

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY
Y.A.B PEHIN SRI HAJI ABDUL TAIB MAHMUD
CHIEF MINISTER OF SARAWAK
AT THE TWENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE
ASIA AND PACIFIC COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURAL
STATISTICS
KUCHING, SARAWAK, MALAYSIA 9-13 JUNE 2008

Y.BHG PUAN HAJAH WAN RAMLAH WAN ABD. RAOF
CHIEF STATISTICIAN OF MALAYSIA

DR. JAIRO CASTANO
THE SECRETARY OF THE APCAS COMMISSION

Y.B. DATUK AMAR WILSON BAYA DANDOT
STATE SECRETARY
SARAWAK,

FAO REPRESENTATIVES,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

GOOD MORNING AND SELAMAT DATANG,

1. I WISH TO CONVEY THE APOLOGY OF THE YAB CHIEF MINISTER SARAWAK AS HE IS UNABLE TO BE PRESENT THIS MORNING DUE TO OTHER COMMITMENT.

2. IT GIVES ME A GREAT PLEASURE TO WELCOME YOU TO MALAYSIA, ESPECIALLY TO KUCHING, SARAWAK, LAND OF THE HORNBILL.

3. FIRSTLY, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE ORGANISERS FOR GIVING ME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO OFFICIATE THE OPENING OF THE 22nd SESSION OF THE ASIA AND PACIFIC COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS OR APCAS, WHICH IS HELD FROM 9th – 13th JUNE, 2008. ON BEHALF OF THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT, I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY UTMOST GRATITUDE TO FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION OR FAO FOR CHOOSING MALAYSIA AS THE VENUE FOR THIS ROUND OF SESSION.

4. I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME ALL PARTICIPANTS FROM THE 25 PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES TO THIS SESSION, JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE FAO, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND AGRO-BASED INDUSTRY, MINISTRY OF PLANTATION INDUSTRIES AND COMMODITIES MALAYSIA

AND THE DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS, MALAYSIA. I HOPE YOUR TRIP HERE IS PRODUCTIVE, ENLIGHTENING AND ENJOYABLE. PLEASE TAKE SOME TIME OFF TO ENJOY THIS BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY OF OURS, INCLUDING OUR DELICIOUS FOOD AND WARM HOSPITALITY.

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

5. THIS SESSION WHICH WILL BE HELD OVER 5 DAYS, BEGINNING THIS AFTERNOON WILL ADDRESS VARIOUS PERTINENT ASPECTS IN RELATION TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS.

6. APCAS, WHICH IS A STATUTORY BODY OF FAO, MEETS EVERY TWO YEARS **TO ASSESS THE CURRENT STATUS OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT** IN MEMBER COUNTRIES. IT ALSO **REVIEWS THE FAO ACTIVITIES** IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

7. DURING THE PERIOD 2006 TO 2020, THE MALAYSIAN ECONOMY IS TARGETED TO GROW AT 6.3 PER CENT. THIS TARGET IS PREMISED ON THE WORLD ECONOMY REGISTERING AN AVERAGE GDP GROWTH OF 3.5 PER CENT DURING THE ENTIRE PLAN PERIOD, GREATER FOCUS WILL BE GIVEN TO DEVELOP THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR, PARTICULARLY IN AREAS OF FOOD SUPPLY AND FOOD SECURITY. THIS IS IN LINE WITH THE THIRD NATIONAL AGRICULTURE POLICY, WHICH SPANS FROM 1998-2010.

8. THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAYSIA HAS TAKEN VARIOUS MEASURES IN THIS ASPECT, TO REVITALISE THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR AS THE THIRD ENGINE OF GROWTH. HENCE, THE THIRD NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND THE NINTH MALAYSIA PLAN ARE GEARED TOWARDS INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY AND COMPETITIVENESS, ENSURING FOOD SECURITY AND

CREATING NEW SOURCES OF GROWTH FOR THE ECONOMY. THE ESSENCE OF THESE POLICIES ARE TO INCREASE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, FURTHER EXPANSION IN AGRO-BASED PROCESSING ACTIVITIES, STRENGTHENING MARKETING AND GLOBAL NETWORKING TO INCREASE EXPORT, IMPROVING DELIVERY SERVICES SYSTEM WHICH WOULD ULTIMATELY ELEVATE THE INCOME LEVELS OF FARMERS.

