

## **OPENING REMARKS**

**YAB DATUK PATINGGI (DR.) ABANG HAJI ABDUL RAHMAN ZOHARI BIN  
TUN DATUK ABANG HAJI OPENG  
CHIEF MINISTER OF SARAWAK  
INTERNATIONAL BIOMASS CONFERENCE MALAYSIA 2017 (IBCM 2017)  
'BIOMASS INDUSTRY REVOLUTION 4.0: INNOVATION-LED BIO-BASED ECONOMY'  
19 & 20 OCTOBER 2017  
BORNEO CONVENTION CENTRE KUCHING**

### **Salutation:**

The Honourable Dato' Sri Hajah Nancy Shukri, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department

The Honourable Datuk Haji Ahmad Haji Maslan, Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry

H.E. Maria Castillo Fernandez, Ambassador and Head of Delegation, European Union to Malaysia

H.E. Dr. Yu Hyun-seok, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Malaysia

H.E. Mrs. Karin Mössenlecher, Ambassador (Designate) of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Malaysia

Distinguished guests

Members of the media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning.

1. It is a pleasure and privilege to be here today with all the distinguished guests and participants of this Conference which brings together key local and international players from the entire biomass value chain, from upstream to downstream, manufacturer to trader and from many other supporting industries that are part of the value chain.

2. For first-time delegates to Sarawak, especially those that flew in specifically for the event, I would like to welcome you all to this beautiful State in Malaysia and thank you for supporting the International Biomass Conference 2017 (IBCM 2017). We are happy to have you here with us today.

Ladies and Gentleman,

3. This year, International Biomass Conference Malaysia is held in Sarawak as part of our long standing collaboration with Agensi Inovasi Malaysia in the biomass development. The Sarawak Biomass Industry Development Plan was launched by the Right Honourable Datuk Patinggi Mohd Najib Tun Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia in 2016. The Sarawak Biomass Industry Development Plan, is an initiative under National Biomass Strategy 2020 driven by the State Planning Unit, Chief Minister's Department. National Biomass Strategy 2020 in 2013 highlighted Sarawak as one of the potential State that could help realise the goal of making Malaysia a regional premier biomass processing hub.

4. As such in 2015, we started working with Agensi Inovasi Malaysia to understand the realistic biomass opportunity for Sarawak through a feasibility study led by a Steering Committee made up of relevant State Government representatives chaired by the Director of State Planning Unit. The study helped us gauge the real biomass volumes available, the cost and eventually the mix of potential sustainable downstream activities that benefit the people of the State, creating real social and economic impact.

5. The assessment showed that Sarawak has tremendous potential to leverage its biomass toward generating RM 4.8 billion in additional GNI, 30,000 jobs and RM 18 billion in investment opportunities throughout the entire biomass value chain. This is Sarawak's unique opportunity to become the leader and potentially Asia's first integrated biomass cluster, or BioHub as we have other existing bio-resources that could be integrated to compliment and exemplify the concept of a sharing economy.

6. Sarawak has the intention to diversify our economy through Bio-economy, with biomass as an integral part of that transition. As such, a detailed roadmap and an action plan will be implemented by a Federal-State Taskforce led by State Planning Unit. Sarawak can host ten biofuels or biochemical plants in various stages of the development, mobilising 6 million dry tonnes

out of the 19 million dry tonnes of biomass in four specific clusters of Bintulu, Miri, Tanjung Manis and Kuching in next 10-15 years.

7. We understand capturing this opportunity is by no means easy but we are in the best position to realise our potential and support Malaysia's aspiration in NBS2020. Sarawak is a big land mass, so the state government in collaboration with the Federal Government must continue to improve the industrial infrastructure, transportation networks and logistics system to meet the demands of the new growing industries like biomass and all businesses alike.

8. With the introduction of the State's Digital Economy initiatives, SBIDP will be strengthened through our holistic approach towards digitisation that will impact all parts of the value chain affecting key areas such as agriculture where activities like precision agriculture, use of drones and all other related enablers will help solve long standing issues in the agroindustry such as yields, shortage of labour, efficiencies and more importantly improve overall mobilisation cost of resources such as biomass, enabled through new technological breakthroughs. The greening of Sarawak's industrialisation efforts is therefore a paradigm shift for us, as we have traditionally been mere exporters of raw natural resources namely timber, oil and gas and CPO.

