



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**HON. NIK NAZMI B. NIK AHMAD**

**MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE  
CHANGE**

**6<sup>TH</sup> MALAYSIA – NETHERLANDS WATER DIALOGUE**

**“WATER AND CLIMATE CHANGE”**

**1 NOVEMBER 2023 | 4.30 P.M.**

**ASIAN INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION CENTRE (AIAC)**

**KUALA LUMPUR**

**Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and good afternoon.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- 1) It gives me great pleasure to be here today at the 6<sup>th</sup> Malaysia –Netherlands Water Dialogue. The Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change (NRECC) in collaboration with the Netherlands Embassy in Kuala Lumpur have been organising this annual Dialogue since 2018. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to our counterpart from the Netherlands Embassy who have been closely working together with us over the years.
  
- 2) Today is additionally special as we have together with us His Excellency Mark Rutte, the Prime Minister of the Netherlands. Thank you, sir, for sparing some time from your busy schedule to grace us with your presence. We greatly appreciate the commitment from the Government of the Netherlands towards our cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

### **Cooperation with the Netherlands Government**

- 3) Malaysia and the Netherlands have had a close bilateral relationship over the years. Apart from the yearly dialogue, NRECC and the Netherlands Embassy has been working on various collaborations focusing on water-related disasters and climate change resiliency. The recent one being the assistance in tackling water disasters by the Dutch

Surge Support (DSS) scheme. The outcome of this programme is the report by the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) team which highlighted the gaps, challenges and recommendations to improve Malaysia's flood risks that further strengthens Malaysia's response to future flood risks and related climate change impacts.

- 4) We look forward to expand the collaboration specifically in developing pilot projects that can be implemented based on the recommendations from the DRR Team report as well as other programmes in the area of flood mitigation and climate resiliency.

### **A Snapshot of Malaysia's Water Sector**

- 5) Now please allow me to share with you on our current water sector status. As of 2022, water supply access coverage stood at 97.1% in urban areas and 97.0% in rural areas. Meanwhile, sewerage services covered 85.4% of the main cities. By the end of 2025, we aim to reach 98% coverage of clean water for rural areas and 87.5%% for sewerage coverage. Malaysia is committed to achieve these targets in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 6 goals, to ensure access to clean water and sanitation for all.
- 6) In our efforts to achieve the goals, we are focusing on four (4) key initiatives which corresponds to the challenges that we face in our water industry as follows:
  - (ii) ensuring continuous and adequate supply of water and resources through systematic planning of water infrastructures;

- (ii) addressing financial sustainability of the water operators;
  - (iii) increasing operational efficiency of the water industry; and
  - (iv) climate resiliency, focusing on flood mitigation and coastal protection.
- Apart from that, we are also guided by the Water Sector Transformation (WST) 2040. Comprising four (4) phases, it strives to position the water sector as a dynamic growth engine while ensuring water security for all.

- 7) To stress our seriousness in providing access to water for all, in the recently announced 2024 Budget Initiative, a significant amount of funds has been allocated by the Madani Government to address water issues in states with major water problems i.e.: Kelantan, Sabah and Wilayah Persekutuan Labuan. It is part and parcel of the several actions that the Ministry will take in the implementation of the “Madani Economy: Empowering the People” economic framework, specifically on Focus 2 – Elevating the quality of the Rakyat’s life.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

## **Water and Climate Change**

- 8) I would like to delve a little bit into the importance of our discussion today, which is centred around the theme of “Water and Climate Change”. The Synthesis Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report stated that Climate change has reduced food security and affected water security, hindering efforts to meet SDGs. Roughly half of the world’s population currently experience severe water scarcity for at least part of the year due to a

combination of climatic and non-climatic drivers.

- 9) The disruption of weather patterns leads to extreme weather events where most disasters are water related. Around 74 per cent of natural disasters between 2001 and 2018 were water related, including droughts and floods. The frequency and intensity of such events are only expected to increase with climate change. In the case of Malaysia, we are blessed with equatorial rainforests and bathed by the monsoon which stands as an epitome of tropical abundance. However, rising temperatures exacerbate the already high humidity levels, increasing evaporation rates and affecting water reserves. The altering patterns of the monsoon, with its unpredictable downpours, pose flood risks to urban areas and threaten agriculture, one of the backbones of the nation's economy. Therefore, for us, it is evident that water is central to the climate crisis, which leads us having this discussion in this platform today.
- 10) We can already foresee that the climate situation presents a looming challenge to future safe water access. When disasters hit, it can destroy or contaminate entire water supplies, which can pose health risks to the public due to the spread of water borne diseases. In light of this, improving the resilience of water and sanitation services and protecting ecosystems will be key to water security in ensuring safe water access for all.
- 11) With this belief, we have put forth our stand at the United Nations 2023 Water Conference in New York earlier this year, co-chaired by the Netherlands and the Republic of Tajikistan, that there is a need of a framework for resilience and it has to start with water, where climate,

environment and development merge. The world needs to shift how development is approached in the age of crises where climate and disaster risks, and economic growth have to be planned together.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

### **Potential Collaboration for Water with the Netherlands**

- 12) I hope under our areas of cooperation with the Netherlands we will continue to learn from each other on how to overcome this challenge. We hope to especially learn from the Netherlands, as a low-lying country which has been relentlessly battling against water. The intricate network of dykes, canals, and pumps that the Dutch have ingeniously constructed over centuries showcases their mastery over water management. Nevertheless, climate change, with its promise of rising sea levels and increased precipitation, will bring forth an amplified challenge to the Dutch water management strategies.
- 13) I do not intend to prolong my speech as time is the essence. We will deliberate further on the potential areas of cooperation with the Netherlands in our dialogue session after this. I wish to conclude by reiterating that the Ministry takes our commitment to provide access to a reliable, sufficient, clean, and quality water supply at an affordable cost to all Malaysians very seriously. In order to achieve this, our management strategies will be aligned to achieve sustainability as well as addressing the climate resilience aspects.
- 14) Last but not least, I would like to congratulate the organising committee from the Ministry as well as the Netherlands Embassy for the

success of the event today. I look forward to have a fruitful discussion with His Excellency Prime Minister after this.

Wabillahi Taufik Walhidayah, Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

Thank You.

**YB NIK NAZMI BIN NIK AHMAD**  
**MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE**  
**CHANGE**

**1 NOVEMBER 2023**