



MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

OFFICIATING SPEECH AND INAUGURAL ADDRESS

YB TUAN SYED IBRAHIM SYED NOH

**MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

FOR

**THE 9TH ASIA PACIFIC GEOPARKS NETWORK SYMPOSIUM 2026
LANGKAWI, KEDAH**

**LANGKAWI, KEDAH
7 SEPTEMBER 2026 (MONDAY) | 8.00 PM**

SALUTATION (TBD)

Salam Sejahtera, Salam Malaysia MADANI and a very Good Evening.

1. **YBhg. Datuk Seri Haji Iskandar Datuk Haji Mohd Kaud**
Chief Executive Officer, Langkawi Development Authority
2. **YBr. Prof. Emeritus Dr Setsuya Nakada**
Chair, UNESCO Global Geopark Council
3. **YBhg. Dato' Khalid bin Mohamed**
Deputy Secretary General (Natural Resources), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability
4. **YBhg. Datuk P.Geol. Zamri bin Ramli (tidak hadir)**
Director General, Mineral and Geoscience Department
5. Distinguished Speakers, Experts, Academics and Researchers,
6. Representatives of government agencies, state government, local authorities, industry, communities and partners,
7. Ladies and Gentlemen.

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

WELCOME REMARKS

1. Here in Langkawi, we are surrounded by a powerful reminder that what takes nature hundreds of millions of years to create can become our responsibility in a single generation.
2. That responsibility is what brings us together today, from across the Asia-Pacific, to learn from one another, strengthen our partnerships, and ensure that the heritage entrusted to us remains protected for generations to come.
3. It is therefore my great honour and pleasure to welcome all our international and local delegates to beautiful Langkawi for the 9th Asia Pacific Geoparks Network Symposium 2026.
4. On behalf of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability, Selamat Datang ke Malaysia, and welcome to Langkawi.
5. I congratulate the Langkawi Development Authority, LADA, together with all organising agencies and partners, for bringing this important international gathering together.
6. The diversity of delegates gathered here reflects something fundamental about the geopark movement: while our landscapes

may be different, the responsibility to protect them is one that we share.

LANGKAWI AND MALAYSIA'S GEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

Ladies and gentlemen,

7. Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark holds a special place in Malaysia's own geopark journey. Recognised in 2007 as Malaysia's first UNESCO Global Geopark, Langkawi is a living record of an extraordinary geological history.
8. From the ancient rocks of the Machinchang Cambrian landscape to the spectacular limestone formations of Kilim Karst and the marble landscape of Dayang Bunting, the story of the Earth is visible all around us.
9. But the story of Langkawi is not written in rocks alone.
10. It is also found in its forests and mangroves, its coastal ecosystems and biodiversity, its culture, and most importantly, in the communities who have lived alongside these landscapes for generations.

11. That is what makes a geopark a living territory. Geology, biodiversity, culture and people do not exist separately. They shape one another.
12. And with recognition comes responsibility. For me, that responsibility can be understood through three simple principles: **Amanah (Responsibility), Mizan (Balance) and Maslahah (Public Good).**
13. **Amanah**, because this heritage is entrusted to us, not owned by us alone.
14. **Mizan (Balance)**, because development must always seek balance between economic progress and the limits of our natural environment.
15. And **Maslahah (Public Good)**, because conservation must ultimately bring meaningful and lasting benefit to people, communities and future generations.
16. These principles are also consistent with the aspirations of Malaysia MADANI: development that is sustainable, responsible and centred on the well-being of both people and planet.

MALAYSIA'S NATIONAL GEOPARK JOURNEY

17. Malaysia has made significant progress in recognising and developing geoparks nationwide.
18. Our approach is guided by the National Geopark Development Plan 2021–2030 and the National Geopark Implementation Plan, strengthening governance, conserving geosites, building local capacity and ensuring that geoparks contribute meaningfully to sustainable development.
19. At its core, our approach rests on three fundamental pillars: **conservation, education and sustainable development.**
20. We protect geological heritage for future generations. We strengthen scientific and environmental understanding. And we create responsible economic opportunities that allow communities to benefit from the landscapes they help protect.
21. But our ambition should not simply be to have **more geoparks.**
22. It should be to have **better geoparks:** better managed, better protected, more inclusive and more impactful.
23. Recognition is important. But recognition is only the beginning. **Stewardship is the real responsibility.**

COMMUNITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

24. At the heart of every successful geopark are its people.
25. Local communities are not simply beneficiaries of conservation. They are partners, storytellers and custodians of heritage. Their knowledge, cultural practices and relationship with the landscape are part of what gives every geopark its unique identity.
26. A geopark succeeds not simply when the world recognises its name, but when the people who call it home see value in protecting it.
27. Geotourism, local products, community-based tourism, cultural interpretation, education and entrepreneurship can create livelihoods while strengthening appreciation of local heritage.
28. When conservation creates opportunity, its value is no longer an abstract idea. It can be felt in homes, villages and communities.
29. This is particularly important for our young people.
30. We want the next generation to see geological and natural heritage not simply as something they inherit, but something they have a stake in protecting.

