

**Opening Address and Official Launching
of
The Borneo International Water and Wastewater
Exhibition and Conference (BIWWEC) 2022
'Sustainability & Resilience
Through Smart Technology and Innovation'
17th – 19th October 2022
Imperial Hotel Kuching
By
YAB Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul
Rahman Zohari bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg
The Premier of Sarawak**

Salutations

The Honourable Deputy Premiers

The Honourable Ministers

*The Honourable Datuk Amar Mohamad Abu Bakar Marzuki, The
State Secretary of Sarawak*

The Honourable Deputy Ministers

Ir. Chang Kuet Shian, Organising Chairman of BIWWEC 2022

Distinguished Speakers and Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamualaikum,
Salam Sejahtera,
Salam Ibu Pertiwiku, and
Good Morning

INTRODUCTION

1. First of all I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all you, especially those from outside Sarawak who are present here this morning to share your experience, knowledge and expertise on how to make clean water accessible to all, how to manage our water resources to ensure its sustainability and how to manage waste water so that it can be useful again to human and not harm the environment.

2. Water connects the environment with our livelihoods. Improving access to clean water, especially in areas vulnerable to water scarcity, alleviates poverty, improves health and is a precondition for improved quality of life. In July 2010, the United Nations passed a Resolution explicitly recognizing the human right to water and sanitation. The Resolution requires all UN member states to provide financial resources, technology, and capacity to help countries provide safe, clean, accessible, and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all.

3. Beyond the traditional use of water, now we have to look at water as a resource towards decarbonisation as the world attempts to find an alternative source of energy to fossil fuel to reverse climate change.

4. We are also looking at water as an economic enabler and therefore, the access to water is

CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Ladies and gentlemen,

5. Millions of people die every year, including millions of children, from water-related diseases such as malaria and diarrhoea. Water is essential not only to health, but also to poverty reduction, food security, peace and human rights, ecosystems, and education. The lack of clean water and proper sanitation undermines prosperity and efforts towards a more sustainable future.

6. As populations grow and natural environments become degraded, ensuring everyone has safe and sufficient water supplies is becoming increasingly challenging. A major part of the solution is to produce less pollution and improve the way we manage wastewater.

7. Across the world, safely reused wastewater is grossly undervalued as a potentially affordable and sustainable source of water, energy, nutrients, and other recoverable materials.

8. There are many treatment processes and operational systems that use wastewater in municipal activities, sustainable agriculture, energy production and industrial development.

9. The positive impacts on water quality and supply by increasing wastewater recycling and safe reuse will drive progress in public health, environmental sustainability and economic development by providing new business opportunities and creating more 'green' jobs.

10. Wastewater is a valuable source of both water and nutrient content for crops, contributing to water and food security and livelihood improvements. Improved wastewater management can improve the health of agricultural workers by reducing the risk of pathogen exposure.

11. Industry is a major water consumer and wastewater discharger. Many businesses are now using some of their 'process water' for cooling or heating, and using rainwater for toilet flushing, irrigation or vehicle washing.

12. Water and wastewater management is at the core of sustainable development and is critical for socio-economic development, healthy ecosystems and for human survival itself. It is vital for reducing the diversion of global resources to stem the spread of water-borne diseases and improving the health, welfare and productivity of populations.

AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Ladies and gentlemen,

13. Water is also at the heart of adaptation to climate change, serving as the crucial link between the climate system, human society and the environment.

14. The need for clean energy alternatives to reduce the impact of climate change encourages us to look at hydrogen as a potential new energy carrier. Hydrogen is now viewed by governments and industries as a viable alternative to the traditional fossil fuel-based energy industries.

15. Sarawak is currently Malaysia's largest provider of renewable energy for a population of almost 3 million across Sarawak and parts of Indonesian Borneo in West Kalimantan.

16. In fact, 70% of the total generation mix is from our hydropower resources, which can be harnessed to produce low carbon hydrogen.

17. This provides an ideal setting for enabling the hydrogen economy in Sarawak and hence hydrogen research study was initiated as pioneering steps to explore, innovate and produce green hydrogen as a solution for the commercial and public application of hydrogen and fuel cell technology.

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

18. The economic transition to an equitable, net-zero emission and sustainable future is both one of the most pressing challenges and greatest responsibilities we have in front of us as a society today.

19. More than ever, we seek evidence-based insights, high quality data and advanced analytics to support strategies when linking sustainability and performance.

20. Data is an increasingly valuable resource, dubbed as the new oil, in fact a renewable resource, that can provide economic value and drive environmental & energy sustainably.

21. Big data will play a vital role in environmental and energy sustainability protecting the environment and natural resources and assessing environmental risks. Take Aqueduct for example. This water-risk mapping tool was designed to monitor and calculate water risks around the world, relying on big data, such as water quantity, quality, and other changing regulatory issues.

