



MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**NIK NAZMI NIK AHMAD**

**MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**FOR**

**CLOSING CONFERENCE OF THE UNODC UNWASTE PROJECT**

**24 APRIL 2025 (THURSDAY)**

**THE PAVILION HOTEL KUALA LUMPUR**

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, a very good morning and Salam Malaysia Madani.

**1. Mr Ibrahim Al-Sheraim**

Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the State of Qatar

**2. Dato' Wan Abdul Latiff Wan Jaffar**

Director-General, Department of Environment

**3. Ms. Joanna Wasiewska**

First Counsellor, Delegation of the European Union to Malaysia

**4. Dr. Pubadi Govindasamy**

Undersecretary (Environmental Management),  
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability

**5. Mr. Benedikt Hoffmann**

Regional Representative (in charge), UNODC Regional Office for  
Southeast Asia and the Pacific

**6. Ms. Ioana Cotutiu**

Programme Coordinator, Project Unwaste, UNODC

**7. Dr. Georgina Lloyd**

Regional Coordinator, UN Environment Programme

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

**INTRODUCTION**

1. It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to Kuala Lumpur for this important and timely gathering under the Unwaste project. On behalf of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability and the Government of Malaysia, I extend our warmest greetings to each of you.
2. We are honoured to host such a distinguished group of experts, policymakers, and advocates committed to tackling one of the most pressing and complex environmental challenges of our time — the threat posed by waste trafficking and pollution-related crimes.
3. I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to our key partners — the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the European Union — for your steadfast support and leadership in this regional initiative. Your commitment to driving solutions across borders is a powerful testament to what can be achieved through multilateralism and shared purpose.
4. We are especially privileged to be joined today by regional representatives from UNODC and UNEP, colleagues from the European Union, and our esteemed counterparts from across Southeast Asia and beyond — institutions that are on the frontlines of strengthening environmental governance. Your presence here signifies more than just participation; it reflects a collective resolve to forge stronger alliances, foster real change, and protect the integrity of our environment and the health of our communities.

5. Let us be clear: waste trafficking is no longer a marginal or isolated concern. It has evolved into a sophisticated, transnational crime that undermines legitimate trade, disrupts environmental justice, and threatens the progress we are making towards sustainable development. According to Europol, the trafficking of waste is not only growing in scale but becoming increasingly complex and clandestine — adapting rapidly even in the face of more stringent environmental regulations. This illicit trade exploits regulatory loopholes, weak enforcement, and fragmented legal frameworks, often placing a disproportionate burden on developing countries.

6. No nation should be left to confront this challenge alone. Waste trafficking, by its very nature, transcends national boundaries. It requires a coordinated, systemic response rooted in mutual trust, shared intelligence, and harmonised legal and enforcement strategies. We must move beyond fragmented efforts and come together to develop integrated frameworks that respect national sovereignty while closing legal loopholes and enforcement gaps. Our cooperation must be strategic, firm, and global in outlook — because pollution knows no borders, and neither should our response.

7. Here in Malaysia, we have taken decisive steps to combat this threat. Our government has introduced targeted policy reforms, enhanced our enforcement capabilities, and cracked down on non-compliant shipments and illegal processing facilities. These efforts are made possible through the dedication of our enforcement agencies and the cooperation of our regional partners.

8. Yet, we are under no illusion: the scale of the challenge demands more than national action. It requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, where every institution, from customs to judiciary, plays a vital role — and where coordination across agencies and borders is constant, effective, and proactive. Malaysia supports the strengthening of inter-regional frameworks that enable better data-sharing, compliance mechanisms, and policy innovation.

9. In this regard, we see the Unwaste Action Plan as a timely and strategic roadmap. It offers us a shared platform to align our actions, reinforce enforcement capacity, and foster deeper regional cooperation. We look forward to contributing actively to its refinement and implementation, and to working with all of you in ensuring it delivers on its promise.

10. Today's conference is more than a forum for dialogue — it is a rallying call for bold and decisive action. The challenges before us are urgent, and they require more than statements of intent. I urge all representatives here to embrace the spirit of the Unwaste initiative: to share knowledge openly, to build bridges across sectors, and to commit to tangible results. Let us take this momentum forward and consider elevating the Action Plan for further deliberation and endorsement at the upcoming ASEAN Senior Officials on Environment (ASOEN) meeting right here in Kuala Lumpur. Together, we can lay the foundations for a stronger, more coordinated response to waste trafficking that spans borders and delivers real impact.

11. As we look to the future, Malaysia reaffirms its unwavering commitment to protecting environmental integrity, enhancing our regulatory frameworks, and contributing meaningfully to the global effort to tackle waste-related crimes. Let us continue this journey together, acting with purpose, determination, and unity to build a cleaner, safer, and more just world for current and future generations.

12. And while we are here to tackle serious issues, I also encourage you to take some time to experience the vibrant spirit of Kuala Lumpur. Whether it is sampling our world-famous street food, exploring our rich cultural heritage, or taking in the stunning view of the Petronas Twin Towers, we hope your time here will be as enriching personally as it is professionally. A little “enviro-tourism,” as we like to say, is a well-deserved reward for change makers like yourselves.

Thank you once again for being here, and I wish you all a productive, inspiring, and impactful meeting.