9. EFFORTS ARE ALSO BEING UNDERTAKEN TO DEVELOP MALAYSIA AS A MAJOR PRODUCER OF *HALAL* PRODUCTS AND SERVICES. MALAYSIA WILL LEVERAGE UPON ITS INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION AS A MODERN AND PROGRESSIVE ISLAMIC COUNTRY TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE EXPORT MARKETS FOR ITS *HALAL* PRODUCTS AND SERVICES. EVENTUALLY, THIS WILL BOOST THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AND AT THE SAME TIME, ENCOURAGE GREATER INVOLVEMENT OF THE SMEs.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

10. A STRONG STATISTICAL DATA SYSTEM IS FUNDAMENTAL FOR THE FORMULATION OF MACRO ECONOMIC POLICIES. IT PROVIDES INDICATORS FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ECONOMY, FORMING A BASIS FOR THE ADOPTION OF CURRENT DECISIONS AND AT THE SAME TIME UNDERLINE THE PROJECTIONS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS. IN ADDITION, THE STATISTICAL INDICATORS FORM THE BASIS FOR COMPARATIVE ANALYSES ON THE ECONOMIES OF OTHER COUNTRIES AND ARE THEREFORE ESSENTIALLY RELEVANT FOR POSITIONING THE ECONOMY, WORLDWIDE.

11. IN LINE WITH THIS, THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT WITH THE COOPERATION FROM THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND AGRO-BASED INDUSTRY, THE MINISTRY OF PLANTATION INDUSTRIES AND COMMODITIES AND THE DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS, MALAYSIA IS IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE DATABASE FOR AGRICULTURAL

STATISTICS. THIS IS FOR THE BENEFIT OF POLICY MAKERS AND OTHER USERS.

12. WITH THE CURRENT GLOBAL ISSUES ON THE INCREASE OF FOOD PRICES AND OTHER CHALLENGES IN FOOD SUPPLY, THE COMPILATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE AND UP TO DATE AGRICULTURE STATISTICAL DATA HAS BECAME A PRIORITY. A COMPLETE AND HARMONISED STATISTICAL SYSTEM HAS TO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO POLICY MAKERS PRIMARILY AS INPUTS FOR PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES. AT THE SAME TIME, THE PERVASIVE USE OF COMPUTING TECHNOLOGY AND THE INCREASED RELIANCE ON INFORMATION SYSTEMS HAS CREATED A HEIGHTENED AWARENESS AND CONCERN ON STORAGE OF INFORMATION. HENCE, THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY HAS BECOME AN IMPORTANT MECHANISM IN ADDRESSING THESE ISSUES.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

13. IT IS HOPED THAT DURING THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL ACTIVELY DELIBERATE TO BRING ABOUT IMPROVEMENTS AND INNOVATIONS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM WHICH WILL ASSIST IN ADDRESSING ISSUES, IN LIGHT OF THE PRESENT CHALLENGES FACED BY THE LINE MINISTRIES AS WELL AS NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICES.

14. IN CONCLUSION, I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY DEEPEST APPRECIATION TO THE ORGANISERS AND ALL PARTICIPANTS FOR MAKING THIS SEMINAR A REALITY. I HOPE YOU WILL HAVE A SUCCESSFUL AND FRUITFUL DELIBERATION DURING THE SEMINAR. I ALSO HOPE THE DISCUSSIONS AND INTERACTIONS WILL STRENGTHEN FRIENDSHIPS AMONG SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS AND ORGANISERS. I WISH YOU A PLEASANT STAY IN SARAWAK AND HOPE YOU WILL BRING HOME FOND MEMORIES OF YOUR STAY IN OUR COUNTRY.

ON THAT NOTE, IT IS MY GREAT PLEASURE TO DECLARE
THE TWENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE ASIA AND
PACIFIC COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS
OFFICIALLY OPEN.

THANK YOU.