



SPEECH BY

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IN CONJUNCTION WITH

**MAJLIS AMANAT PERDANA YAB PREMIER SARAWAK
2024**

**“Building A Prosperous, Inclusive and Sustainable
Sarawak”**

AT

BCCK KUCHING

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Salutation

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

Selamat Sejahtera, Salam Sarawakku Sayang dan Salam Sarawak Maju Makmur

Alhamdulillah, syukur kita ke hadrat Allah SWT kerana dengan izinNya dapat kita bersama-sama berkumpul dalam Majlis Amanat Perdana tahun baru 2024.

Pada petang ini, saya akan berkongsi mengenai perancangan dan hala tuju Kerajaan Sarawak ke arah mencapai status ekonomi maju berpendapatan tinggi menjelang 2030. In our pursuit of progress, we must be clear and mindful of our roles to make things happen at pace.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Challenges

1. The world continues to undergo dynamic changes, resulting in increasing global uncertainties with unprecedented rates of change and evolution that offer both new opportunities and challenges. Case in point, the increase in COVID-19 cases sparked renewed fears of a return to the pandemic

restrictions, and economic and geopolitical uncertainties mean a more cautious view of the future by economists.

2. Whether it be the global shifts in the climate or the ongoing conflicts somewhere on the globe like the Ukraine-Russia and the Palestine-Israel conflict, we must adapt, evolve, and rise to the occasion to remain competitive and relevant while creating opportunities for growth, economic security, and sustainable development.
3. 2023 also marked significant milestones in Sarawak's history where we celebrated the 60th year of Sarawak's independence and being accorded high-income status by the World Bank, just two of the highlights for the year.
4. Sarawak continues to demonstrate resilience, innovation, and a collective commitment to progress. Our revenue reached a record high of RM13.1 billion in 2023. Our businesses and entrepreneurs demonstrated their resilience and agility, finding new paths for growth in this challenging landscape. This is a testament to the ability of Sarawak and her people to emerge ever stronger in the face of economic challenges.

5. Based on our successes in 2023, I believe that 2024 will be an even greater chapter in our collective journey – a chapter that holds the promise of continuous prosperity and growth for Sarawak. Of course, to achieve our ambitious 2030 target, we must embrace another year of challenge and continue to work tirelessly together.
6. I am proud to share with you that we are beginning our new year with a remarkable start. Amanah Saham Sarawak (ASSAR) which is the Sarawak flagship unit trust fund, announced its first dividend distribution of 2.5 cents per unit, after a 9-year break.
7. What is most encouraging about this interim dividend distribution is that it was accomplished just a year after the completion of the ASSAR restructuring in October 2022. This dividend was based on income generated in the span of just 6 months, after the fund was successfully invested under its new investment strategy and asset allocation mix.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. As a gentle reminder, this year marks the penultimate year before the end of the 12th Malaysia Plan. Counting down, we are left with 7 years to achieve the Post COVID-19 Development Strategy (PCDS) 2030 target and our

common goal; to build a thriving society and a prosperous Sarawak that leaves no one behind, enjoyed by everyone for generations to come.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Prospects

9. In the last year, I have been invited to share our journey and talk about our approach to Green Economy in more international forums and stages than ever before; for example, in Europe, Japan, and our neighbours Indonesia to name just a few.
10. Indeed, Sarawak has planted herself in the global consciousness and the center of global conversations due to our steadfast and firm commitment to sustainable development.
11. On the digital front, the digital economy is estimated to contribute, on average 24.3% to the world economy in 2025. Taking the IMF's latest GDP estimates of USD104 trillion, this would mean an approximate contribution of USD25 trillion from the digital economy alone.

12. If Sarawak is able to tap just 0.1% of the global digital economy GDP, this is equivalent to almost USD25 billion or RM113 billion contribution to Sarawak's GDP.
13. To fully take advantage of this opportunity, I reiterate the importance of embracing digital technologies, particularly generative Artificial Intelligence to drive our economy towards accelerated sustainable development. I would like to see an AI chatbot to be implemented to provide a responsive virtual assistant for high-impact services.
14. Digitalisation is not an option; it is mandatory. We must work in tandem with global digital technological advancements to foster a conducive environment for economic development and innovation. As such, the Sarawak Government is actively prioritising the enhancement of our digital preparedness. This includes bolstering digital infrastructure, improving connectivity achieving 99.9% internet coverage by 2030, fostering digital and data analytics talent, incorporating cloud computing, strengthening our cybersecurity, and effectively managing and monetising our data.
15. Our efforts to improve our Digital Economy include enacting the Electronic Sarawak Government Activities Ordinance 2022, making online service delivery legally recognised, and

the Data Sharing Policy and Sarawak Government Activities Ordinance 2022, enabling digitalisation of government service delivery, facilitating digital transformation in Sarawak.

