



Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources

OPENING REMARKS

BY

THE HONOURABLE PEHIN ORANG KAYA SERI UTAMA

DATO SERI SETIA AWANG HAJI YAHYA BIN

BEGAWAN MUDIM DATO PADUKA HJ BAKAR

Minister of Industry and Primary Resources

Brunei Darussalam

AT THE

LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF THE

SUNGAI INGEI RESEARCH PROJECT, PHASE II

ENTITLED: FAUNAL BIODIVERSITY SURVEY IN

THE EXTENSION ZONE OF THE PROPOSED

BELAIT BASIN WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

**Indera Samudra, Grand Hall, The Empire Hotel and Country Club,
Jerudong, Brunei Darussalam.**

Wednesday, 26 Rabiulakhir 1435 / 26 February 2014.

Bismillah Hirahmaneer Raheem,

Yang Mulia Dayang Hajah Normah Suria Hayati binti Pehin Jawatan Dalam Seri Maharaja Dato Seri Utama (Dr.) Awang Haji Mohd Jamil Al-Sufri, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, Brunei Darussalam - as the Chairperson of the Organizing Committee;

The Right Honourable the Earl of Cranbrook – our Special Guest Speaker at this Ceremony;

Excellencies High Commissioners and Ambassadors; Permanent Secretaries; Deputy Permanent Secretaries; Members of the Heart of Borneo National Council; Head of Departments; Senior Officials; Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen.

***Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh* and a very good morning.**

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 for the launching ceremony of the Sungai Ingei Research Project, Phase II - entitled the **Faunal Biodiversity Survey in the Extension Zone of the Proposed Belait Basin Wildlife Sanctuary.**

2. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the Right Honourable the Earl of Cranbrook to Brunei Darussalam and express my sincere thanks and appreciation for accepting our invitation as the Special Guest Speaker today and very honoured that you could join us in our Expedition. Your experience and knowledge would be very useful to the team.

**Your Right Honourable, Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

3. It is with my great honour and pleasure to announce that the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources through the Heart of Borneo Centre will be implementing the 2nd phase of the faunal biodiversity research project at the Sungai Ingei in Ulu Belait.

4. This project is a major spin-off from the positive results of the first Sungai Ingei faunal biodiversity survey, which was sponsored by the Standard Chartered Bank Brunei Darussalam that lasted for two years, which started in 2010 and completed in 2012.

5. This time around, the 2nd phase of the faunal research project in Sungai Ingei will be funded by the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam through the Brunei

Research Council (BRC) Fund under the current 10th National Development Plan, where a total sum of about B\$1.46 million has been allocated for the implementation of this research project.

6. This research project provides data which can be used in understanding ecological balance, sustainable conservation, forest management and local community participation in what will be Brunei Darussalam's largest, multipurpose wildlife sanctuary.

7. Data collected during the 1st phase of the Sungai Ingei faunal research project revealed unequivocally, that the Sungai Ingei Conservation Forest within the Labi Hill Forest Reserve is indeed a biodiversity gem of Brunei Darussalam, a treasure house of dazzling faunal biodiversity. The survey from the 1st phase of the faunal research project in general has documented 36 species of fish; about 38 species of amphibians; 12 reptile

species; 161 species of birds; 97 species of mammals; and 42 morpho-species of spider that have yet to be indentified. Results also showed new records for Brunei Darussalam as well as species new to science.

8. The Sungai Ingei Conservation Forest and its surroundings have a great potential to become A **WILDLIFE SANCTUARY**. More expedition needs to be programmed and more studies needs to be carried out in order to obtain concrete information to qualify it to be declared as a sanctuary.

9. The long term viability and continued existence of these populations can only be ensured if the core area, which is the Sungei Ingei Conservation Forest is supported by a surrounding buffer zone, extensive enough to supply both environmental resources and sufficient gene pools to avoid inbreeding among those species that have low population densities. Predators

like wild cats are known to require extensive areas for movement and survival and camera trap data from Sungai Ingei have provided evidence where globally endangered flat-headed cat, bornean clouded leopard and the marbled cat have been recorded outside the Sungai Ingei Conservation Forest.

10. The creation of a large buffer zone would allow management of the whole area with zonation for various degrees of protection and human use, for the benefit of the ecosystem and species protection throughout the entire area.

11. We would like to move towards establishing this area as sanctuary probably known as **BELAIT BASIN WILDLIFE SANCTUARY** to include the Sungai Ingei Conservation Forest in southern Ulu Belait and northwards to include segments of Ulu Mendaram, Bukit Teraja Protection Forest and its extension where

results of biodiversity surveys shown it to be very rich in several species.

12. The proposed sanctuary illustrates one of the important principles of the Heart of Borneo initiative, which is, **forest connectivity**. The proposed Belait Basin Wildlife Sanctuary ensures that there is forest connectivity from the peat swamps of Ulu Mendaram, Bukit Teraja Protection Forest to Bukit Ulu Tutong Protection Forest as well as connectivity up to Sungai Ingei Protection Forest. Another important feature of the proposed sanctuary is that it will protect several water catchment areas such as Ulu Teraja, Ulu Belait and Ulu Ingei.

13. The proposed size of the Belait Basin Wildlife Sanctuary is 166,000 hectares - big enough to ensure long term survival for all endangered species in Sungai Ingei Protection Forest as well as other wildlife in the Belait Basin; big enough for management and protection of major water catchment areas in Brunei Darussalam; big enough for sustainable multiple-use of the sanctuary for scientific research, education, research tourism, controlled and limited eco-tourism, economic spin-offs, re-forestation and cultural events.

14. The present project will survey the faunal biodiversity richness in several parts of the proposed sanctuary, habitat usage and movements by wildlife, human practices and traditions of the indigenous people, incidence of illegal hunting and poaching and potential for limited ecotourism and research tourism.

All this information will be used to formulate a management plan for a sustainable wildlife sanctuary.

15. Lastly, once again, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the Organizing Committee for the invitation and opportunity given to me to launch this 2nd phase of the Sungai Ingei Research Project. And once again my appreciation to our Special Guest Speaker the Right Honourable the Earl of Cranbrook, as well as to all invited guests that are present at this morning's ceremony.

With the Kalimah '***Bismillaah Hirrahmaaniir Rahiim***' and with the blessings of Allah and Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alahi Wassalam, Peace be Upon Him, it is indeed my great honour and pleasure to launch the "**2nd Phase of the Sungai Ingei Research Project entitled the Faunal Biodiversity Survey in**

**the Extension Zone of the Proposed Belait Basin
Wildlife Sanctuary.**

**Wabillahi Taufik Wal Hidayah,
Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.**