

**SPEECH BY  
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AT THE WATER 2000, TENAGA 2000 AND ISF 2000 EXPO & FORUM  
AT THE MINES EXHIBITION CENTRE, SRI KEMBANGAN  
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Firstly, allow me to welcome all of you to this joint opening of Water 2000, Tenaga 2000 and ISF 2000. It is somewhat unusual that three forums and exhibitions in different industries are held together. However, I believe that this joint-effort will be of benefit in terms of the extra publicity and shared resources of this exhibition centre. I would also like to thank AMB exhibitions for inviting me to officiate at this important event.

The three forums and expositions that begin today bring together key regional players from their respective industries to deliberate on the challenges of the new millenium and to forge new business relationships. It is my hope that the discussions and networking you conduct over the next few days will bring about smart partnerships and initiatives that offer strategies and plans of action in the areas of water demand, power generation and security and fire safety services.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The world commission on water has estimated that one billion people, largely in the least developed countries, lack access to safe water. As the global population increases rapidly, the situation will worsen. In the next two decades, water use will increase by about 40% and 17% more water will be needed to grow food for the growing global population. At the same time, according to the united nations, by 2025, two-thirds of the world's population will face water shortages.

As a developing country, one of Malaysia's priorities has been the adequate provision of basic amenities and utility services. Access to clean water has improved greatly over the last two decades. Now, one hundred percent of the urban population and more than three quarters of the rural population has access to clean water.

Although we are blessed with abundant rainfall, the fact that we have experienced periodic water shortages indicates the need for better water management, storage, distribution and treatment.

It is perhaps because of the levels of rainfall that we record in Malaysia that the public take for granted the process involved in the provision of safe, clean water. Water use has been wasteful and better water management must begin by continuing to remind the public of the necessity to conserve water. According to a study conducted, we need about 50 litres of water per person per day. In the urban areas the usage is 500 litres per day. If water usage is not dramatically reduced, we risk recurrences of water shortages in the future.

At the same time, on the supply side, there needs to be better cooperation within government agencies and between the private and public sector. The multitude of agencies, both at the state and federal level, must approach our water situation with a coordinated strategy.

In particular, we need to fulfill our socioeconomic objectives by ensuring that there is complete rural access to clean water and, more importantly, that access - both in rural and urban areas - is constant and sustainable.

The provision of safe water can be improved if there is greater awareness concerning the cleanliness of our rivers - an important source of freshwater. Environmental degradation and pollution that affect our rivers and inland waterways, will increase the cost of providing clean water to the public because of the treatment that the water supply requires.

In addition both the government and the private sector must study proposals for the supply of water carefully to ensure that the solutions that we come up with are strategic, cost-effective and environment friendly. We must, for example, examine with greater detail the problem of leaking pipes and ascertain the loss incurred by these leaks. Similarly, we must study the existing supply networks across state boundaries carefully to determine whether inter-state cooperation can improve water supply without having to create new supply sources that may be costly, short-sighted and detrimental to the environment.

It is my hope that the water portion of this joint exhibition will introduce new technologies that can better equip water suppliers in Malaysia and in the region to provide clean, sustainable water on which, not only economic development, but basic survival is so dependent.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In addition to water, power generation is an important and strategic utility for any country in the world. The adequacy of energy supply is key to economic development. However, as we know, the increasing consumption of energy results in undesirable consequences on the environment and the climate. It is, therefore, a priority for Malaysia to explore and develop sustainable uses of energy.

Our three-pronged national energy policy objectives signify the attention that we are paying to sustainable energy usage with special care given to the environment. Firstly, the government will ensure the provision of adequate, secure and cost-effective energy supplies through developing indigenous energy resources using the least costly options. Secondly, the government will promote the efficient utilisation of energy while discouraging wasteful and non-productive patterns of energy consumption. And thirdly, the government will strive to minimise the negative impacts of energy production, transportation, conversion, utilisation and consumption on the environment.

