

By : DATO' SRI MOHD NAJIB TUN ABD RAZAK
Venue : HOTEL MANDARIN ORIENTAL, KUALA LUMPUR
Date : 04-01-2006
Title : AT THE PRESENTATION OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S
HIBISCUS AWARD 2004/2005

YB Dato' Sri Hj. Adenan bin Hj. Satem,
Minister of Natural Resources and Environment;

YB Datuk S. Sothinathan,
Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment;

YBhg Dato' Kok Wee Kiat,
Chairman of PMHA Organising Committee;

YBhg Tan Sri-Tan Sri, Datuk-Datuk;

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh. Syukur Alhamdulillah dengan berkat dan restuNya kita dapat bersama untuk Majlis Anugerah Hibiscus Perdana Menteri 2004/2005. Saya merasa sungguh gembira sekali atas jemputan pihak penganjur untuk merasmikan majlis penyampaian Anugerah tahun ini. Selanjutnya izinkan saya meneruskan ucapan dalam bahasa Inggeris.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2. It is my great pleasure to be here before you in honoring companies, businesses and organizations that are recognized for their notable, exceptional and excellent achievements in receiving the Prime Minister's Hibiscus Award. This award recognizes and rewards companies, businesses and organizations for their commitment to environmental awareness while successfully operating their business in Malaysia.

3. Being the citizens of this planet that we all call home, we have no choice but to ensure the protection and preservation of the environment for ourselves and the future generations. For it is what we do today that will create the rippling effects for the later generations, whether they would enjoy the benefits of our labor in protecting the environment or suffer the consequences of our actions or in action in neglecting the same. Gone are the days where the impacts of environmental issues are only felt in the country that face those issues. Today, an issue affecting a county may affect its neighboring countries and perhaps the whole region. Therefore, it is pertinent that awareness to protect, preserve and conserve the environment and the actions supporting such awareness is given priority.

4. The protection, preservation and conservation of the environment must go hand in hand with efforts of sustainable development. This will ensure that progress will not cause harm or worse, irreparable damage to the environment.

5. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Government to practice sustainable development in its planning and support this (planning) with socio-economic benefits and enhancements for its people. We can achieve these objectives in our planning through initiatives, including enacting laws that addresses environmental concerns, providing incentives to the private sectors funding public R&D and obtaining technical assistance for the adaptation and adoption of new technologies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. Competing in a globalized economy is a challenge that Malaysian companies would have to raise to. Today, more than ever, markets are emphasizing on another compliance mechanism, i.e., environmental or green compliance. Therefore, it is pertinent for Malaysian producers and exporters to keep an eye on the development of its many markets for such issues on compliance. Many governments in these markets, particularly in the developed countries, have enacted laws to protect and preserve the environment, as well as allocating more resources towards waste management. For example, the European Union has introduced many regulations affecting businesses, such as:

- End of Life Vehicles Directive, which banned the use of lead, mercury and cadmium;
- Directive on the electrical and electronic equipment wastes;
- Directive on Restriction of the Use of Certain Hazardous Substances in Electrical and Electronic Equipment (ROHS).

7. Another example is Japan which enacted a law on Promoting Green Purchasing to mandate eco-friendly procurement by national and local government in 2001. Similarly, the United States Environment Protection Agency has instituted the Reserve Conservation Challenge Program, which promotes the purchase of green products through the Environment Preferable Purchasing and Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines. Environmental information on 600 products and services is included in the Environmental Preferable Purchasing database to help consumers who wish to consume greener products and services. Therefore, Malaysian Producers and Exporters must keep themselves abreast with environmental friendly laws and compliance mechanisms to make sure that they will not fall behind.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. In our country, we are actively pursuing a policy of balancing environmental conservation with sustainable economic development. Various measures and regulations have been formulated and enforced to address environmental issues and are updated from time to time to ensure effectiveness. Environmental concerns in Malaysia initially addressed the need to control pollution. The Environmental Quality Act, enforced since April 1975 is the main legislative instrument to prevent, abate and control pollution and enhance the quality of the environment.

9. We have moved forward since the inception of the 1975 Act. For example, our Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996 – 2000) categorically states that adequate attention must be given to the protection of the environment and ecology for the sustainability of economic development. While the Eighth Malaysian Plan (2001-2005) and the

Ninth Malaysian Plan (2006-2010) which would be launched early this year, further integrate more specific strategies for environmental management and conservation. Through other initiatives, the Government also strongly encourages industries and businesses to adopt technologies which are environmental friendly.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

10. Indeed, environmental protection and conservation has to be a joint effort of the government, the private sector and the public. Together we can raise the level of awareness and encourage good environmental practices.

11. To further encourage best practices for our environment, the Government is doing its part by providing incentives such as pioneer status and income tax allowance for the manufacture and supply of environmental friendly products and services. Such incentives are given for:

- The storage, treatment and disposal of toxic and hazardous wastes,
- Waste recycling activities that are of high value added and high technology, and
- Generation of energy from renewable sources such as biomass and solar power.

12. On the other hand, the business community must also do its part by acting responsibly towards the environment. Companies should use less-polluting methods and materials and produce more environmental friendly products and services as environmental issues have become more important in international trade, than ever before.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

13. Moreover, companies must be able to manage environmental issues. Over the last few years, the ISO 14001 standard as a tool to manage environmental issues has become more important. Compared to Japan, Taiwan, North Korea and Thailand, we are still lagging behind. The Japanese believes the ISO 14001 is an effective tool towards self regulation and implements it in all sectors of industry as well as government departments and local councils. At this juncture I strongly encourage local Malaysian based companies to attain the ISO 14001 standards.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

14. We are all consumers and as such play an influential role. We can influence families, friends and the industry by supporting products and services that are less harmful to the environment; reducing waste and recycling. Currently, the recycling rate in Malaysia is only 5%. The Government hopes to increase this rate to 22% by 2020.

15. We also need the support of the media to raise awareness on environmental issues, promote and educate the importance of recycling and the importance of green products. In the final analysis it is about attitude, to ensure a higher standard of environmental protection.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

16. For this matter, I would like to congratulate

- The Business Council for Sustainable Development Malaysia (BCSDM),
- The Environmental Management and Research Association of Malaysia (ENSEARCH),
- The Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) and
- The Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MICCI), for organizing the Prime Minister's Hibiscus Award for the past 10 years and for their commitment and effort towards promoting greater environmental consciousness among businesses and industries.

17. I have been informed that the participation for this award has increased and there are noticeable improvements in their performance.

18. I am also very pleased that five State Governments are supporting the 2004/2005 Award. This clearly demonstrates the growing commitment to environmental improvement and best practices.

19. The Award has in fact helps business enterprises to identify global environmental challenges and areas for improvement. Therefore, it is my hope that the Prime Minister's Hibiscus Award would continue to grow in stature as a credible benchmark for Malaysian industries to achieve the higher standards and in value to the Malaysian industry, including achieving international recognition.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

20. Verily, environment is the nation's most valuable treasure. With that, I would like to assure that the Government will continue to support such effort. Congratulations to the Award recipients for their continued efforts and commitment.

Thank You.