16. Under the Sarawak Digital Economy Blueprint 2030, the Sarawak Government also aims to accelerate the transformation of the public sector and services by focusing on increasing the ease of doing business and achieving 100% end-to-end online services. This will enable the majority of our tasks to be performed online and the public can conveniently access online services anywhere, anytime.
17. To foster a more accessible, efficient, and transparent government that meets the evolving needs in the digital age, we shall adopt a whole-of-government approach enabling interagency processes and data to be connected and shared for enhanced planning and decision-making.
18. In 2018, Sarawak started the Sarawak ID initiative. This Single Sign-On service provides convenience and has reduced the hassle of remembering multiple passwords for different accounts of Sarawak Government online services. The Sarawak ID will be enhanced to incorporate facial recognition to accelerate and simplify access to these services.

19. The Sarawak ID will be further enhanced and transformed to become SarawakPass, similar to Singapore's SingPass – the single trusted digital identity used by Sarawakians to access a wide array of services, including financial services, private services and public services such as the Autonomous Rapid Transit system.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

20. Increased digitalisation carries increased cybersecurity risks. According to the European Union Cybersecurity Report, cybercrime cost the world USD6 trillion in 2021. In Malaysia, cybercrimes cost us RM600 million in 2022, mostly from fraud cases.
21. The losses from the threat of cybersecurity attacks go beyond just monetary in value, it will also disrupt our peaceful and harmonious community and a real threat to our national security. Therefore, it is crucial for Sarawak to be prepared for cyberattacks and work towards protecting our digital data and services.
22. For example, businesses often store vast amounts of sensitive data, including personal and financial information, on servers that are at risk of unauthorised access, data breaches, and cyber-attacks. For this reason, the private

sector and the government must collaborate to share threat intelligence, report incidents, and collectively respond to cyber threats.

23. As part of this preparation, the Sarawak Multimedia Authority has established a Cyber Security Unit to provide cybersecurity services, including addressing security solutions for critical infrastructures such as power plants and hospitals, and guidance to the public sector, private sector, and the general public at large.
24. I am confident that growing digital businesses while strengthening digital security will support and expand Sarawak's global competitiveness and attract more investments and partnerships.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sustainable Development Goals

25. Sarawak is committed to promoting the green economy by embarking on several initiatives, leveraging our abundant natural resources and renewable energy. Capitalising on renewable hydropower, the Sarawak Government is able to balance between ensuring energy security and environmental sustainability in driving our socio-economic

transformation. At least 60% of our power installed capacity mix is currently from renewable sources.

26. Taking advantage of the many rivers in the deep interiors of Sarawak, we see an opportunity to increase electricity access to rural communities using the cascading dam concept. The cascading dams will rely on river flow and water falling through a turbine. I believe this approach will bring life to the river, enriching river habitats, minimising environmental and social impact, and help control the movement of crocodiles. This demonstrates new, innovative, and environmentally friendly solutions for harnessing hydropower for the betterment of Sarawak.
27. Our utilisation of renewable hydropower for green hydrogen production through electrolysis has made us the regional leader in the green energy transition. Other states and countries are looking to us as role a model for their sustainable development efforts.
28. I am proud that Sarawak Economic Development Corporation has inked an agreement with two Japanese firms – Sumitomo Corp and ENEOS for the H2ornbill project to move forward with the project to produce 90,000 tonnes per annum of green hydrogen in Bintulu.

29. Sarawak Energy is also in collaboration with three South Korean multinationals, namely, Samsung Engineering, Posco, and Lotte Chemical to develop a green hydrogen derivative facility known as the H2biscus project, which has now progressed to the front-end engineering design stage.
30. Together, these two projects have the potential to produce up to 238,000 tonnes of green hydrogen per annum, generating an estimated additional RM2.4 billion to Sarawak's gross domestic product by 2030.
31. I believe this is just the beginning of a hydrogen future for Sarawak. To accelerate the pace and gain more momentum, a robust hydrogen supply chain is crucial. I am happy that the two mega hydrogen plants will enable the creation of new hydrogen-based industries such as the manufacturing of electrolysers, fuel cells and kick-start the green chemicals industry.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

32. I have always asserted that the key to unlocking the green economy and adding value to our green initiative is through research and development. For example, there is a huge potential for microalgae to change the energy landscape by

becoming the renewable feedstock for biofuels, pharmaceuticals, and food supplements.