There are various strategies that the government is pursuing to achieve our national energy policy objectives. Among these are to secure supply through the diversification of fuel type and sources and the upgrading of transmission and distribution networks. By promoting competition in the electricity supply industry, the government hopes that benefits will accrue to consumers from lower tariffs. In addition, the government is also encouraging the development of renewable sources such as biomass and solar which can contribute to a more sustainable supply.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As a rapidly developing country, Malaysia has to meet the demands of a growing

population that has become more affluent. Consumption of utilities has increased as seen by the demand for electricity and water. At the same time we are faced with the task of bringing about broad-based development to every Malaysian - both urban and rural dwellers.

The provision of basic amenities in some instances have been privatised - for example in power production and water supply. This policy has been implemented to accelerate and ensure the universal and sustainable provision of basic utilities. It has also been undertaken so that the private sector shares the responsibility of developing the country together with the government.

Private sector participation in supplying utilities and in other development activities has, however, been misunderstood as something that will result in increased costs to the consumers while benefiting the concessionaires disproportionately. I would like to allay any doubts by stating that the government views the provision of basic utilities as an important socioeconomic role and, as such, will ensure that the private concessionaires that are responsible for such provisions act in the best interest of the consumers - the Malaysian public.

At the same time, I would like to remind the private sector that the provision of basic utilities such as water and electricity must not be seen as a gilt-edged business. While the government acknowledges that private participation necessarily entails the attainment of profits, we hope that such concessions are regarded as ventures that are important and strategic to the national interest. In this regard, I hope that the partnership between the government and private sector will be one that places the needs of the consumers and the preservation of the environment as overriding priorities.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to now touch on matters relating to civilian security and safety. The ISF 2000 will showcase and highlight services, systems and state-of-the-art technologies for the protection and safety of people and property against theft, wanton destruction, accidents and the ravages of fire.

Malaysia is one of the most peaceful countries with a low crime rate. This is something that we are indeed proud of. However, it is also something that we must not take for granted. We believe that prosperity must be achieved in tandem with peace. We want economic development and security. Freedom from want and freedom from fear.

The Malaysian government has ensured that law enforcement protects the life and property of the average Malaysian. In a multiracial country, the need for security becomes overriding, it is something that we take seriously and guard preciously.

We also stress on preventive measures to curb crime. This includes educating the youth on the dangers of crime and preemptive steps that they can take to prevent crime from occurring. Our socioeconomic objective of eradicating poverty and bringing about broad-based economic development has also ensured that there are no glaring relative economic deprivations that can contribute to a culture of theft and robbery.

As the Minister for Home Affairs, I am well aware of the challenges that face the

police force in this new millenium. Law enforcement officers will have to formulate new strategies and master new technologies to fight modern high-tech crime. Similarly, knowledge of sophisticated equipment will be required to protect property and more efficiently fight fire.

As we embrace the development of new technologies, we must be aware that breakthroughs in electronic and computer engineering will become a double-edged sword\* such technologies can be used by criminals to infiltrate areas that we assume are adequately protected by existing methods. These cyber or high-tech criminals are already making their presence felt - through illegal electronic withdrawals at ATM machines, interception of credit card information on the internet, hacking into e-commerce portals, using high-tech equipment for arson attacks or simply deactivating sophisticated alarm systems used in homes.

The security and fire services in both the public and private sector will have to face up to this challenge by cooperating and sharing technologies and crime- prevention strategies. I can assure you that the relevant crime prevention, law enforcement, and rescue agencies are upgrading their operations so that they are able to employ the latest equipment that can bring about greater efficacy. The private sector must share the responsibility of crime prevention by ensuring that positive steps are made, through the use of proper equipment, to protect premises against crimes and accidents.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Whether we are dealing with the problems of water supply, or power generation or security and safety systems, we must be conscious of new technologies and methods that can enhance delivery in these three areas.

Before I conclude, I would like to remind all the participants that technology must, first and foremost, improve people's lives. The development of modern equipment in the three areas mentioned must serve the ordinary person. When introducing new technology, companies and government agencies must examine the utility of such equipment to the people that it is designed to help, or to the environment that it is helping to preserve.

I hope that these forums and expositions will be an ideal setting for industry players to share best practices in their respective fields. I would like to thank AMB exhibitions and all the other sponsors for their efforts in organising this joint-event.

It gives me great pleasure to declare the Water 2000, Tenaga 2000 and ISF 2000 exhibitions and forums open.

Thank you.