



## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

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

**INSPIRE FORUM 2017**  
*GROWING YOUR F&B BUSINESS*  
*CHALLENGES, INNVATIONS & OPPORTUITIES*

MUTIARA BALLROOM, RADISSON HOTEL  
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Bismillah hir Rahman nir Rahim

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh

1. A very good morning to Mr Shaun Hoon, Editor of Inspire Magazine, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen. Let me first and foremost thank for inviting me here today as a Keynote Speaker to further provide input to the forum here today.

Raise your hand if you like food. Everyone has their hand up, right? Now raise your hands again if you have experienced really good fine dining in your life? And how many of those can you say was here in Brunei Darussalam? So (if ada) But (if none) it's not impossible. We can achieve it by growing the industry further.

This is why I believe it is important to raise the standard of our F&B Industry as well as the Hospitality Industry in this country. When we travel around the world, whether it be for holiday or for work, we always seek to have memorable experience each time. And the food that we consume is part of that memorable experience.

2. In Brunei Darussalam we have an eclectic mix of cuisines, from vendors selling traditional Malay food to restaurants specializing in Middle Eastern, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Korean and Western food, to name a few. The Food and Beverage sector has multiplied quite significantly over the last 3 years. New cafes and restaurants either locally owned or franchise have now opened and some incorporating Bruneian flavors and ingredients in their recipe. As the industry continues to expand businesses will need to know how to deal with a more competitive market, and this will require them to become more aware of strategies which can lead to their increased success.
  
3. With this in mind, MPRT has exciting, innovative plans for the future of this industry. I am proud to announce that we will be organizing the Brunei Gastronomic Week for the first time from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> February 2017 in conjunction with the 33<sup>rd</sup> National day. This is Brunei Tourism Board and my Ministry's initiative aimed at encouraging local restaurants to promote unique dishes which represent Brunei's identity. We believe that this strategy can be effectively used to attract tourists from around the world and therefore would like to cordially invite all the restaurants in Brunei to participate in this initiative.

Gastronomy, as the essence of culture and a major element of intangible heritage worldwide is a growing driver for tourists that remains often untapped by destinations. The interrelation between gastronomy and tourism provide a vehicle for the transmission of culture which in turn, if properly managed, enhances local economic development, sustainable practices and food experiences. Hence, gastronomy tourism, helps to brand and market destinations, as well as assists in maintaining and preserving local tradition and diversity, harnessing and rewarding authenticity. The relation

between food and culture has become a major motivation for travelers, but also a great catalyst of sustainable tourism as gastronomy tourism brings out the most authentic features of each destination.

4. For Brunei Darussalam the main purpose of the Brunei Gastronomy Week is to celebrate diverse tastes of Brunei's food past and future. The objective of the event is to celebrate Brunei and create an awareness on the Bruneian Cuisine; to encourage more hotels and restaurants to serve the Bruneian cuisines in a more sophisticated way; to further improve on the taste and elevate the presentation of Bruneian dishes to be served as part of a fine dining experience or at receptions held within or outside the country; to provide a unique Bruneian gastronomical experience to visitors within or outside Brunei.

The highlight of this Brunei Gastronomy Weeks is to promote the Brunei Bamboo Chicken as an authentic Bruneian delicacy showcasing Brunei's culinary diversity and creating awareness to Brunei's expansive gastronomy. Other Bruneian delicacies include *Acar Buah-Buahan*, *Sup Kembayau*, *Sup Tahai*, *Ambuyat*, *Soto Brunei*, *Nasi Katok*, *Daging Masak Kunyit* (Beef cooked in Tumeric) and as well as desserts such as *Wajid*, *Cendol* and *Selurut*.

5. Bruneian cuisines shouldn't just be served as part of the buffet menu, it should also be served as Canapés, Ala-carte dishes and have its own distinct identity. The importance of organizing this type of event is to promote and position Brunei Darussalam as an ideal tourist destination, and consolidate Bruneian cuisine as an added value of tourism. During this Gastronomy Week, we will also be conducting a Rating Program whereby we have identified 4 judges with different backgrounds and experiences in Service Industry to rate the signature cuisines served by each restaurant during the event.
6. I am proud to note that we have 15 participating hotels and restaurant companies and our national carrier Royal Brunei Airlines as our partners. We are pleased to note that the airlines will also be serving Brunei Cuisines during the National Day on the Regional Flights. Participating restaurants will

be promoting their own signature dishes during Gastronomy Week, whereby Brunei cuisines are served as the highlight of the buffet or Ala Carte menu.

7. As this is the first time we are organizing this event, we want to start first with a few major industry players and hope to grow this in the years to come. We would like to thank members of the Board and our partners such as the Brunei Association of Hotels, CHMP Media, Borneo Bulletin, Association of Travel Agents Brunei and Royal Brunei Airlines for their strong support as the key for generating successful gastronomic tourism products involves leadership, creativity, teamwork, long-term vision, courage and setting ambitious goals. Teamwork involves collaboration at all levels, i.e., public-private, public and private-private.

We also need to build stronger linkages between our local chefs and internationally renowned Chefs if we are to succeed in building innovative and vibrant food industry. We want to build and heighten the level of skilled personnel within the F&B industry. The Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism through the Tourism Development Department will work closely with the relevant agencies such as the Manpower Planning Council, Educational institutions, Department of Economic Planning and Development (JPKE) to support Bruneians who are driven and passionate in the culinary industry, and want to further excel and gain international experience in order to achieve world class recognition. On another note, I would like to take this opportunity to remind those involved in the F&B industry that it is important to continue practicing the highest ethical standards in food preparation. Beyond providing a palatable meal, we also urge vendors to take into consideration the nutritious value of the meals on their menu so that we can all contribute to building a healthier nation.

8. As you can see there are many exciting things happening in Brunei. The Government believes that F&B sector will continue to assist in our efforts to create a strong diverse and sustainable economy. At MPRT, we applaud the F&B industry and celebrate the positive impact which it has had on the economy, as this enables us to move closer to the diversification goal of

Wawasan 2035 of His Majesty's Government. It is my hope to see Bruneian F&B businesses flourish and expand beyond our borders, to share the best of Brunei with the rest of the world. And it is up to you to make this happen.

Wabillahi taufiq wal hidayah wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi wa barakatuh

Thank you.