33. I am proud that Sarawak Biodiversity Centre in collaboration with Sarawak Energy Berhad, Chitose Laboratory of Japan, and ENEOS Corp has established the world's largest mass microalgae biomass production demonstration facility, spanning about five hectares in Sejingkat, Kuching, utilising flue gas from the coal power plant, unlocking vast product development potential in the food and pharma industry.
34. Microalgae also offer great potential to produce crude algae oil (CAO) used in the production of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). SEDC Energy in collaboration with PETRONAS Research has a demonstration plant growing a strain of microalgae that can potentially produce large amounts of CAO to be processed into SAF. If successful and cost-competitive, a larger commercial-scale facility will be built near Bintulu to utilise the carbon emissions from the industry as a feed stream, simultaneously reducing the overall emissions.
35. Other breakthroughs can also be discovered via more intensive research and development activities in Sarawak. I would like to see the products from all the current and

future demonstration facilities and plants to be analysed and characterised in our Sarawakian research centers to further the promised discovery and innovation for the future of Sarawak.

36. Clean Energy and the Energy Transition is the key to Sarawak's future economic development and growth. To support our efforts in energy transition, the Ministry of Energy and Environmental Sustainability Sarawak will formulate the Energy Transition Policy and Road Map for Sarawak. Once completed, targeted by the end of this year, the roadmap will be a reference point for us to pave the way toward a secure, equitable, and sustainable energy future for Sarawak.
37. To address issues of climate change and waste management, Sarawak will form strategic partnerships to explore the various waste-to-energy technologies and practices to adopt and replace current waste management processes.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

38. Infrastructure development has always been a key priority forming a critical part of the PCDS 2030. Infrastructure development improves the well-being and livelihoods of our

people and acts as a catalyst for economic growth, attracting potential investors.

39. Sarawak has taken a decisive move to acquire MASwings Sdn. Bhd. signifying our commitment in enhancing air connectivity. It is a vital asset to complement our transportation and logistics network and develop Sarawak as an aviation hub by expanding MASwings's services to cater for regional routes with flight duration of 6 to 7 hours. Our Sarawak-owned airline will make air travel more affordable for a broader segment of the population.
40. Enhanced air connectivity will unlock additional prospects in trade, commerce, and tourism, effectively showcasing Sarawak as a premier destination ripe for investment, sustainable tourism, business, and commerce.
41. Similarly, the Sarawak Government's undertaking to assume control of the Bintulu Port Authority aims to streamline Sarawak's ports and infrastructure in a more synergistic manner, accelerating economic development. As you read in the news, the Federal Minister of Transport, YB Anthony Loke came to Kuching to meet with Deputy Premier Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas to discuss the handover of Bintulu Port Authority, which will take place in

June this year. This shows the Federal Government's commitment to Sarawak.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Private Sector as Engine of Economic Growth

42. In the pursuit of economic prosperity, the private sector – entrepreneurs, businesses, SMEs and investors hold the key to unlocking new opportunities, innovation, new job creation, and driving cost efficiencies.
43. Robust policies, enhanced by efficient logistics, transportation, energy, and digital infrastructure are the backbone of a thriving economy, creating an environment conducive to private sector expansion and economic opportunities while cultivating a versatile workforce.
44. Collaboration between the private and public sectors is essential for inclusive growth, bringing together the strengths of both parties by leveraging public resources and private expertise to deliver results efficiently. For example, the public sector provides the framework and policies, while the private sector brings innovation, project management experience, and operational efficiency to ensure successful implementation.

45. Partnerships and collaborations in R&D will encourage and accelerate research and development with government-sponsored research complemented by private-sector investments and market commercialisation. This will lead to the development of new technologies, products, and services that drive economic growth and enhance competitiveness.
46. A month ago, I was in Dubai attending the 2023 United Nations Framework on Climate Change Conference or Conference of the Parties, more commonly known as COP28. At the conference, I witnessed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Sarawak Energy Berhad and United Arab Emirates state-owned clean energy provider, Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company, widely known as MASDAR.
47. One of the targets outlined in the MoU is the joint effort to develop 2 Gigawatts of renewable energy in Malaysia, with plans to kick off Phase 1 of this initiative by developing 1 Gigawatt in Sarawak. In addition to the focus on solar and energy storage, Sarawak Energy and MASDAR are set to explore collaborative opportunities in hydro projects throughout Malaysia.

48. We are also exploring collaboration opportunities between PETROS and Mubadala Investment Company, to explore collaboration opportunities, with a particular focus on the energy and carbon sectors.
49. I have formed a special committee that will involve PETROS and Sarawak Energy working together with Mubadala and MASDAR to facilitate the details of these investments.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Facilitating Investment and Business

50. Currently, the Ministry of International Trade, Industry and Investment Sarawak is formulating the Sarawak Investment Policy to provide a comprehensive investment promotion strategy and targeted investment incentives to attract both domestic and international investors.
51. Programmes to enhance the competencies of SMEs, especially those export-oriented entrepreneurs to penetrate the global markets, are also being reviewed and developed to enhance local competitiveness.
52. InvestSarawak, Sarawak's one-stop agency for investment, will provide investment coordination focusing on priority sectors identified by the Sarawak Government and build

strong partnerships with the various stakeholders, including government agencies, industry associations, and local communities.

