

Opening Speech by

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**International Construction Week 2019
Opening Ceremony**

**Theme:
*Construction Beyond 2020***

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Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre**

Distinguished Speakers,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Salam Sejahtera and Selamat Datang.

A warm welcome to all of you here today.

1. Let me first say that it is a great honour for me to be here with all of you today at the International Construction Week, or ICW 2019, hosted by the Ministry of Works and the Construction Industry Development Board Malaysia (CIDB). This year marks the 19th edition of the ICW.
2. I am made to understand that initially, this event was known as the National Construction Week and confined within Malaysian borders. It was in 1999 that CIDB first called for international participation. This reflected the increasing influence of globalisation in the construction industry at that time. It also reflected the growing confidence of the Malaysian industry of its ability to be at par with its peers overseas.

3. I am glad to note that today ICW has grown into a premier regional event. I would like to congratulate CIDB and its exhibition partner, UBM Malaysia, for the successful creation of ICW 2019 which also encompasses the inaugural ASEAN Super 8 mega trade fair – the largest of its kind in the region. This marks another milestone in ICW’s history.
4. Before I proceed further, I also wish to take this opportunity to thank all distinguished speakers who have come from near and abroad to share their knowledge and expertise in all of the 8 conferences and seminars that we have on schedule throughout the ICW 2019. I am confident that all participants will be able to gain many fresh perspectives and discover new opportunities on how we can continue to move forward effectively and thrive in the industry.

Ladies and gentlemen,

5. The theme for ICW this year, “*Construction Beyond 2020*” is one that resonates closely to Malaysians today. In 1991, our current Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir, introduced Vision 2020. The vision was for the nation to be an industrialised nation by the year 2020, having balanced development in all aspects of national life, including economic prosperity, social well-being, world-class education, and political stability.
6. Times have certainly changed tremendously in the years since and various challenges have arisen in the global economic environment. In the digital age today, the adoption of new technologies and methodologies is no longer an option but a necessity in our quest to enhance the productivity of the construction industry.
7. This is crucial as the construction industry is seen as the catalyst and heartbeat of economic growth. This is especially true for the construction of infrastructure projects, as they support our day-to-day function – the delivery of clean water, electricity, telecommunication and sewage management just to name a few. The development of highways and rail infrastructure which is ongoing in the country, are indeed the lifeline of the economy – which is akin to arteries and veins

channelling more blood to the towns and cities it, making it thrive in socio-economic activities.

8. Nonetheless, in today's environment, where climate change is happening at a rapid rate, it is not enough that we build infrastructure like we normally do. We want smart infrastructure that brings economic benefits alongside environmental ones. Sustainable infrastructure refers to the designing, building and operating infrastructure in ways which brings and maintains sound economic development, in a way which helps protect our vital natural resources and the functionality of the natural environment. The whole life-cycle of the infrastructure must also promote a more effective and efficient use of financial resources. Today, when we build infrastructure, we must consider carbon footprints, social cohesion, stewardship of natural ecosystems, and financial viability of projects.

9. A stellar example of sustainable infrastructure can be seen in Copenhagen, Denmark, a city where I had the opportunity to make a working and educational visit last year. Copenhagen has set an ambitious goal to be carbon neutral by the year 2025. In order to achieve this, the city council made the calculation that 75% of the population must get around either by foot, bicycle or public transportation. The City already has some 400 kilometres of bike paths being used by 40 percent of commuters to go to work. On top of this, or rather underneath the current infrastructure, a new underground 15.5 km Cityringen Metro rail will soon open. It will complete the 43 km Copenhagen Metro, which will carry 240,000 commuters daily to more than 40 stations around the city. This capacity represents 85% of Copenhagen city dwellers. So, if you ask me: Can modernisation support environmental sustainability through the right infrastructure development? The answer is yes.

10. I also would like to cite another example of sustainable infrastructure. This time, closer to the East -- in Seoul, Korea. In the early 2000s, the government had decided to demolish a four-lane elevated highway which was built on top of the Cheonggyecheon river in the 1970s. Even though the highway carries 1.5 million vehicles a day, it separated the city into two parts – North and South. Worst, the traffic accidents and fatalities on the highway became a big concern.

The Seoul City Council had made a big decision to tear down the highway to restore and beautify the river underneath. They also started to place a greater emphasis on using public transportation. This initiative had reduced the number of vehicles entering the area by 43 percent from 2002 to 2006, not to mention bringing down traffic accident and fatality rates. That year, Seoul won the Sustainable Transport Award from the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, which advocates high quality transport systems and policy solutions that make cities more liveable, equitable, and sustainable.

11. I strongly believe that we should aim for such successes in Malaysia and set sustainability goals that stretch beyond 2020. The Construction Industry Transformation Programme (CITP) which has undergone a midterm review last year, is a good start. As a national blueprint to guide the transformation of the construction industry, the CITP has four strategic thrusts, with aspired end-states.

