



MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**NIK NAZMI NIK AHMAD**  
**MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**FOR**

**MIM CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS:**  
**SHARED RESPONSIBILITY, SHARED FUTURE, UNITING**  
**STAKEHOLDERS TO CO-CREATE A GREENER MALAYSIA**

**“SMALL STEPS, BIG IMPACT, GREENING THE GRASSROOTS:**  
**EMPOWERING SMEs FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION**

**10 JULY 2024 (WEDNESDAY)**

**HILTON PETALING JAYA**

*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*

*Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and Salam Malaysia Madani*

- **YBhg. Tan Sri Dato' Seri (Dr.) Haji Megat Najmuddin Megat Khas**  
President of MIM,
- **Dato' Ng Tieh Chuan**  
Vice President of MIM,
- **Mr. Kabenesh Eliathamby**  
Chief Executive Officer of MIM,
- Board of Directors of MIM,
- Distinguished panellists and speakers,
- Honourable guests, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is my pleasure to be speaking at the Malaysian Institute of Management's ESG Conference, with the theme "**Shared Responsibility, Shared Future: Uniting Stakeholders to Co-Create a Greener Malaysia.**" This event, organised in collaboration with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) Malaysia, is a welcome addition to the many conferences now being organised on and in support of our nation's sustainability journey.
2. This conference, as I understand it, seeks to delve into a crucial aspect of sustainable transformation which is **Small Steps, Big Impact, Greening the Grassroots: Empowering SMEs for Sustainable Transformation.**

This is undoubtedly apt given that SMEs form the backbone of our economy, contributing significantly to employment and economic growth. Yet, SMEs' potential to drive sustainable practices remains largely untapped.

3. As the Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability, I have had the privilege of leading transformative initiatives aimed at preserving Malaysia's biodiversity and managing plastic pollution on a global scale.
4. Earlier this year, Malaysia took proactive steps at the *Fourth Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee* in Ottawa, Canada, advocating for an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution. This effort underscores our commitment to combatting marine plastic pollution while promoting sustainable economic development.
5. Furthermore, our ministry has revised Malaysia's national biodiversity policy to align with the *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*. This framework aims to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, reflecting our dedication to conserving Malaysia's rich natural heritage for future generations.
6. In addressing the pressing issue of plastic waste, we have embarked on several initiatives, including the *Zero Single-Use Plastics policy* and the *Malaysia Plastics Sustainability Roadmap*. These initiatives are pivotal in our quest to achieve zero plastic waste by 2030, ensuring cleaner oceans and healthier ecosystems.

7. I am cognizant that these initiatives will require the buy-in and indeed, support of the private sector—including the SMEs. It has been estimated that 97% of total businesses in Malaysia are SMEs. As such, the green transition of our economy will not succeed unless SMEs are involved and can take advantage of the various opportunities it presents.
8. We recognise that embracing sustainability is not easy even for big businesses. It can be costly and complicated. But it must be done and the private sector needs to be guided as well as helped. The government is doing what it can—through needed-reforms, nurturing policies and forward-looking initiatives like NETR and the NIMP 2030—but that's just a part of the picture.
9. Sustainability is a challenge that Malaysia must embrace. Indeed, I believe this is the case. **I have heard both CEOs of big firms and small shop owners speak about how it is the future of their businesses—**not only because it is lucrative but because it involves their very survival. Moreover, it's heartening to see industry bodies like the MIM making an effort to contribute to this process through events like this.
10. I think human capital and capacity for sustainability is something that can be looked at—especially at the SME level. The human element will always be important, even in this age of AI and high technology. Let us also not forget that Malaysia is Chair of ASEAN in 2024 and so, our efforts must also be geared towards how we can utilise this platform, not only to unite our region towards greater sustainability and a just transition—but also to help our SMEs compete in Southeast Asia, Asia and globally. I trust the MIM, as our country's premier executive education institution, can and will assist in these goals.

11. Today, as we discuss empowering SMEs for sustainable transformation, let us remember that environmental sustainability is not just a choice but a responsibility we owe to our planet and future generations. By integrating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles into business practices, SMEs can contribute significantly to Malaysia's sustainable development goals. Let us remember that the small steps taken by SMEs can lead to the biggest impacts in greening the grassroots of our economy.
12. In closing, I extend my sincere gratitude to the Malaysian Institute of Management for initiating this important conference. I also want to thank everyone for their time and active participation. Your dedication and commitment to sustainability inspires us all to strive for a future where economic prosperity goes hand-in-hand with environmental stewardship.
13. I am confident that through collaborative efforts with the Malaysian Institute of Management, we can all pave the way for a greener and more prosperous Malaysia. Thank you.