



OPENING REMARKS

**YANG BERHORMAT
DATO SERI SETIA AWANG HAJI ALI BIN APONG
MINISTER OF PRIMARY RESOURCES AND TOURISM**

PROMOTION OF THE BRUNEI DIVING PACKAGE

SERASA SPORTS COMPLEX, MUARA

12th July 2017

Bismillah hir Rahman nir Rahim

Yang Berhormat Awang Haji Sabli bin Haji Arshad as the President of Association of Travel Agents in Brunei;

Yang Berhormat Pengiran Haji Mohammed bin Pengiran Haji Osman@Othman;
Permanent Secretaries;

Brunei Tourism Board Members;

Deputy Permanent Secretary;

Your Excellencies;

Our Special Guests from Australia led by Mr Francis Wong, National President of Australia-Brunei Darussalam Business Council and his delegation;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

A very good morning and salam sejahtera.

1. It gives me great pleasure to be here this morning to officiate the promotion of the “Brunei Diving Package”.
2. The diving industry in Brunei has been established since 2010 with 3 licensed dive operators.
3. Diving has always been one of the activity-based tourism offerings, hence, we want to intensify our promotional efforts in making Brunei as one of the preferred diving destinations in South East Asia. There are more than 60 pristine diving sites including some 30 shipwrecks, beautiful coral reefs, rich marine life and rare macro-critters which makes Brunei a very exciting diving destination. In fact, now Brunei has been gaining popularity on muck diving, which is known to attract the high income and experienced divers. With over 410 coral species and 700 different species of reef fish diversity, Brunei’s diving industry prides itself on its continuous marine conservation efforts as Brunei’s coral life is considered to be one of the healthiest in the world. For long term sustainability of the diving industry, we all have a role to actively conserve the corals reefs, and its marine life.

4. Over the years, the dive industry in Brunei has grown quite steadily and we hope that this will continue to grow even more by 2020. According to the statistics provided by our dive operators, there were over 10,000 divers recorded between the years 2010 to 2017, which estimates to 1,400 divers per year with 38% from tourist divers overseas. Major source markets of the tourist divers are from Malaysia and Singapore, which account for nearly 40% of the market share, whilst other divers come from Europe, Australia, United Kingdom and as well as the Far East. Divers spend on average about B\$1,500.00 per person per package and stay about 6 days. The estimated revenue generated by the diving industry is B\$800,000.00. This, I believe has room to grow and can contribute more to the economy.

5. To achieve our vision of 450,000 inbound tourist arrivals by air into Brunei by the year 2020, the Tourism Development Department has set to achieve 5,000 tourist divers per year. For this to happen, there needs to be concerted effort amongst the dive operators, travel agents and airlines in their promotional activities internationally to attract new and repeat divers. Divers who come to Brunei are mostly experienced and in search for a dive sites which is still pristine, undiscovered, not overcrowded or overpopulated with tourists.

6. We realize that Diving is a niche market that requires a great deal of promotion to ensure growth of this sector. Hence, cross-selling and cross-promotion of packages of diving and non-diving packages is crucial and should be further enhanced to include other tourism products and experiences such as Temburong, Bandar Seri Begawan or Kampong Ayer Packages.

7. To promote diving successfully and remain competitive amongst dive sites within the region, we need to feature new developments and exciting products, ensure high quality in the services offered by our dive operators. It is also very important to not compromise on the safety standards and that proper procedures must be in place, monitored and maintained at all times.

8. The Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism through the Tourism Development Department has worked very closely with Dive Operators, Marine Department, Royal Brunei Navy, the Association of Travel Agents (ATAB) and Brunei Association of Hotels (BAH). These various stakeholders are also important in ensuring that proper procedures and well-maintained infrastructure are in place for all our divers. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank them for their endless support and contribution on these exciting dive packages.

9. The Government believes that Diving sector will continue to assist in our efforts to create a strong, diversified and sustainable economy. We applaud the dive operators on their continuous efforts on making a positive impact on the economy, as this enables us to move closer to the diversification goal of Wawasan 2035 of His Majesty's Government.

With that I end with, Wabillahi taufiq wal hidayah wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi wa barakatuh

Thank you.

10. With kalimah Bismillahirrahmannirrahim I officiate the promotion of the “Brunei Diving Package 2017”.
(launching gimmick proposed-cutting ribbon)