

## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE**

**DATUK PATINGGI TAN SRI (DR)**

**ABANG HAJI ABDUL RAHMAN**

**ZOHARI BIN TUN DATUK ABANG**

**HAJI OPENG**

**PREMIER OF SARAWAK**

**The Malaysia Sustainable  
Development Goal (SDGs) Summit  
2023: Sarawak Region @ Pullman  
Hotel on Tuesday, 3rd October 2023**

**Time: 3.30 PM**

**Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi  
Wabarakatuh, Salam Sejahtera,  
Salam Sarawak Maju Makmur dan  
Salam Segulai Sejalai.**

Distinguished guests, esteemed speakers, and participants of the Malaysia Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Summit 2023, Sarawak Region, ladies and gentlemen.

1. I wish to extend my warmest welcome to all of you who are present here today. My sincerest appreciation also to all speakers for your sharing of knowledge, experience and expertise at the Malaysia SDGs Summit 2023, Sarawak Region in Kuching.

2. I truly appreciate all of you and the important work you do. This two-day summit has been a testament to the power of collaboration, determination, and our steadfast commitment to forging a sustainable future, not only for Sarawak but for all.

3. I also wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to the distinguished representatives of the United Nations who have graced us with their presence. Your engagement as well as those of numerous experts throughout this summit has not only enriched our discussions but has also underscored the global significance of the

SDGs, reminding us of our shared responsibility on the world stage.

4. I also extend my sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Economy, RECODA, and Pustaka Negeri Sarawak for their unwavering support and dedication in organising this landmark event. Such collaborations are the foundation on which we can build a sustainable future.

5. I was informed that there will be a National SDGs Summit next year, which I am sure will solidify the importance of SDGs in Malaysia.

**Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

6. The Malaysia SDGs Summit 2023, Sarawak Region has been a platform for voices from diverse spheres, notably from the government, industry, academia, and civil society to converge, united in their commitment to address the 17 Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations. These goals encapsulate our collective vision of a world free from poverty, hunger, inequality, and devoid of environmental degradation.

7. Over the past two days, I believe the discussions have traversed an extensive spectrum of topics, all intricately linked to the 17 SDGs and the 5Ps namely the People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership. These conversations have not only been inspiring but have also laid the crucial groundwork for meaningful, actionable change.

**Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

8. It is important to underline the synergy between this Summit and Sarawak's Post COVID-19 Development Strategy (PCDS)

2030. In the aftermath of a global pandemic, we have witnessed the necessity for resilience, adaptability, and forward-thinking in our development initiatives.

9. Both the SDGs and PCDS 2030 provide us with a roadmap to ensure that we are marching towards a more resilient and sustainable future for Sarawak and its people.

10. Our commitment to environmental sustainability is unwavering, and we have aligned our development strategies with the United Nations SDGs.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

11. Sarawak has made remarkable progress towards improving the livelihood of the people. This year marks the 60th anniversary of Sarawak's independence. The theme for the celebration, Sarawak Maju Makmur or Progressive Prosperous Sarawak bodes well with SDGs progress in Sarawak.

12. Over the past 60 years, we have transformed from a traditional agrarian economy where we rely much on agriculture and forestry into a more

diversified and dynamic economy. GDP value has increased 20 times, from a mere RM7 billion in 1963 to RM140 billion in 2022.

13. We have observed a surge in the mean monthly household income, which has grown by an impressive 3.4 fold, rising from RM1,800 in 1995 to RM6,400 in 2022. This growth in household income is attributed to our economic policy and development that created more business and employment opportunities for our people.

14. Our inclusive socio-economic development has enabled us to reduce the incidence of poverty in Sarawak from 32% in 1985 to 10% in 2022. We have extensive social safety net programmes to uplift the wellbeing of the underprivileged such as welfare assistance, housing, free health and education.

15. When I took over as the Chief Minister in 2017, I initiated various programmes to expand the coverage of roads, water and electricity supply and telecommunications to all settlements in Sarawak. Currently, the coverage of water supply has reached 84% whilst electricity supply to almost 100%.

Our target under PCDS 2030 is to have full coverage of water and electricity supply.