22. Big data will enable environmental sustainability and security by giving the world the opportunity to better understand its demand for energy, food, and water.

23. Among the many benefits of big data for sustainability, its function in the enforcement of regulatory practices around the world in keeping track of their emissions, reaching renewable energy goals as they raise standards of sustainability in all sectors.

24. For example, it takes 2,000 litres of water to produce the food necessary to feed one person for a single day. The application of big data for agriculture is critical, given the average rate of resource consumption and growing scarcity. Big data is indispensable in managing the environmental and energy sustainability challenges and issue.

25. Sustainable water management by integrating digital solution is an ideal strategy for maintaining future water resources that include increasing water supply and managing the way we use freshwater to sustain economic growth for current and future generations.

26. With increasing complexity in water systems and management, there is growing potential and need to adopt transformative digital solutions. Digital technologies offer unlimited potential to transform water systems, helping utilities become more resilient, innovative, and efficient, and in turn helping them build a stronger and more economically viable foundation for the future.

27. Exploiting the value of data, automation, and artificial intelligence allows water utilities to extend water resources, reduce non-revenue water, expand infrastructure life cycles, provide the basis for financial security, and more.

28. In addition, digital technology will not be enough to resolve the water-related challenges, both private and public sector will need to bring in a culture of innovation while working out how to scale their digital technology solutions.

29. Digital technologies and innovations are at the forefront of solving water quantity and quality challenges. Solutions such as artificial intelligence and blockchain are helping to vastly improve our understanding of surface and groundwater supplies, how infrastructure is managed and how communication with customers and consumers on water quantity and quality is managed.

30. Bearing the theme of "Sustainability & Resilience Through Smart Technology and Innovation", I am sure The Borneo International Water and Wastewater Exhibition and Conference (BIWWEC) 2022 will achieve the aim to work on active solution and synergistic efforts to overcome challenges of water and wastewater needs in Borneo and eventually benefit everyone from many fruitful and enriching discussion.

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

31. Conserving water is important because it keeps water pure and clean while protecting the environment. Conserving water means using our water supply wisely and responsibly.

32. As every individual depends on water for livelihood, we must learn how to keep our limited supply of water pure and away from pollution.

33. It takes both public awareness and effective education as well as the necessary laws to protect water from unjudicial use. We should learn from the water crises in other countries so that we can appreciate the benefits of water and do not arbitrarily pollute

our rivers to ensure the sustainability of our water supply in the future is more secure.

34. The challenge for governments, not only in developing regulations but all policy instruments, is to move toward more results-oriented policies. Regulatory drafting, implementation, monitoring, and enforcement should be designed to maximise the potential for target groups to achieve substantive policy goals.

SARAWAK WAY OF MOVING FORWARD

35. Through its Post Covid-19 Development Strategy 2030 (PCDS 2030), Sarawak aims to balance economic growth with a responsible approach towards utilisation of natural resources and integration of climate adaptation and mitigation plans. This approach prioritises the sustainable use of land and ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs while preserving the health of the land and ocean ecosystem.

36. In line with sustainable development principles and commitments towards climate adaptation, various initiatives will be implemented such as to maintain more than 50% forest and tree cover, establish an integrated watershed management policy to conserve and protect water resources, increase urban green spaces and prioritise green mobility solutions, including developing fuel cell technology.

37. There are many factors contributing to the state of the present water supply systems issues, and they include inadequate treatment plant capacities, insufficient raw water sources,

inefficient water treatment processes, inadequate treated water storages, aged pipelines, lack of interlinked networks, poor soil conditions, and high non-revenue water amongst others.

38. To address these issues holistically and systematically, Sarawak Government has introduced **Water Supply Grid System** spanning across the whole State of Sarawak for the purpose of providing reliable, sustainable and resilient water supply to address the short term, medium term and long term demands towards the year 2070.

39. An initial funding of RM4 billion is allocated for the implementation of the first phase of the programme that shall be in place by 2025.

40. Meanwhile, the state is also implementing the Sarawak Alternative Water Supply Programme or SAWAS to serve isolated communities with standalone treated water supply systems.

CONCLUSION

41. Finally, I want to express my deepest appreciation to the Ir. Chang Kuet Shian the Chairman of The Malaysian Water Association Cawangan Sarawak cum Organising Chairman of BIWWEC 2022 and The Organizing Committee, strategic partners and sponsors, respective Ministries and Government agencies as well as Government – Linked Companies and private sectors who have worked very hard to make The Borneo International Water

and Wastewater Exhibition and Conference (BIWWEC) 2022 a reality.

42. With this, ladies, and gentlemen, I hereby officially declare open The Borneo International Water and Wastewater Exhibition and Conference (BIWWEC) 2022 and wish you all very fruitful discussion and networking during the programme.

Thank you.