



OPENING REMARKS BY

YANG BERTHORMAT

PEHIN ORANG KAYA SERI UTAMA

DATO SERI SETIA AWANG HAJI YAHYA BIN

BEGAWAN MUDIM DATO PADUKA HAJI BAKAR

Minister of Industry and Primary Resources

Brunei Darussalam

AT THE

**1ST MEETING OF THE EAS TRACK II STUDY GROUP ON
ENHANCING FOOD SECURITY IN THE ASIA REGION
THROUGH SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND
MARINE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

TUESDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2013

Bismillah Hirahmaneer Raheem,

Yang Mulia Dayang Hajah Hasnah Ibrahim, the
Chairperson of the Organising Committee;

Permanent Secretaries;

Deputy Permanent Secretaries;

Head of Delegates of the East Asia Summit countries;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

**Assalamualaikum Warrahmatullahi Wabarakatuh
and a pleasant good morning to all of you.**

1. First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Organizing Committee for inviting me to be the Guest of Honour and officiate the 1st Meeting of the East Asia Summit (EAS) Track II Study Group on Enhancing Food Security through Sustainable Fisheries Management and Marine Environmental Conservation, held here in Bandar Seri Begawan from the 3rd until 5th December 2013.

2. Indeed it is my great pleasure to have you all gather here in our country as you will be discussing on a topic that is critical for the future sustainability of our marine resources. I am sure that this Meeting, with your collective knowledge and expertise, can help address our challenges and concerns in sustainable fisheries management and marine environmental conservation in the East Asia region.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

3. Food security is becoming an increasing challenge faced by the international community. This is due to the growing demand for food triggered by the rise in global population; rising food and energy prices; climate change; and increasing concern over environmental impact.

4. For East Asia Summit countries, the only regional grouping to include all ASEAN countries as well as India, food security is in fact one of the central issues of the East Asia Summit. As food security interacts with almost every key priority of the East Asia Summit as well as a host of other issues including the environment, energy, climate change and economic development, the positive and negative impacts on food security should therefore be an important consideration when we further advance our key priority areas.

5. Most of the countries in the East Asia region are surrounded by water and teemed with coastal communities. Much of our population is dependent on the sea for nutrition and as well as a source of livelihood. However, factors such as unsustainable fishing practices, climate change, or pollution can have a negative effect on our marine ecosystem which can lead to the decrease in biodiversity and aquatic population.

6. Furthermore, fishing is an issue of trans-boundary nature. The action of one country may affect others as well. In this regard, it is important to ensure that this essential resource, which is shared by the region as a whole, is protected and properly managed.

7. Hence, I am happy to note that the task of this East Asia Summit Track II Study Group is to promote discussions among member countries on issues of enhancing food security through sustainable fisheries management and marine environmental conservation. I am also pleased to note that this group will be reviewing the existing regional and international mechanisms and measures on sustainable fisheries resource management and marine environmental conservation.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

8. For Brunei Darussalam, we have implemented various interventions in our effort to achieve sustainable fisheries management and marine environmental conservation. These include:

- mitigation of overfishing problem through a moratorium;

- introducing and enforcing '*mesh size*' regulations;
- zoning of fishing grounds; and
- the construction and deployment of artificial reefs in specific areas to provide fish habitat or shelter, hence conserving our fish biodiversity.

9. In January 2012, Brunei Darussalam announced the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) within the coastal areas of Brunei Waters which aims to prevent excessive fishing; enhance biodiversity of marine life; develop rehabilitation of damaged fishing grounds and coral reefs; as well as to promote the full recovery of fish stocks in the designated areas. This protection is paramount to the long-term conservation of our marine environment, which I believe can also lead to the successful development of our marine eco-tourism industry.

10. Despite those interventions, there are numbers of issues that are of concern to Brunei Darussalam in our efforts to sustainably manage our marine resources, particularly the issue on destructive fishing practices. These practices can cause great harm and damages to our marine ecosystem and our marine biodiversity and can be considered as “serious crimes” to the “rainforests of the ocean and seas”.

11. As we are on the verge of promoting and developing our marine eco-tourism, these destructive fishing practices are of major concern and in fact impediments to develop this potential sector. Perhaps, more determined, better coordinated actions and a more effective monitoring and enforcement measures are necessary.

Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen;

12. Before I end my opening address, let me once again express my appreciation to the Organizing Committee for inviting me as Guest of Honour and officiate this 1st Meeting of the East Asia Summit Track II Study Group on Enhancing Food Security through Sustainable Fisheries Management and Marine Environmental Conservation. To our international delegates, let me wish you a pleasant stay and take some time to discover our unexpected treasures in Brunei Darussalam. I wish you every success and fruitful discussions.

13. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Department of Fisheries, and other partners for successfully organizing this Meeting.

14. With the kalimah BISMILLAHIR RAHMANIR RAHIM, I hereby declare the **1ST MEETING OF THE EAST ASIA SUMMIT TRACK II STUDY GROUP ON ENHANCING FOOD SECURITY IN THE ASIA REGION THROUGH SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND MARINE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION** officially open.

Wabillahi Taufik Wal Hidayah, Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

Thank you for your attention.