

**Speech at The Malaysia Urban Forum 2020**

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

Date : 28/09/2020

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**MALAYSIA URBAN FORUM (MUF) 2020  
28-30 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**OFFICIATING SPEECH**

**By**

**THE HONOURABLE TAN SRI DATO' HAJI MUHYIDDIN BIN  
HAJI MOHD YASSIN  
PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA**

**DATE: 28TH SEPTEMBER 2020, MONDAY  
TIME: 9.00AM**

**VENUE: AUDITORIUM, ASIAN INTERNATIONAL  
ARBITRATION CENTRE,  
BANGUNAN SULAIMAN, JALAN SULTAN HISHAMUDDIN  
50490 KUALA LUMPUR**

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim.

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and a very good morning.

Yang Berusaha Pengacara Majlis,

i. Yang Berhormat Puan Hajah Zuraida binti Kamaruddin  
Minister of Housing and Local Government, Malaysia

ii. Senior Ministers

iii. Yang Berbahagia Dato Seri Maimunah bt Sharif  
Executive Director of UN-Habitat

iv. Yang Berhormat Dato' Sri Dr. Haji Ismail Bin Haji Abd. Muttalib  
Deputy Minister of Housing and Local Government

v. Yang Berbahgia Datuk Zainal Abidin Bin Abu Hassan  
Secretary General of Ministry of Housing and Local Government

vi. Yang Berusaha TPr (Town Planner) Norliza bt Hashim  
CEO of Urbanice Malaysia

Distinguished Guests, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Alhamdulillah, Praise be to Allah, that we can all gather here today at this Malaysia Urban Forum 2020. This is a national-level forum that aims to promote discussions and sharing of knowledge and solutions towards developing and addressing the many challenges we face in becoming a sustainable and developed nation.

2. After 63 years of independence, Malaysia has certainly matured as we continuously work very hard to strengthen and diversify our economy, improve our human capital capacity and capabilities, overcome the disparities in income inequality to reduce poverty of our people and endlessly combating rising environmental challenges.

3. New challenges will continue to emerge as we are a fast-developing nation, but I believe that our strong foundation built over times has made us to be more resilient and responsive in overcoming these challenges. I believe these are in line with the tenets of the 2030 Sustainable Agenda that Malaysia as a member state of the United Nations has and will continue to commit.

4. COVID-19 has indeed challenged us further and given us a wake-up call. On top of combating and monitoring cases, every nation, including Malaysia, is forced to re-assess all that have been done and are to be done. And though COVID-19 has brought us much challenges and pain, it has, at the same time, brought us all together to think on what's best for the people – be it their health, their jobs and incomes as well as their social well-being and welfare. The Rakyat has always been our priority and the Perikatan Nasional Government of Malaysia will continue to work together with the private sector and financial institutions to ensure that we can find ways and means to reduce the impacts of COVID-19.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. Malaysia is committed in carrying out its poverty eradication efforts. However, despite the many policies and programs that we have introduced, poverty remains a growing concern to us. With the recent revision of the National Poverty Line Income (PLI) from RM980 to RM2,208, more than 400,000 households have fallen within this level i.e. 5.6% of Malaysians. The revision of the National PLI now takes into consideration optimum food requirements as well as quality and healthy eating unlike in the past where we used to only consider the concept of 'minimum'.

6. This is important as a strong nation builds upon a healthy nation. Hence, we must ensure our people have sufficient quality and nutritious food.

Since the pandemic, we have seen relentless efforts in urban farming carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Housing and Local Government as well as by the local communities. I hope these good efforts will continue as we focus on 'food to table' to ensure no hunger and malnutrition amongst Malaysians and to help reduce the burden of our poor households, especially those living in urban areas.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Para Hadirin Sekalian

7. Pada 25 Ogos 2020 yang lalu, saya telah turun padang melawat penduduk Projek Perumahan Rakyat (PPR) Desa Rejang, Setapak Kuala Lumpur bagi meninjau dan melihat sendiri keadaan kehidupan penduduk miskin bandar di situ dari golongan warga emas hinggalah kepada Golongan Kurang Upaya (OKU). Kebanyakan mereka membuat perniagaan kecil-kecilan, bekerja sebagai pemandu teksi dan lori serta ramai juga yang membuat kerja sendiri untuk meneruskan kehidupan mereka yang sekian hari semakin mencabar.

