



**MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

SPEECH

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**MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

FOR

MOBULA 8 INAUGURATION

10 FEBRUARY 2025 (MONDAY)

PULAU INDAH MARINA, SELANGOR

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and a very good morning everyone.

1. YBhg. Dato' Haji Abd. Hamid Hussain

Mayor of Royal City Council of Klang

2. His Excellency Axel Cruau

Ambassador of France to Malaysia

3. Her Excellency Chantal Moser

Ambassador of Switzerland to Malaysia

4. Mr. Benoit de Torcy

General Manager of The SeaCleaners Swiss

5. Dr. Nicolas J. Pilcher

Founder and Executive Director of Marine Research Foundation

6. Mr. Jeremy Camps

Commodore of Peninsular Sailing Club

Ladies and gentlemen,

INTRODUCTION

1. The inauguration of the Mobula 8 that we are gathered here today to witness is truly a momentous occasion. Today marks a new chapter in addressing marine plastic waste in Malaysia, a project spearheaded by Malaysia's own Marine Research Foundation in partnership with Swiss NGO The SeaCleaners, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES).
2. Our oceans are teeming with life, and their health is vital not only to the well-being of our ecosystems but also to the prosperity of our people. They support our economy, provide food and resources, and are integral to biodiversity. However, with rapid economic growth and urbanisation, Malaysia's waste generation has been increasing at an alarming rate of 4% annually. As our population grows, so does plastic consumption—much of which finds its way into rivers, drains, and ultimately, the ocean.
3. Malaysia, with a coastline of 4,675 km and rich marine biodiversity, is severely affected by marine debris. Land-based activities and fishing-related debris are the leading contributors to plastic pollution, which includes plastic bottles, bags, and food wrappers—a list that, unfortunately, is growing to become endless. These pollutants put marine species at risk, disrupt fragile ecosystems, and endanger the livelihoods of those who rely on the ocean for food security and income.

Ladies and gentlemen,

KEY POLICIES

4. History tells us that the first synthetic plastic was produced in 1907, marking the beginning of the global plastics industry. However, the actual expansion of global plastic production did not occur until the 1950s. Over the next 70 years, the annual production of plastics increased nearly 230-fold to 414 million metric tonnes in 2023. In just the last two decades, global plastic production has doubled. The sad fact is that much of this waste is poorly managed.
5. Recognising the severity of this crisis, Malaysia has developed key policies to guide our efforts in the fight against marine plastic pollution. For instance, the **National Marine Litter Policy and Action Plan (NMLPAP) 2021-2030** lays the foundation for reducing plastic pollution in Malaysia through strategic actions along the value chain of the plastic life cycle. Additionally, the **Plastic Sustainability Roadmap 2021-2030** and the **Roadmap towards Zero Single-Use Plastics 2018-2030**, are crucial frameworks in addressing the root causes of plastic waste. These policies align with **Strategy A2, Chapter 8 of the 12th Malaysia Plan**, which focuses on the implementation of a circular economy as a catalyst for resource sustainability. We are also working on a national policy on plastic production, use and wastage that will be in line with the 2022 Global Plastics Treaty (GPT), which is still under negotiation.

6. However, policies alone are not enough. While they provide a strong framework, real change requires innovative, on-the-ground action. Malaysia currently ranks in the top ten of the world's top ocean polluters—not exactly a list we want to be on. Although we may not be the largest producer of plastics, the proportion of plastic waste that reaches the ocean from Malaysia is disproportionately high compared to other countries.
7. This underscores the urgent need for better waste management systems and the deployment of technologies to reduce ocean plastic pollution.
8. Since 2018, **The Ocean Cleanup** has been implementing river-cleaning technologies in Malaysia, including the **Interceptor Original system**, which has the capacity to extract up to 50 tonnes of waste daily from rivers like the Klang River. However, these technologies have yet to be fully explored in other parts of the country, and indeed, recent research points to the problem lying just as much in the minor rivers and tributaries as major rivers alone.

Ladies and gentlemen,

AGAINST MARINE PLASTIC POLLUTION

9. Today, we mark a significant milestone in our fight against marine plastic pollution with the launch of the **Mobula 8**. It is an innovative, purpose-built vessel designed to efficiently remove surface plastics from our waters. This vessel will be stationed in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, complementing the ongoing efforts by the Dewan Bandaraya Kota Kinabalu to tackle marine debris. The goal of Mobula 8 is not just about cleaning what has already entered our oceans; it represents a broader commitment to targeted interventions and collaborative solutions that prevent pollution at its source.
10. However, let me be clear—removing plastic waste from the ocean is only part of the solution. Like it or not, human beings are creatures of habit. And so, the war against plastic, like the wider war against climate change, must be waged in as well as for hearts and minds. Our long-term focus must also remain on strengthening waste management practices, raising public awareness, and fostering a culture of sustainability that prevents plastic pollution from occurring in the first place.
11. It is regrettable that something as simple as transitioning away from plastic straws has, in this day and age, become politicised, even by the great, wealthy and powerful. While it has to be acknowledged that the process of addressing it needs patience and sound judgement, the phenomenon of plastic pollution needs to be addressed.

We cannot afford to wait. We can and must do what we can in our own country, in our own borders. It will take some getting used to. But it has to be done.

12. As we celebrate this achievement, let us recognise that our efforts, whether in our communities, companies and families or even individually, no matter how big or small, are part of the larger solution to create a cleaner, healthier future for our marine ecosystems. The future of our oceans and communities depends on our actions today to manage plastic waste. And our future will be very bleak indeed if our oceans end up choked by plastic.

13. I hope that the launch of Mobula 8 will serve as a catalyst for more innovative interventions, from technological advancements to community engagement and collaborative efforts. These are essential for achieving long-term, sustainable solutions to combat plastic pollution across Malaysia. Technology, and this is also another reality of our era, has unfortunately likewise become politicised. But it should not be so when it comes to the kind of technology that can help save our planet as well as create more liveable communities, especially for the very poor. My Ministry is committed to addressing marine plastics in a proactive manner, and we are willing to support all endeavours that make Malaysia's marine environment healthier and more resilient.

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, esteemed partners,

CLOSING

14. Before I close, I would like to specifically acknowledge and express my gratitude to the following distinguished individuals for their vision and willingness to advance marine conservation, and address marine plastic pollution in Malaysia:

- Dr Nicolas J. Pilcher, Founder and Executive Director of the Marine Research Foundation;
- Benoit de Torcy, General Manager of The SeaCleaners Swiss;
- Mr. Ralph Stamm, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Switzerland
- His Excellency Axel Cruau, Ambassador of France

15. With that, I am honoured to officially inaugurate the Mobula 8 SeaCleaners initiative. Thank you.