53. Concurrently, Pasukan Petugas Pemudahcara Perniagaan Peringkat Sarawak (SAMUDAH) will promote close collaboration between the private and public sectors to improve the regulatory processes, procedures, and policies enhancing the ease of doing business.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Education and Talent Development

54. As we pursue increasingly novel and complex opportunities in the new economy, we are concurrently developing a competitive, highly skilled, and innovative workforce, which can demand higher salaries. We must actively ensure that our young Sarawakians are equipped with quality education and skills training.
55. The Sarawak Government is committed to providing free tertiary education by 2026 to deserving Sarawakian students enrolled at all five state-owned universities and colleges namely Swinburne, Curtin, University of Technology Sarawak, iCATS University College, and Kolej Laila Taib.

56. In this space, the Government also sees opportunities for private sector investment in education, training, and initiatives that support skill development such as mentorship programmes to ensure that our workforce is equipped for the challenges of a rapidly evolving world.
57. In support of talent development, the Ministry of Education, Innovation and Talent Development is developing the Sarawak Talent Masterplan, to meet the talent requirements of the new economy, in particular the hydrogen and digital economy, to achieve a 30% skilled workforce by 2030 across the various sectors.
58. The strategies in the Talent Masterplan include collaboration between industry and academia, statutory bodies, agencies, regional development agencies, and associations of the likes of TalentCorp, Jabatan Pembangunan Kemahiran, Malaysian Board of Technologists, and Sarawak agencies and GLCs. Such collaboration is important to design relevant and timely curriculum and technical training to equip our future workforce with the right skills in an evolving job market.

59. The Sarawak Government, in collaboration with Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, has developed the Sarawak Workforce Information System (SWIS) database which is slated to be completed this year. Once completed, we will have a comprehensive labour market database system that contains information about industry demand for the workforce in the short to long-term, matching the demand to the talent supply.
60. Further complementing the SWIS database, the Sarawak Government recently commissioned a new system called Sistem Pesanan Kerjaya (SPEAK) to benefit school students, job seekers, and youths in Sarawak with up-to-date information on the latest training and study opportunities.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Agile Civil Service

61. Better communication and understanding between both the public and private sectors will enable the Civil Service to put in place the right policies, processes, and regulations for the right sectors. This includes streamlining the administrative processes, providing transparent regulatory frameworks, and reducing bureaucratic hurdles.

62. The role of the civil service is crucial in ensuring that Sarawak can truly achieve our PCDS 2030 aspirations. As our time is limited, we can no longer continue with business as usual. The Civil Service needs to swiftly respond to challenges by understanding and keeping up with emerging trends, be open to feedback, and be ready to reposition itself to take advantage of new and emerging opportunities.
63. The Sarawak Government will continue to empower the civil service to innovate and embrace new technologies. In the journey to create an agile civil service, we will recognise and reward the professionalism, integrity, and tireless dedication of our civil service.
64. In the spirit of lifelong learning, the Sarawak Government is investing in training and development programmes to ensure that civil servants are equipped with the relevant skills, experience, and knowledge needed to navigate the complexities of modern governance. Our officers have undergone training in programs like the Senior Fellowship Program, Advanced Management Program, and Lee Kuan Yew Senior Fellowship in Public Service Program. These professional programs will ensure we build a competent professional, and agile civil service.

65. We also need to enhance our transparency and communication across the civil service to break down silos and truly work as One Team. Fostering collaboration across departments and agencies allows different talents to come together to create breakthrough ideas that will lead to better and more effective solutions, accelerating the transformation of Sarawak into a developed society.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Conclusion

66. Embracing innovation, fostering collaboration, and prioritising sustainable development are the cornerstones of our journey ahead.

67. More than ever, I believe that Sarawak will have a bright future. Through open collaboration, dedication to shared values, a forward-thinking mindset, and purposeful action, we will shape a brighter future for all.

68. Together, we can overcome all challenges, unlock new opportunities, and build a Sarawak that will thrive economically, socially, and sustainably for many generations to come.

69. Kita akan meraikan Tahun Baru Cina tidak lama lagi. Saya mengambil kesempatan ini untuk mengucapkan Gong Xi Fa Cai kepada semua yang akan meraikan. Sambutan perayaan adalah satu bentuk perpaduan yang berharga dalam masyarakat kita. Melalui perayaan, kita dapat bersama-sama merayakan kebahagiaan, mengenang tradisi dan nilai-nilai yang diwarisi, serta memperkukuhkan ikatan sosial di antara kita.
70. Akhir kata, marilah kita bersama menghadapi cabaran 2024 ke arah Sarawak Maju Makmur 2030.

Sekian, wabillahi taufik wal hidayah, wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

Terima kasih.