

WELCOMING SPEECH BY
Y.BHG PUAN HAJAH WAN RAMLAH WAN ABD. RAOF
CHIEF STATISTICIAN OF MALAYSIA
AT THE TWENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE
ASIA AND PACIFIC COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS
KUCHING, SARAWAK, MALAYSIA
9 -13 JUNE 2008

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Honorable Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Dr. George Chan Hong Nam – Deputy Chief Minister of Sarawak, representing the Chief Minister Pehin Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud

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,

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and Good Morning.

1. FIRSTLY, I WOULD LIKE TO SPECIALLY WELCOME Y.A.B PEHIN SRI HAJI ABDUL TAIB MAHMUD, CHIEF MINISTER OF SARAWAK TO THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE TWENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE ASIA AND PACIFIC COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS THIS MORNING. WE ARE

PLEASED THAT YOU HAVE COURTEOUSLY ACCEPTED OUR INVITATION TO DELIVER THE OPENING ADDRESS AND TO OFFICIATE THE OPENING OF THIS SESSION.

2. ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAYSIA, PLEASE ALLOW ME TO EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO ALL THE GUESTS, MAY I SAY “SELAMAT DATANG”. IT IS INDEED A GREAT HONOUR TO THE DEPARTMENT AND TO MALAYSIA TO HOST THIS MEETING SINCE THE LAST SESSION HELD IN 1974 AND MAY I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK FAO FOR THE SUPPORT AND COMMITMENT RENDERED TO MAKE THIS EVENT A REALITY.

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

3. THE ASIA AND PACIFIC COMISSION ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS OR APCAS IS A BIENNIAL EVENT AND IT HAS PROVIDED STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS IN THE ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION THROUGHOUT ITS 43 YEARS OF EXISTENCE. THE COMMISSION IS ALSO RESPONSIBLE TO SET DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS OF STATISTICAL SYSTEMS

BY WORKING AS PLATFORM FOR SHARING COUNTRY INITIATIVES. THUS ASSISTING FAO IN DECIDING NEW PROGRAMME INITIATIVES AND FOR SETTING PRIORITIES IN THE COURSE OF FAO REFORM.

4. FAO BEING THE COORDINATOR ROTATES THE HOST COUNTRY TO ORGANISE THIS EVENT AMONG MEMBER COUNTRIES. WE ARE FORTUNATE THAT MALAYSIA HAS BEEN GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO HOST THE 22ND SESSION WHERE IT PROVIDES AN AVENUE TO REVIEW THE DEVELOPMENT IN AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SINCE THE LAST SESSION HELD IN PHUKET THAILAND IN 2006. BESIDES, THIS MEETING FACILITATES THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS WITH THE PRESENCE OF EXPERTS FROM FAO AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS REGARDING THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS IN THE REGION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

5. MALAYSIA IS TAKING NEW SHIFT IN PRIORITY TOWARD AGRICULTURE. IN NINTH MALAYSIA PLAN, THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR IS ABOUT TO ACHIEVE THE FIRST MISSION TO

INCREASE THE VALUE ADDED IN THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY. THE 'NEW AGRICULTURE' PROGRAM WILL REVITALISE THE MALAYSIAN AGRICULTURE AS THE THIRD ENGINE OF GROWTH. THE PROGRAM IS NOT JUST ABOUT PRODUCING MORE BUT IT IS EXPECTED TO ENHANCE VALUE-ADDITION TO AGRICULTURE PRODUCTS, TARGETED TO GROW AT 7.6% BY 2010. ULTIMATELY IT WILL GENERATE NEW SOURCE OF GROWTH AND IMPROVING THE NATIONAL SOCIO-ECONOMICS DIVIDE BY ERADICATING POVERTY.

6. TODAY, THE AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS ARE VERY CRUCIAL FOR THE PLANNING AND POLICY FORMULATION IN MALAYSIA ESPECIALLY WITH THE ALARMING GLOBAL THREATS, SHORTAGE OF FOOD AND PRICE VOLATILITY. A LOT OF EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE AND RESOURCES ALLOCATED BY THE MINISTRY AND THE STATISTICS DEPARTMENT TO CONDUCT SURVEYS AND CENSUSES. IN 2005, THE AGRICULTURE CENSUS WAS CARRIED OUT BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS COVERING ALL AGRICULTURAL HOUSEHOLDS IN MALAYSIA.