- a. **Quality, Safety and Professionalism** – for these values to be ingrained in industry culture;
- b. **Environmental Sustainability** – for Malaysia’s sustainable construction to be a model for the emerging world;
- c. **Productivity** – for industry productivity to be more than doubled, matched by higher wages; and,
- d. **Internationalisation & Competitiveness** – for Malaysian champions to lead the charge locally and abroad.

12. I am proud that today, in conjunction with the opening ceremony of the ICW 2019, we will witness the completion of one of the key initiatives under CITP’s second strategic thrust, Environmental Sustainability. It is the launch of Sustainable INFRASTAR -- a rating tool developed to measure sustainable elements in the designing, building and operations of an infrastructure project. This tool, was developed by industry players, for the industry through various industry technical committees and taskforce established and coordinated by CIDB. Sustainable Infrastar has been carefully benchmarked against similar tools available internationally such as CEEQUAL from the UK, Envision from the US, ISCA from Australia and Pearl Estidama from UAE.

13. **INFRASTAR** stands for **Sustainable Infrastructure Rating Tool** where it applies an objective & evidence-based rating system that assesses each infrastructure project through important elements of sustainability such as site land use, ecological and environmental impact, the use of materials and resources, amount of waste generated, energy use as well as social and cultural impact of the project.
14. Through Sustainable INFRASTAR, we can now better assess the extent of sustainability measures adopted by infrastructure projects in Malaysia primarily at the pre-design and pre-construction stages. Since the development of infrastructure projects may contribute towards various ecological and sustainability concerns, the decision to pursue such projects must be rightly balanced between economy, social and environmental benefits.
15. The launch of INFRASTAR is definitely another great achievement of the CITP in the areas of environmental sustainability. In 2016, MyCREST which is a green rating tool for buildings was launched. MyCREST, which stands for the Malaysian Carbon Reduction and Environmental Sustainability Tool, aims to guide, assist, quantify, hence reduce, the built environment's impact in terms of reduced carbon emissions and environmental impact. The Sustainable INFRASTAR complements this effort by making sustainability assessments available for infrastructure projects.
16. Under the Environment Sustainability strategic thrust of CITP, one of the targets set is to achieve 50% of new infrastructure projects worth more than RM100 million to be certified in Sustainable INFRASTAR or any acceptable sustainability infrastructure tool from Dec 2020 onwards. We would like to make this mandatory so that it will pave the way to creating more sustainable infrastructure projects in Malaysia. I urge all industry players and relevant government agencies at the federal, state or regional level to come forward to have their infrastructure projects to be assessed by CIDB using the Sustainable INFRASTAR. The more assessments we conduct, the more we will learn about sustainable infrastructure in the country and the more we can guide the project owners and their teams on the important elements of infrastructure sustainability. The expenses for the

assessment are currently fully borne by CIDB, thus there is no better time than this to get your projects registered for the assessment.

17. I am happy to announce that to date, the Sustainable INFRASTAR, has already been piloted on five ongoing infrastructure projects in the country -- 3 of them are government projects and 2 private sector projects. The projects include:

- a. The Regional Sewage Treatment Plant at Bandar Indera Mahkota, Kuantan, Pahang,
- b. Power Generation Plant in Sandakan Sabah
- c. Kahang Dam Construction in Kluang
- d. Setiawangsa – Pantai Expressway (SPE) @ DUKE 3
- e. West Coast Expressway (Banting to Taiping – Section 4)

18. At this juncture, I would like to extend my utmost appreciation for the agencies and companies who have come forward to participate in this pilot project. They are:

- a. The Sewerage Services Department, and
- b. The Water Supply Department, from the Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources (KATS)
- c. The Special Taskforce on Sabah Electricity Supply, under the Ministry of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment & Climate Change (MESTECC)
- d. Ekovest Berhad, and
- e. IJM Construction.

Let's give them a round of applause!

Ladies and gentlemen,

19. The ultimate goal of the CITP is to raise the standards of the Malaysian construction industry to be on par with developed nations. To achieve this, one of the key strategies identified is for the industry to adopt economically and

environmentally sustainable practices. Only then can the construction sector be resilient to challenges for both today and tomorrow.

20. Construction industry players need to have the foresight to adopt new technologies, methodologies and ways of thinking in order to continue to thrive in this brave new world. The future of construction promises to be challenging yet holds many exciting opportunities. In fact, the future is already here and I urge all of us here to embrace "**Construction Beyond 2020**" in order to fully benefit from it.

21. The International Construction Week is the most appropriate platform to bring some of the most renowned minds in the world in order to catalyse a paradigm shift in the construction industry. I am certain that this year's ICW will be a dynamic platform that goes far towards elevating the quality of Malaysian construction, so that industry players can continue to improve and achieve excellence on par with the world.

22. On this note, I have the pleasure to declare the International Construction Week 2019 officially open.

Thank you.

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