8. Antara perkara yang boleh dipertingkatkan adalah dengan menambah baik pusat komuniti setempat dengan aktiviti menambah kemahiran, keusahawanan dan memperkasakan pendidikan anak-anak mereka untuk menjamin kesejahteraan pada masa depan. Kerajaan Perikatan Nasional akan sentiasa meletakkan agenda membantu rakyat sebagai keutamaan

dan akan terus mencari pelbagai kaedah bagi membantu meningkatkan taraf hidup golongan itu.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To date, 77 per cent of the Malaysian population reside in the urban areas and this is expected to increase to 80 percent or 26 million people by 2030. With such large population in the cities, we will be even more challenged to provide for the needs of our urban societies – manage the waste generated, overcome increasing traffic problems and air pollution, provide affordable homes, ensure sufficient access to water, uninterrupted power supply, provide quality access to public transportation and telecommunication as well as overcoming severe flooding in the cities.

9. We are also challenged by the change in demographic profile where Malaysia will become an ageing society by 2045 and where 14 percent of our population will be 65 years and above. This will bring about new challenges in health services needs and physical environment. Hence, our cities and urban environment must be aged and gender-friendly as we prepare ourselves for this change in social profile. It is time we address ageing society in our national development plans and relook at our planning and physical development in order to meet the needs of the elderly community.

10. The Sustainable Development Goal or SDG 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities requires its adopters to ensure safe, accessible and inclusive city spaces. Thus, we need to provide good quality public spaces for communities to gather, strengthen social cohesion and allow cities to highlight their local cultural identity. We must not compromise these spaces. We need them even more today where the role of urban public spaces in our health, well-being and social life has become more significant. The needs of the disabled to live independently and have equal opportunity is equally important. Thus, our cities must be people-friendly and barrier-free and if our cities are to be truly sustainable, they must be truly equitable.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

11. I was informed that the forum has engaged stakeholder groups. This is important to understand the needs of the various groups of our Rakyat. The inclusion of City Leaders, Women, Youth, Grassroots and the elderly is commendable as their role in ensuring cities are liveable and sustainable should never be undermined. I look forward to hearing their contributions and commitments towards Malaysia's growth and success.

12. With just 10 years to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we should not only address the challenges and aspirations mentioned, but we need to report and show our action plans, progress and

efforts towards the achievement of the SDGs in view of the vision for Malaysia to be a Sustainable Urban Nation.

13. All these, undoubtedly, require concerted efforts by Ministries and agencies at the National, State and Local levels to work together to align our policies and strategies to ensure that our future growth will take place in a more responsible, integrated and sustainable manner. We must strengthen our bottom-up feedback system to ensure integration and co-operation on policy matters and better co-ordination of action plans to reduce mismatch between real needs and plans.

14. The formulation of Malaysia SDG Cities as the key outcome of KL Declaration 2018 at the World Urban Forum 9, which Malaysia hosted in 2018, is an action plan roadmap framework for cities. This is timely and important as Malaysian cities need to address local challenges and set their own pathways and targets guided by the SDG Goals and aligned to our national policies on sustainability. Congratulations KPKT and URBANICE Malaysia for all your efforts. I hope everyone, including local stakeholders will work together with Perikatan Nasional Government to address the many impending issues arising.

15. “Local Leaders” play an increasingly important role here as they are connected directly to the communities and are involved in the planning, development and management of cities. It is therefore crucial for local leaders, be it their community representatives or local governments or the local authorities, to operate in a more engaging manner as this will lead towards a more effective and efficient management system.

16. Strong partnerships between all levels is vital, including with the communities, NGOs, professionals, business and the private sector as well as the government machinery. The private sector plays an important role where they can help in strengthening the local economic growth and providing employment. Hence, partnership to implement sustainable agenda and transform the business environment is vital to overcome poverty and financing of sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

17. I would like to congratulate the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and URBANICE Malaysia for organising and hosting this Malaysia Urban Forum 2020. I believe this is the first urban forum held during this COVID-19 period. I hope it can be an annual event so that stakeholders can meet regularly to measure the progress of the commitment made in this year’s forum.

18. I also want to thank UN-Habitat for being the partner of this important program and the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Dato' Sri Maimunah Sharif, who is also our former Mayor of Penang and Seberang Perai. It is good to see you here in Malaysia. I hope UN-Habitat will continue to support us. To the representatives of UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific), UNDP (United Nations Development Program) and UCLG Aspac (United Cities and Local Governments for Asia Pacific), thank you for being here and for supporting this important forum.

19. To all participants of this forum, I look forward to hearing your deliberations, which I believe will lead to shared knowledge and ideas that we can use in our efforts to advance sustainable urban development. I wish all of you a fruitful deliberation.

20. May God Almighty bless us on our efforts and with “BismillahirrahmanNirRahim” – In the Name of Allah, the Most Righteous, Most Merciful, I declare the Malaysia Urban Forum 2020, officially open – “Together we will work to build a sustainable Malaysia”.

Thank you.

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