



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

**Opening Ceremony International Tourism Conference & Exhibition: Tourism and Heritage: The ASEAN & Borneo  
Context**

**Tuesday, 16th January 2018, 9.00 am**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الحمد لله رب العالمين، وبه نستعين على أمور الدنيا والدين، والصلاة والسلام على  
أشرف الأنبياء والمرسلين، سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين

**PAPRSB Institute of Health Science Extension Building, UBD**

Yang Mulia Datin Dr. Dayang Hajah Anita Binurul Zahrina binti Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Wijaya Dato Seri Setia Haji Awang  
Abdul Aziz, Vice Chancellor;

Yang Mulia Dk Dr Noor Hasharina Pg Hj Hassan, Conference Chair;

Your Excellencies;  
High Commissioners and Ambassadors;  
Permanent Secretary;  
Deputy Permanent Secretary;  
Head of Departments;  
Senior Government Officers;  
Tourism Industries Partners;  
Distinguished Guests;  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

Salam sejahtera & a very good morning

1. First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Organizing Committee for inviting me as the Guest of Honour to launch the International Tourism Conference and Exhibition, with the theme "Tourism and Heritage: The ASEAN and Borneo Context".
2. The Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT) is dedicated to continue its efforts in growing the tourism sector. As one of the promising sectors for economic diversification, tourism remains to be a major contributor towards Brunei's non-oil and gas economic diversification and development.
3. Recent developments in the economy has shown a growth of entrepreneurial culture among locals in Brunei including that in the tourism sector. This is aligned with His Majesty, the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam's 2016 New Year Titah, where His Majesty highlighted on Titah, the need for a more steady and competitive economic growth and intensify efforts to increase Brunei's gross domestic product through non-oil and gas sector.
4. Tourism generates multiplier effect through job creation and growth of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMES) in Tourism Service Industries and product creation. We see this in our developing transportation, gastronomy, accommodation including homestays, recreation and entertainment, creative industry producing applications and souvenirs, guided tours and travel, and retailing sectors within the tourism industry. In the MPRT's

Strategic Plan for 2016-2020, several initiatives were identified and implemented. This includes improving the quality of tourism services and products of primary, emerging and activity based tourism products.

5. Today, we see Brunei is beginning to yield positive results from Tourism. The Tourism Development Department under the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism's data indicates that tourist arrivals is expected to increase by 10% towards the end of 2017, compared to 0.3% in 2016. This positive growth was due to new product initiatives. This includes Bandar Seri Begawan and Kampong Ayer Heritage Trails; Tutong Destination Packages; the Belait Destination Packages; the Brunei Diving Packages; the Temburong Holiday Destination Package as more recently the Brunei December Festival. By creating and promoting the primary, emerging and activity based tourism products identified in the Tourism Development Department's strategic plans and constantly improving the quality of Tourism services and products facilities we are moving towards a positive direction towards the department's aim in increasing the number of tourists into the country.
6. As reported in the Travel & Tourism: Global Economic Impact and Issues (2017) travel and tourism contributed US\$2.3 trillion and 109 million jobs worldwide in 2016. Travel and Tourism are expected to make direct contribution to GDP at an average of 3.9% per year over the next ten years. They forecasted that by 2027, Travel and Tourism is expected to support more than 380 million jobs globally, which equates to 1 in 9 of all jobs in the world and the sector is expected to contribute around 23% of total global net job creation over the next decade. Meanwhile, the total Travel & Tourism's GDP is expected to account for 11.4% of global GDP and global visitor exports are expected to account for 7.1% of total global exports. In 2017, all world sub-regions are expected to experience growth in direct Travel and Tourism GDP. South East Asia and South Asia are expected to be the fastest growing world regions with growth of around 6.5% to 7%.
7. In keeping with His Majesty, the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in his 2018 New Year Titah, where His Majesty emphasised on supporting Brunei's progress through "close cooperation between the government, the private sector, and the people as much as possible". For, it is only with this cooperation, can we generate a business and commercial climate that is much simpler and, thus at the same time, make the country that more inviting in the eyes of foreign investors. Today's event is part of an Activity Based Tourism Product where the Conference and Exhibitions brings together local and international researchers as well as different stakeholders in the Tourism sector to spur discussions on the various themes on Tourism.
8. Despite the growing competition to attract tourists and the changing trends in Tourism, MPRT continues to try to develop Brunei's tourism sector and increase visitation, practicing Sustainable tourism to balance the tourist inflows with our landscapes' carrying capacity especially in Brunei's rich rainforests. Sustainable Tourism is identified as a significant contributor "to the three dimensions of sustainable development" because it involves close linkages to other sectors and its ability to create decent jobs and generate trade opportunities. Tourism growth and sustainability should be equally reinforcing. Embedding sustainability into our tourism development is vital. The United Nations highlights "the need to support sustainable tourism activities and relevant capacity-building that promotes environmental awareness, conserve and protect the environment, respect wildlife, flora, biodiversity, ecosystems and cultural diversity, and improve the welfare and livelihoods of local communities".
9. Tourism development necessitates and must promote the inclusion of stakeholders that cuts across different sectors including local communities. Through these dialogues and collaboration between the multiple stakeholders, it can spur green and sustainable economy. This includes waste and energy reduction, biodiversity and cultural heritage conservation, poverty reduction, equality promotion, welfare improvement, protection whilst promoting our natural and cultural heritage as well as engaging and strengthening the relationship with the locals who are knowledgeable on the bio-culture of the landscape in Brunei and Southeast Asia. All these positive impacts of tourism and potential achievements are in harmony with and are encapsulated in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG 1, 3 7 and 8) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
10. Brunei's comparative advantage is its location, being in the third largest island in the world and positioned in the centre of South East Asia. Borneo is unique as it signifies three comparable ASEAN states that is rich in history, heritage and natural resources. Borneo has the potential for healthy and active eco-tourism. As part of Borneo, we share a common goal and cooperation with the other two major countries through the Heart of Borneo initiative. The Heart of Borneo promotes empowerment of locals to manage cross border or inter-border tourism. This facilitates tourism to be more attractive and accessible. The Heart of Borneo initiative also, through its people, seeks to find an equilibrium between our vibrant ecosystems including heritage with tourism development that contributes towards the economies of the three nations of Borneo.
11. The International Tourism Conference and Exhibition, through the collaboration between Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) and the Borneo Studies Network (BSN) Secretariat, supported by MPRT and Brunei Tourism Board, is another outlet for cross border collaboration and exchange of ideas on tourism trends and development. To the speakers, participants and exhibitors, I wish you a warm welcome and hope this conference offers a good

platform to generate lively involvement and discussions from all stakeholders. I hope the conference will produce new initiatives that can garner a stronger and sustainable tourism development in Brunei as well as cooperative competition and collaboration with our ASEAN and especially in Borneo neighbours.

12. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the organizing committee and all the local tourism stakeholders for their efforts in organizing this conference and exhibition this morning. Thank you to the generous sponsors of the event: Babakimpo Sdn Bhd; Total E&P Borneo BV; Big Begawan; Preston Geocem and Nusatek; and Kingston Beverages and Creamery Sdn Bhd.
13. With the Kalimah 'Bismillaah Hirrahmaaniir Rahiim' and with Salawat and Salam to our Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wassalam, May Peace Be Upon Him, it is indeed my great honour and pleasure to officially launch and declare the International Tourism Conference and Exhibition 2018, opened.

Wabillahi Taufik Wal Hidayah, Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.