairs. Both are global common threats that require a common global solution. Just as we need a vaccine for COVID-19, climate change requires urgent solutions that can’t wait for a generation.

7. The impact of climate change is global in scope and unprecedented in various economic of scales, from shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rapidly rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding. Without drastic action now, adapting to these impacts in the future will be more difficult and even more expensive.

8. The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its Fifth Assessment Report, highlighted that from 1880 to 2012, the average global temperature had increased by 0.85°C.

9. Recent projections have shown that the planet is warmer by 1°C compared to preindustrial levels, and the temperature is continuing to go up. This will see a huge impact on our climate, food security, health and biodiversity as well as causing disruptive mass migration. We are racing against time in our war to prevent a climate crisis.

Ladies and gentlemen,

10. Malaysia sets long-term development plans in every five years, and 2020 marks the final phase of our Eleventh Malaysia Plan for the period 2016 – 2020. As part of the Eleventh Malaysia Plan, the strategy of Enhancing Environmental Sustainability through Green Growth agenda has been an important catalyst for sustainable development. The Covid-19 challenges us to build resilience as we wade through this pandemic, and the road ahead has to be on a green recovery pathway.

11. Malaysia, just like all other countries, needs to rethink about our development agenda. The pandemic is a wake-up call for the world. Sustainable development and green technology need to play a vital role in driving the economy. A green recovery approach would not only spur the economy and social well-being but will also drive the nation's development trajectory on a low carbon and climate resilience pathway.

12. In this context, the Perikatan Nasional Government of Malaysia has taken quick and responsive actions to address the pandemic and its socio-economic implications. I have announced socio-economic recovery plans, namely PRIHATIN (Rakyat Economic Stimulus Package) amounting to RM260 billion and PENJANA (Short Term Economy Recovery Plan) amounting to RM35 billion for the rakyat and industries, especially small- and medium-scale enterprises to assist them to face the challenges of the pandemic.

13. Malaysia, as a country blessed with rich natural resources, being one of the 12 mega-biodiverse countries in the world, and with a head-start in green technology, should leverage on this for a stronger green recovery agenda. In our Budget 2021, there will be a special focus on sustainability agenda and we will make a very important announcement in this regard.

Ladies and gentlemen,

14. The Ministry of Environment and Water (KASA) is currently spearheading the Environmental Sustainability Roadmap in Malaysia towards sustainable development. This document has clear targets and indicators towards a green and sustainable pathway from 2020 to 2030. I would like to congratulate the Ministry for this effort which takes into account planetary health approaches as these will go far and beyond in addressing symptomatic environmental issues and challenges.

15. The Green Technology Master Plan (GTMP) strategically outlines approaches up to the year 2030 for green technology development to create a low carbon and resource-efficient economy. The success of the plan draws upon effective collaborations across various sectors to maximise its collective potential benefits.

16. Malaysia is also taking steps to move towards a Circular Economy which covers a wide range of elements in managing end-of-life impact of products. To enable Circular Economy to be effective, we need the industries to embrace Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) which will significantly contribute towards an environmentally sustainable business strategies.

17. We have also galvanised several cities in Malaysia to set a low-carbon vision and develop a low-carbon action plan. A total of 52 local authorities are now part of the Low Carbon City Framework Programme which encourages strategies and actions to reduce carbon emissions.

18. The impact of climate change on water resources alter the availability, quantity and quality of the water supply cycle while contributing to extreme weather, causing long drought and extreme flood disaster. This will affect the capacity to meet water demand and the implementation of water infrastructure projects. As a way forward, the Government has plans to explore other alternatives or unconventional water resources such as groundwater abstraction, rainwater harvesting or even storm water harvesting using off-river storages and coastal reservoirs.

19. Malaysia strives to ensure that the country's water resources will be managed sustainably. Water must be treated with respect. All these will contribute to the overall achievement of national KPI of 99% water supply coverage, 80% connected sewerage services and the national target of 25% in reducing non-revenue water by 2030.

20. On the environmental conservation side, Malaysia boasts 55.3% of total land area covered with forests and placed under various forms of protection to fulfil our pledge at the Earth Summit 1992 in ensuring that at least 50% of the land remains under forest and tree cover. We have established 63 marine protected areas, covering over 15,000 square kilometres, which is about 3.27% of the coastal and marine areas.

21. On the financial sector, currently our central bank, Bank Negara Malaysia, is finalising a “Climate Change and Principles-based Taxonomy” to help align understanding and assessments of risk by providing a common language to categorise economic activities based on their impacts on climate change.

22. As we acknowledge the Ministry of Health’s efforts in combating COVID-19, we also recognise the milestones achieved by the Ministry in sustainable development. The Ministry has implemented various initiatives to achieve a green building status which also provides for sustainable healthcare facilities. The Ministry was recently awarded a gold rating for leadership in energy and environmental design for operations and maintenance for its Hospital Sultanah Maliha in Langkawi. The prestigious award conferred by the US Green Building Council makes this facility Malaysia’s only US GBC LEED version 4 certified government building. I am pleased to share that it is the only such gold-rated building in Malaysia and the only hospital to have received this rating in the world.

Ladies and gentlemen,

23. As an optimist, I said earlier we are daunted by the ‘twin Cs’ – Covid-19 and climate change, but I will introduce another set of ‘twin Cs’ – Courage and Change. We can face these challenging times with courage and make the change we want. The time is now – join us in energising sustainability at IGEM 2020 for a better tomorrow.

24. With this, it gives me great honour to officially declare the first-ever virtual IGEM 2020, open.

Thank you

Wabillahi taufiq wal hidayah wassalamuaalaikum warah
matullahiwabarokatuh

Copyright of the Prime Minister’s Office Official Website

Source: <https://www.pmo.gov.my/2020/10/speech-at-greentech-eco-products-exhibition-conference-malaysia-igem/>