31. The success of a geopark therefore cannot be measured by visitor numbers alone. It must also be measured by **what remains protected, who benefits, and whether the next generation feels ownership over that heritage.**

GEOPARKS, CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Ladies and gentlemen,

32. This responsibility has become even more important as we confront interconnected challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation and natural hazards.
33. Understanding the Earth beneath our feet helps us make better decisions above it: about water, land use, infrastructure, disaster risk and the resilience of our communities.
34. Here in Langkawi, the connections are clear.
35. Its forests, mangroves, karst landscapes and coastal environments are not simply beautiful scenery. They support biodiversity, livelihoods and ecosystem resilience, while contributing to the long-term sustainability and attractiveness of Langkawi as a world-class destination.

36. Protecting them is therefore not a choice between conservation and development. **It is about ensuring that development can endure.**
37. This is where geoparks can play an increasingly important role.
38. They can become places where national commitments on biodiversity, climate resilience, environmental stewardship and community participation are translated into visible local action.
39. For NRES, this is important. Policy must ultimately mean something on the ground. Conservation must be seen, understood and experienced by the communities whose lives are connected to these landscapes.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR CAVES AND KARST

Distinguished guests,

40. And nowhere is the importance of this stewardship more visible than in our caves and karst landscapes.
41. This symposium comes at a meaningful moment as we prepare to celebrate the International Day for Caves and Karst for the first time on 13 September 2026.

42. Caves and karst landscapes record geological processes across immense periods of time. But they are not simply records of our past.
43. They provide habitats for unique biodiversity, sources of water, places of cultural significance, opportunities for scientific discovery, education and responsible tourism.
44. Their protection therefore matters not only to geology, but also to water security, biodiversity, human history and the communities of today.
45. The Kilim Karst Geoforest Park and Dayang Bunting Marble Geoforest Park are outstanding examples of this heritage here in Langkawi.
46. Their conservation requires science, responsible management, public awareness and active community participation.
47. I hope this first International Day for Caves and Karst will inspire stronger research, better visitor management, deeper public understanding and closer international cooperation to protect these fragile and irreplaceable environments.

LOOKING AHEAD

Ladies and Gentlemen,

48. As Malaysia enters the next phase of our geopark journey, we must continue to raise our ambition.
49. From **recognition to effective management.**
50. From **conservation to sustainable use.**
51. From **scientific knowledge to public understanding.**
52. And **from community participation to genuine community empowerment.**
53. The **question** before us is therefore not simply how many geoparks we can recognise, but **what kind of geoparks we want to leave behind.**
54. I hope this symposium goes beyond the exchange of ideas.
55. Let it generate partnerships that continue beyond Langkawi, knowledge that can be translated into action, and commitments that strengthen the geopark movement across the Asia-Pacific.

56. Because the strength of this network will ultimately be measured not only by what we discuss when we gather, but by **what we do when we return home.**

CLOSING

Distinguished guests,

57. Malaysia is proud of its geopark journey, but we also recognise that this journey is never complete.
58. Our responsibility is to ensure that these landscapes remain protected, that communities continue to benefit, that young people are inspired to become their next custodians, and that future generations inherit something worthy of being passed on again.
59. That is our Amanah.
60. To protect with responsibility, to develop with Mizan, and to ensure that what we do ultimately brings Maslahah to people and the planet.
61. Here in Langkawi, the Earth has taken hundreds of millions of years to write its story.
62. What we choose to do with that story is now our responsibility.

63. Let us ensure that the chapter written by our generation is one of stewardship, partnership and action.
64. To all our delegates, Selamat Datang ke Malaysia and once again, welcome to Langkawi.
65. I wish you a productive, inspiring and memorable symposium, and I congratulate LADA and all partners involved in organising the 9th Asia Pacific Geoparks Network Symposium 2026.
66. With that, it is my great honour and privilege to officially declare the 9th Asia Pacific Geoparks Network Symposium 2026 open.

Thank you.

Salam sejahtera and Salam Malaysia MADANI.