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**MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

KEYNOTE SPEECH

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

FOR

CLJ'S ESG NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2024

19 JUNE 2024 (WEDNESDAY)

**THE VERTICAL BUSINESS SUITES,
KUALA LUMPUR**

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and Salam Malaysia
Madani

1. Yang Amat Arif Tun Tengku Maimun Tuan Mat
Chief Justice of Malaysia

2. Yang Arif Tuan Mohamed Zaini Mazlan
Judge, Court of Appeal

3. Yang Berbahagia Dato Dr Cyrus V. Das
Partner, Cyrus Das Advocates & Solicitors

4. Puan Rostina Gaus
Director of CLJ Malaysia

5. Tuan Wan Sharif Wan Ahmad
Editorial Director of CLJ Malaysia

6. Tuan Preghaladhan Vizia Balakrishnan
General Manager of CLJ Malaysia

7. Tuan Mohamad Ezri Abdul Wahab
President of the Malaysian Bar

8. Yang Arif Dato' Lee Swee Seng
Judge, Court of Appeal

9. Yang Berbahagia Dato' Mary Lim Thiam Suan
Former Federal Court Judge

10. Karen Cheah,
Former Malaysian Bar President

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

INTRODUCTION

1. It is with great pleasure that I stand before you today at the **ESG National Conference 2024**, organised by CLJ Malaysia. This gathering is a testament to our commitment to environmental sustainability and corporate responsibility.
2. As the Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability, I am acutely aware of the pressing challenges confronting our nation and the world. Climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution are not merely abstract concepts; they are tangible threats that demand urgent action.
3. In the face of these challenges, we must adopt a holistic approach that integrates environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles into our policies, practices, and decision-making processes. ESG considerations are not only essential for mitigating risks and ensuring long-term profitability but also for safeguarding the well-being of our planet and future generations.

MANAGING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS WHILE ADDRESSING CORPORATE INTERESTS

4. Malaysia, with its rich biodiversity and natural resources, has a critical role to play in the global effort to combat climate change and promote sustainable development. We must leverage our strengths to foster innovation, enhance resilience, and forge partnerships that transcend borders and industries.

5. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors are two of the most important and interrelated concepts in the modern world. ESG initiatives, such as cutting down on greenhouse gases, enhancing labour conditions, and fostering diversity and inclusivity, can directly contribute to accomplishing numerous SDGs. Conversely, investments focused on ESG can expedite the realisation of the SDGs.
6. Lately, there has been an uptick in interest towards ESG investments. The investment community is progressively favouring companies that demonstrate a commitment to sustainable and ethical operations. This trend is propelled by heightened consciousness about the ecological and societal repercussions of corporate activities, an escalating consumer demand for eco-friendly products and services, and mounting regulatory demands for companies to step up their ESG game.
7. The convergence of SDG and ESG considerations is gaining prominence in contemporary discourse. As corporations, investors, and policymakers collaborate towards fulfilling the SDGs, ESG considerations are poised to be instrumental in propelling this advancement.
8. In Malaysia, for instance, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES) has been working on integrating SDGs into national policies while balancing industrial and environmental concerns.

9. By deploying strategies such as the establishment of the Green Technology Master Plan, which promotes green technology to align industrial growth with environmental sustainability, and collaborating with the private sector through initiatives like the Malaysian Green Technology Corporation (GreenTech Malaysia) to drive sustainable practices, the ministry can effectively manage sustainable development goals while addressing the diverse interests of special interest lobbies. The ultimate goal is to ensure a balanced and inclusive approach to national development.

LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES AND NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE ACT (RUUPIN)

10. The theme of this conference, "**The Ethico-Legal Landscape, Impact & Opportunities**," resonates deeply with the aspirations of my ministry and the people of Malaysia where we need to firstly understand the ethical and legal landscape of ESG and its impact before we embrace the opportunities it creates for all of us, as a nation, for its people and the economy. This conference underscores the need for concerted action, bold leadership, and unwavering commitment to building a more sustainable and inclusive future for all.

11. Legislative initiatives are being taken by the Government via NRES to address climate change and other environmental threats by enhancing the regulatory framework and governance on climate change through the development of the National Climate Change Act (RUUPIN), which is expected to culminate in a finalised draft in 2025.
12. The primary objective of this RUUPIN is to enhance the national GHG inventory process, enhance climate change mitigation and adaptation actions, as well as facilitate climate reporting in Malaysia. The bill complements existing acts related to climate change currently enforced including those developed by state governments.
13. The bill is a regulatory tool to enhance climate efforts in Malaysia without compromising economic growth. The RUUPIN aims to balance Malaysia's economic growth with sustainable development by implementing a robust regulatory framework that supports both environmental protection and economic progress.
14. This year, Malaysia is prioritising the development of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Roadmap and the Long-Term Low Emissions Development Strategy (LT-LEDS) to steer our climate mitigation actions.

15. We are also developing the Malaysia National Adaptation Plan which focuses on sectors including water security and water resources, agriculture and food security, infrastructure, energy and built environment, forestry and biodiversity as well as public health, underscoring Malaysia's proactive stance in building resilience against climate impacts.
16. In confronting the scourge of plastic pollution, Malaysia has come up with roadmaps in achieving zero single-use plastics and, where the material is difficult to avoid, a sustainable plastics framework.
17. This transition covers the whole range of elements in managing the end-of-life impact of products and diverting waste from the landfills and open environments. The roadmaps adopt the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework to help incentivise producers to design products that are easier to recycle or dispose of responsibly, and looking at alternatives to fossil-fuel based plastics including traditional materials.
18. As we navigate the complexities of climate change and resource depletion, robust governance frameworks are imperative to ensure the sustainable utilisation of our planet's resources. Sustainability governance encompasses not only environmental considerations but also social and economic aspects, striving for a balance that fosters long-term viability that is both equitable and sustainable for the current and future generations. However, effective sustainability governance requires collaborative efforts across stakeholders, sectors and borders.

19. Since last year, the Ministry has adopted a collaborative approach to decision-making in climate action through the establishment of an Advisory Panel and a Consultative Panel on Climate Change. These panels act as a platform for collaboration with multiple stakeholders including state and local governments, the private sector, civil society organisations and the local youth.

20. Acknowledging the significance of engaging young individuals in shaping the future of the planet, we have also established a dedicated youth cluster to further empower and amplify the role of youth in addressing climate change challenges.

CONCLUSION

Ladies and gentlemen,

21. I commend CLJ Malaysia for organising this timely event and bringing together stakeholders from the government, legal fraternity, industry, academia, and civil society. Your dedication and foresight are instrumental in catalysing positive change and driving the transition towards a greener, more resilient, and equitable socio-economic society.

22. As we embark on this collective journey, let us remember that the choices we make today will shape the world we inhabit tomorrow. Let us seize this opportunity to chart a course that honours our past, embraces our present, and empowers our future generations to thrive in harmony with nature.

23. In closing, I urge every one of you to seize the opportunities that lie before us and to be agents of positive change in your respective spheres of influence. Together, we can pave the way for a brighter tomorrow, where prosperity and progress are inseparably linked to the well-being of our planet and its inhabitants.

24. Thank you, and may our collaborative efforts today inspire lasting climate stewardship for Malaysia.