



OPENING REMARKS BY YANG BERHORMAT PEHIN ORANG KAYA SERI UTAMA DATO SERI SETIA AWANG HAJI YAHYA BIN BEGAWAN MUDIM DATO PADUKA HAJI BAKAR, MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND PRIMARY RESOURCES OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM, WORLD FORESTRY DAY 2011, Dewan Setia Pahlawan, Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, 9.00 a.m, 21st March 2011.

Bismillah Hirahmanir Rahim.

Yang Mulia Awang Haji Saidin bin Salleh, the Director of Forestry as the Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the 29th World Forestry Day Celebration;

Excellencies High Commissioners and Ambassadors;

Principals, teachers and students;

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum Warrahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and a very good morning

It is indeed a great honour for me to join you all again this morning to formally launch the 29th year of World Forestry Day. It has always been a pleasure to be here, at this memorable occasion, in the same room with those who cares about the forest and the environment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we know the theme for this year's World Forestry Day - **FORESTS FOR PEOPLE** is adopted from the United Nations' theme for the International Year of Forests. As mentioned by the Director of Forestry, this reflects Brunei Darussalam's commitment and support towards the United Nations initiative in declaring this year as the International Year of Forests and to acknowledge the important roles and contribution of forest to mankind. Hopefully, this year's celebration will give more insight into the significant role of forests to us, the people and the profound impact of the people to the forests.

This theme fit very well with the initiatives taken by the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam to strengthen efforts to conserve forest as well as to strengthen research and development. Both will results in the development of products, which will be useful and beneficial for the people, such as food additives and supplements, health and medicinal products. Also recognizing the important role played by the forest, particularly, but not limited to, preventing national disaster such as flood and reducing the negative effect of climate change and global warming.

The natural ecosystem services, for which the forests are part of it, provide proper development path, opportunities and security for our investment in agricultural, aqua-culture, industrial and commercial developments. When world experts calculated the value of nature's ecosystem services, they found it was worth at least US\$36 trillion annually. That figure is strikingly close to the annual gross world product of approximately US\$39 trillion. Since 1992, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development has made formal recommendations for the proper valuation of natural services, such as the use of full-cost pricing and to change the standard of national accounts, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to reflect environmental scarcity.

Forests and people have a very strong symbiotic relationship-meaning forest and people depend on each other, derive mutual benefits, and not destruction, from that relationship. There are certainly win-win opportunities to be had in that relationship positive-sum game, in other words and not a zero-sum game. Real cases are many to support this assertion: the famous Napa valley in California; the rain forests in Costa Rica; and satochi-satoyama (or country-side initiatives) in Japan are to name a few.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam remains committed to retain Brunei Darussalam within the top ten of forested nations in the world. With this, we want to demonstrate once again our dedication and commitment to conserve our natural heritage while at the same time, pursuing our national agenda of incremental economic development. We have adopted an integrated and wider approach to respond to the global concerns through the existing forest resources policies and institutional capacities in natural resources management. We also have adopted a holistic and participatory approach through community building or intense partnership for the benefits of every sector and society in this country.

Brunei Darussalam commits 58% of her overall area to The Heart of Borneo initiatives and this indicates our seriousness in ensuring the environment is protected and the country remains clean and green. The Brunei Darussalam's Heart of Borneo initiative, as provided for by its project implementation framework, also responds very well to secure the protective, productive and socio-economic functions of forests. Its interdisciplinary approach will link other stakeholders that are naturally connected to our forests.

We intend to strengthen our resource management regime at the national level as well as at the sub-regional level. Our diplomatic or trans-border co-operative efforts with our neighbouring states will be beneficial not only to Brunei Darussalam natural ecosystems but for the whole island of Borneo. Brunei Darussalam's Heart of Borneo initiatives does not intend to stop the utilization of natural wealth. As such, it will encourage science-based utilization approaches that will result in sustainable production of forest goods and services.

As we implement the Heart of Borneo strategies, new prospects and economic opportunities will be opened for investments without compromising the integrity of our natural ecosystem. In line with the identification of new opportunities in the forestry sector, we intend to increase significantly the forest areas for conservation purposes focusing on the need for ecotourism industry and sustainable uses of forest biodiversity as well as aiming to be one of the **megadiverse** countries in the world. With the proper information and technologies at hand, we believed that our biodiversity wealth will lead us to a desirable economic growth and provide the utmost benefits to the people of Brunei Darussalam.

The implementation of the Brunei Darussalam's Heart of Borneo initiatives will require active participation from every sector and society. It is designed to invite various disciplines and expertise in order to develop an integrated approach beneficial for everybody and every sector. I am certain that this is not an easy task, but with you around, we are certain that everything is doable.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us use this celebration as a venue to build up further our commitment to our natural environment. As the theme **FORESTS FOR PEOPLE** imply and to reflect on the symbiotic relationship I mentioned earlier, let us return back the favour by doing **PEOPLE FOR FORESTS** initiatives. I am encouraging everyone to do our own little ways to conserve our forests, to share resources and implement collective actions towards sustainable forest management. Let us show to the world our internal and unique capabilities in managing our natural resources.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the life of our planet and the future of our beloved country lie in our hands. As the sayings goes THERE IS NO PLANET B. With this, I am inviting you to join the legion of everyday heroes that our country needs – for the betterment of our environment and for the greater good of all.

With Kalimah Bismillahir Rahmanir Nirahim and peace and blessings be upon our prophet Mohammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, I, now, officially launch the 29th World Forestry Day.