



OPENING REMARKS

**BY YB. DR. XAVIER JAYAKUMAR
MINISTER OF WATER, LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES,
MALAYSIA
AT THE 2ND MALAYSIA-NETHERLANDS WATER DIALOGUE**

**2 OCTOBER 2019 (2.10 – 2.20 PM)
MALAYSIA INTERNATIONAL TRADE & EXHIBITION CENTRE
(MITEC), KUALA LUMPUR**

His Excellency Aart Jacobi
Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Malaysia

YB. Tengku Zulpuri Shah Raja Puji
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources

YBhg. Datuk Zurinah Pawanteh
Secretary General
Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources

Distinguished co-moderators YBhg. Datuk Ir. Abdul Kadir Mohd Din
President, the Malaysian Water Association and Mr. Robert van As
Managing Director, Paques Asia Pacific

Respected Panellists from Malaysia and the Netherlands,

Representatives from Federal and states agencies,

Representatives from water operators,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Selamat Datang and Good Afternoon to all.

1. First and foremost, I would like to thank His Excellency Aart Jacobi for joining us today. It is a great honour for me to deliver a joint opening remark for the 2nd Malaysia-Netherlands Water Dialogue. I must congratulate the Water and Sewerage Services Division of KATS as well as the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Kuala Lumpur for their tireless effort in making today's event a success. I am extremely pleased to note that the inaugural dialogue held last year was a great success.
2. Let me also extend a warm welcome to the distinguished panellists from the Netherlands, ladies and gentlemen to the 2nd Malaysia-Netherlands Water Dialogue held in conjunction with the Malaysia International Water Conference 2019. Aptly themed "Sharing of Best Practices on Water Management in Malaysia and the Netherlands", this dialogue is held in the spirit of strengthening cooperation through the sharing of best practices in water management between both countries.

4. The water and sanitation agenda have been given its due recognition and is well articulated under Goal 6 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Nevertheless, as most of us are experiencing, the journey towards realising these goals is a rather challenging one. In ensuring universal access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation by 2030, the SDGs warrant a concerted effort be implemented covering adequate investment in water and sanitation infrastructure and restoring water-related ecosystems such as forests, mountains, wetlands and rivers to mitigate water scarcity, thus ensuring water security for all.

5. The notion of holistic management of natural resources known as Source to Sea (S2S) management has been gaining popularity among world leaders deliberating the inextricable linkages between the impacts of land and forest activities on freshwater, coastal and sea eco-system, and its contribution to the SDG Goal. This topic took centre stage during the World Water Week held in Stockholm recently, which I had the opportunity to attend and share my thoughts during a high-level panel discussion.

Ladies and gentlemen,

6. Climate change is unavoidable when it comes to discussing water management. Greta Thunberg, a 16 year old girl has spoken about the urgent need to address climate change, and how it could cause detrimental effects to our way of life.
7. Water management has always been given a priority and regarded as a key enabler for the economic development of the country. The Malaysian Government recognises the need to strike the balance between access to water as a basic necessity and a human rights issue as well as ensuring the financial and operational sustainability of the water sector to fuel the economic development of the country.
8. We are at the tail end of the 11th Malaysia Plan, and honestly, I feel there remains much to be desired. We are not at a satisfactory level of managing water loss. Water disruptions are common due to aging water assets and inadequate asset management practices. Our main raw water source, rivers, are at constant risk of pollution – no thanks to the lack of enforcement to punish non-point source polluters and unconnected private waste water plants. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

9. I am glad to note we have taken efforts to rectify the current situation. Water must be given a prominent role as an economic driver for the country. In this regard, I believe my ministry has been working closely with the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MEA) to transform the water sector under the 12th Malaysia Plan centred upon the key principle of the “Shared Prosperity Vision” by 2040.

10. Under the new strategic direction for the water sector, my Ministry is determined to complete and ensure the success of the water transformation plan by bringing water into the mainstream of the national development agenda covering the three dimensions of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental – which I believe must all be addressed for effective water management.

11. Let me briefly share the Visions for Water Sector Transformation as follows:
 - (i) recognizing the potential of groundwater as a source of water supply to meet the demand of rising population and economic development;
 - (ii) tackling non-revenue water issues;
 - (iii) reform the Water Services Industry Act 2006 (WASIA);
 - a. to allow private sector participation;
 - b. water industry should not just be the concern of the government;
 - (iv) look into the adoption of new technologies to bring Malaysia to the forefront of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM);

12. The goal for this water transformation vision is to attain reliable and sufficient water supply to meet demand, better water quality, cleaner rivers, efficient flood management and improved water storage management.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

13. Malaysia stands to benefit from the Netherlands' experience and best practices in water management as we embark on the 12th Malaysia Plan. Malaysia recognizes the Netherlands as a country that has the best water management in Europe and at the global level. I glad to note that Dutch best practices in water management has been adopted in many countries. Malaysia too has a lot to learn from the Dutch experience in water management.
14. During my recent visit to the Netherlands, I am convinced that at least in two areas that Malaysia could greatly benefit from the Dutch experience. First, in the ground water exploration technology. It is astonishing to learn the so-called 'non-dig approach' in building an underground dam using a sonar technology. I am also impressed that the Dutch places great emphasis on the important of the precision data collection for ground water exploration before embarking on the physical project. I believe that is already a collaboration between a Malaysian company and their Dutch counterparts on a ground water project in Kelantan. I would like to see further collaboration opportunities to be extended to other projects being identified by the ministry i.e. in Langkawi and Johor.

16. The second aspect relates to the flood management. A visit to the *Maeslantkering*, parts of the Delta Works re-affirms the truth that 'man will never win over water'. This gigantic storm surge barrier - one of the largest moving structures on the earth - protects the port and city of Rotterdam from the flood risk. The barrier took six year to complete at the cost of 450 million euro. The 1953 flood that killed almost 2,000 people brings new perspective in flood management in the Netherlands, and more importantly the financial requirement in combating the flood. I was informed that the Dutch government has allocated close to 1 billion euros every year for flood management.
17. I have also been informed that several Dutch experts will be invited to share best practices in sustainable water treatment plant residuals management during a 3-day conference organised by the Malaysian Water Engineers Action Committee (MyWAC) this coming November.
18. What I have just highlighted are some of the areas of cooperation that both countries could work on. I see that the 2nd Malaysia-Netherlands Water Dialogue provides an opportunity for better understanding, bringing collaboration between both countries to greater heights. I look forward to the interesting presentation from both sides and wish all of you a fruitful and productive deliberation.

Thank you.

Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources
Putrajaya

2 October 2019