16. We are making good progress to provide quality education and human capital development initiatives to equip our people with the right skills and talents. We have improved dilapidated schools, collaborate with technical institutions and fostering interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematic (STEM).

17. We have made steady progress in ensuring a healthy lives and wellbeing of the people. During the pandemic, Sarawak has successfully vaccinated its population

thus contributing to the low number of severe Covid-19 cases in Sarawak. The Sarawak Government also launched Bantuan Khas Sarawakku Sayang (BKSS), a special aid package amounting to RM6.7 billion, implemented with the aim to reduce the impact of the pandemic on the economy and the wellbeing of the people.

18. On food security, Sarawak is adopting technology to increase agriculture productivity not only for domestic consumption but also for export. Our aim is to be net food exporter by 2030 especially to support growing food demand in the Southeast Asia which currently have 688

million population and wider Asian market of 4.8 billion population. In other words, we will be one of the food production regions for more than 50% of the world population.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

19. Sarawak is ahead of other states in Malaysia and other regions in Southeast Asia in dealing with global climate change in accordance with the Paris Agreement 2015.

20. This is done through our bold and systematic energy transition plan. We are the leading region in producing clean

renewable energy, where currently about 70% of our energy mixed is from hydropower. We are committed to maintain at least 60% of our renewable energy capacity mix with hydropower.

21. Hydropower offers a sustainable renewable energy option that can benefit us beyond mere electricity generation. It allows us to reduce the carbon emission intensity of our power system by 73% between 2010 and 2021, contributing to our Net Zero and sustainability commitments. Leveraging on renewable hydropower has allowed us to explore

green hydrogen production and utility scale floating solar.

22. Under our Green Energy Agenda, we are exploring several ways to decarbonise our transport system and further transition towards a low carbon economy that already has predominantly green electricity as a pillar.

23. In 2019, Sarawak commissioned the first Hydrogen Production Plant and Refueling Station in this region. Sarawak is also working with Japanese and South Korea multinational companies (MNCs) to

develop mega hydrogen production plants in Bintulu.

24. Riding on the move to decarbonise public transport system in Sarawak, the Kuching Urban Transport System (KUTS) will be automated using the Autonomous Rapid Transit (ART) and integrated with digital solutions to create seamless experience using hydrogen fuel cell.

25. With a modern and eco-friendly integrated public transportation system, we expect carbon footprint from land transport in Kuching City will be significantly reduced by 15% by 2030. Traffic growth of 2% per



annum will be subdued and we will save 36,000 hours of daily travel time.

26. Microalgae also offer great potential to produce Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), which is crucial to the aviation industry to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

27. In Sarawak, there is enough sunlight, warm tropical climate and abundance of seawater that provides the right condition to continuously farm the oil source sustainably.

28. We are now cultivating 1,000 acres of microalgae in Bintulu that can potentially produce 500,000 tonnes per annum of

crude algae oil. This can be equated to about 10,000 barrel per day with about 37% extraction rate of crude algae oil from algae biomass. Therefore, we are potentially 'growing oil' that will have significant contribution to our Green Economy Agenda.

29. Sarawak is estimated to have about 30 trillion cubic meters of carbon storage capacity in the seabed of our continental shelf. We are now undertaking our first offshore Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) project at the Petronas Kasawari Field near Bintulu. This project is anticipated to reduce up to 3.3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide

(CO2) annually and further contribute to net zero emissions goal by 2050.

### **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

30. I am proud of the strides and accomplishments that Sarawak has achieved on its path to sustainable development. Sarawak employs innovative solutions, pioneering green initiatives, and catalysing community-driven projects.

31. Under my leadership, I will assure that Sarawak will continue to lead the Green Economy Agenda in the region for a

sustainable development in line with PCDS 2030 and SDGs initiatives.

32. Through relevant ministries and agencies, we are collaborating and partnering with the experts around the world towards harnessing the full potential of our region, benefiting industry, innovation, and infrastructure development and pave the way for a brighter and more sustainable future, not only for our region but for the entire world.

33. I would like to take this opportunity to also welcome our delegates from overseas

to explore Sarawak and enjoy our hospitality.

34. In conclusion, once again, I would like to congratulate all those involved in making this Summit a success, and officially close the Malaysia Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) Summit 2023, Sarawak Region.

Thank you.