TO MATERIALISE THE NEED TO ESTABLISH THE RIGHT APPROACH TO GARNER DATA AND INFORMATION ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS AND TO MEET THE VARIOUS REQUESTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS AND USERS, A NEW DIVISION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS, THE AGRICULTURE AND AGRO-BASED STATISTICS DIVISION WAS ESTABLISHED IN THE YEAR 2007. THE INITIAL ACTIVITY BY THE DIVISION WAS TO CONDUCT THE AGRICULTURE AND LOGGING ECONOMICS CENSUS AND THROUGH WHICH THE STATISTICS PRESENTED ARE RELATED TO GROSS OUTPUT GENERATED, COST OF INPUT, SALARY & WAGES AND FIXED ASSETS OWNED IN THE SECTORS. THE DIVISION ALSO CONDUCTS MONTHLY RUBBER STATISTICS TO PROVIDE GENERAL STATISTICS ON PRODUCTION, STOCKS, IMPORT, EXPORT, DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION OF RUBBER AND NUMBER OF WORKERS, SALARY AND WAGES IN RUBBER ESTATES. FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT, THE DIVISION PLANS TO ESTABLISH A SURVEY ON AGRO BASED INDUSTRIES AND SUPPLY AND UTILIZATION ACCOUNT.

7. AS THE ECONOMIES ARE GLOBALIZING SO ARE THE STATISTICS WHICH REFLECTION OF SUCH DEVELOPMENT.

NOWADAYS ECONOMIC FLAW OCCURS IMMEDIATELY WITHOUT SHOWING ANY SUBSTANTIAL INDICATOR ESPECIALLY FOODS. IT IS VERY EMINENT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO MONITOR THE PRODUCTION AND PRODUCTIVITY OF THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS TO AVOID SHORTFALL. INITIATIVE HAS BEEN TAKEN BY THE STATISTIC DEPARTMENT TOGETHER WITH THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND AGRO-BASED INDUSTRY AND THE MINISTRY OF PLANTATION INDUSTRIES AND COMMODITIES TO DEVELOP A DATABASE FOR AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS WHICH CAN BE SHARED BY OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES. THE DATABASE COMPRISES DATA AT HOUSEHOLD AND ESTABLISHMENT LEVEL. IN FUTURE, THE DEPARTMENT WILL TAKE A LEAD AS A FOCAL POINT FOR INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURE DATA SHARING AND EXCHANGE.

8. IN LINE WITH THIS, GREATER INVOLVEMENT OF FAO PROMOTING ADVANCED AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SYSTEM INTEGRATED INTO A NATIONAL STATISTICS

SYSTEM IS ESSENTIAL ESPECIALLY IN TERMS OF TECHNICAL SUPPORT AND CAPACITY-BUILDING.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

9. ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAYSIA I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SPECIALLY THANK FAO FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE GIVEN DURING THE AGRICULTURE CENSUS. THE DEPARTMENT WILL SUPPORT THE COMMISSION AND THE MEMBER COUNTRIES TO PREPARE PROPER WORLD PROGRAMMES AND APPROACH FOR THE CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE 2010. IT IS A BIG CHALLENGE TO THE COMMISSION AS ONE OF THE NEW OBJECTIVES OF THE CENSUS IS "MONITORING MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS". THE MODERNISATION OF FAOSTATS REALLY ASSISTS THE POLICY MAKER AND PLANNERS TO VIEW THE DATA AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL AND SET BENCHMARKS AT THE CLICK OF THE MOUSE.

10. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS MY SINCERE APPRECIATION TO ALL FOR THE SUPPORT AND

COMMITMENT GIVEN IN MAKING THIS MEETING A SUCCESS.
MAY OUR EFFORTS BE BLESSED AND MAY THIS SESSION BE
A PRODUCTIVE ONE.

11. FINALLY ONCE AGAIN, I WOULD LIKE TO WISH A PLEASANT
AND MEMORABLE STAY IN KUCHING, SARAWAK.

SALAM AND THANK YOU