9. We are confident that a realistic and well-executed biomass industry development can contribute towards Sarawak becoming a high-income state with a more balanced development across the state. With that, Sarawak can help Malaysia position itself as the Regional Biomass Processing Hub for High Value Downstream applications. The journey for the State has just started, the commitment has never been stronger and we are on the right track in moving towards the target but we need all the support and collaboration opportunities both by local and international stakeholders to make this race exciting and fruitful for all.

10. Today, I am able to witness these interests turn into actions both by the Dutch and South Korean governments, showcasing and bringing companies and sharing with us how we could work together and co-develop this industry for Sarawak. I would encourage all local Sarawakian

companies and stakeholders to start thinking out of the box to help us move out of the paradox and move us into a new era of competitiveness that is highly localised but with global standards. I welcome all interested parties to be with us in this journey.

Ladies and Gentleman,

11. We recognise the growing importance of biomass industry across sectors within various type of applications and outputs. With the opportunities available in this Biomass sector, each and every one of us should be focused and build on our niche and competencies, while not forgetting the importance of collaboration in the process. There is always scope for strategic cooperation and collaboration among countries, businesses and academia, because this industry will not be possible without a strong ecosystem throughout its value chain.

12. I am confident that through strategic collaboration we can achieve much more. The green economy aspiration could not be achieved by any one country. It is a world-wide endeavour and will need concerted global effort. Now, it is not merely an option but has become a responsibility of all parties involved. Transition to a greener economy is not even a question anymore. It will require an integrated commitment and innovative business models in order for it to be part of the mainstream economy. We can see the emerging trends across the world, where demand for sustainable goods and services is increasing significantly. This in itself presents a huge potential for generating additional opportunities for the global business community.

Ladies and gentlemen,

13. For local stakeholders, we should be maximising the value of our biomass resources and not just turning it into low value products. Depending on locations in Malaysia, there could be different ideal portfolio of uses. The existence of all kinds of biomass industries in Malaysia is what will make us unique and increases the scalability of the industry. Bioenergy, Biofuels, Biochemical and even Biomass based end products like bioplastics are all possibilities for the biomass industry

and we should be aiming and leveraging these resources to grow our manufacturing and services sector and optimising the highest aggregated value these industries can bring to the country.

14. As for our international biomass community, we assure you Sarawak is committed to bringing the biomass industry to the next level. Sarawak can be your destination for forging partnerships and alliances, as we have the drive and capabilities to realise our potential and more importantly the biomass resources become a platform for many bio based businesses to implement their regional and global expansion initiatives.

15. Given the enormous amount of biomass that we have, we are blessed to be given this opportunity, and we owe it to ourselves to embrace the responsibility of building a green economy for the future of our next coming generations. Let me reassure you that Sarawak is very committed towards the aspiration to become the Regional Biomass Processing Hub for downstream biomass activities.

16. With Malaysia's multi biomass feedstock proposition, geographic location, established infrastructure, facilities and amenities from existing industries like oil and gas, forestry, as well as the drive by the government and private sector, we are well positioned to carve a niche in the industry. New biomass-based industries will not only create additional income for Sarawak, but will also generate high-income paying jobs for our people.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

17. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the State Planning Unit, Chief Minister's Department Sarawak, Agensi Inovasi Malaysia, Prime Minister's Department, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Malaysian Investment Development Authority and all other supporting parties involved in making this a successful conference. This is the first time that Sarawak is hosting the International Biomass Conference Malaysia and I am encouraged by the

turnout and the keen interest that local and international communities have shown for the State's agenda to develop a sustainable Bio-economy leveraging the various biomass feedstock available.

18. Once again, it is my pleasure and privilege to be here with all of you at this Conference today. I would like to congratulate the organisers for such a great Conference. I hope that all the participants will gain a lot of benefits and please maximise the networking opportunities from this Conference, and I wish you all the best.

Thank you.