

***Welcoming Remarks  
by Hj Idris Hj Jaafar, Head of HSE, Brunei Shell Petroleum Co Sdn Bhd  
at BSP and Wetlands International Biodiversity Action Plan Stakeholder Engagement  
Wednesday, October 17, 2012  
Empire Hotel & Country Club, Jerudong***

Honoured representatives from His Majesty's government, esteemed members and participants from the private sector and non-governmental agencies,

Distinguished guests, Tuan-tuan dan Puan-puan,

As'salamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabaraktuh,

Bismillahirrahman nirahim.

Good morning and thank you for your time to attend this event today.

OVER the past 80 years, Brunei Darussalam has been blessed with abundant natural resources that have transformed our once idyllic country into the prosperous and peaceful developed country that it is today. These advances have raised the living standards of Bruneians to a level that is amongst the highest in the region and indeed the world.

But after two centuries of rapid industrialisation, the world has realised that these advancements have come at a very high cost. Global warming, climate change and

ozone depletion are just some of the visibly worrying natural indicators that the planet is suffering as a direct result of our progress and modernity.

We in Brunei Darussalam, have already stood up and done something to stop the further degradation of our immediate environment by engaging our direct neighbours, Malaysia and Indonesia to set up the internationally-acclaimed Heart of Borneo Biodiversity Conservation Initiative in 2007, as a means of preserving our tropical heritage.

The lowland rainforests are particularly vital for the environment and biologically richest in Borneo, containing many locally endemic plants and animal species, which are found nowhere else in the world.

In BSP specifically, we are fully committed to protecting the environment in our business by implementing robust Health, Safety and Environment policies and regulations to ensure that we provide meaningful contributions to the country's sustainable development efforts.

This brings me to why we are here today. BSP is the leader in the private sector in providing support for the government's conservation efforts, especially in the Heart of Borneo project where we have also contributed funds and expertise on environmental awareness and conservation issues.

Today we are introducing to you BSP's collaboration with Wetlands International on this Biodiversity Action Plan project; where it is in line with the Belait District's Plan on peatland rehabilitation plans. This encompasses the Sungai Seria and its surrounding wetlands that have repeatedly been recognised as an area of high biodiversity value, which also comes under the overarching Heart of Borneo project.

Aside from the obvious green benefits that the Biodiversity Action Plan will generate, it will also provide other benefits such as mitigating the risks to public health from peat fire hazes, now sadly an annual occurrence, it further demonstrates our firm contribution to Brunei's efforts in helping to reduce global warming and ecosystem destruction.

In terms of greening Brunei's economy, as recently emphasised at the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development – which highlighted seven areas that requires priority attention; decent jobs, energy, sustainable cities, food security and sustainable agriculture, water, oceans and disaster readiness – the Biodiversity Action Plan Project is also aligned towards promoting and supporting the country's efforts towards Local Business Development, specifically for ecotourism.

No matter how learned a person is, no one knows the lay of any particular land better than those who call it home. And it is these people, with their local knowledge and skills that make them ideal as guides, rangers and even teachers, which can be

developed into job employment within their local communities. They can further support and work with academics and scientists, which could produce further potential down-stream projects, such as in the field of pharmaceuticals or traditional medicine.

Other value-added spin-offs that this project is aligned towards are for the contribution and development of knowledge and skills from the country's academic and research institutions. With our local resources, Bruneians can participate and contribute as specialists and research assistants whereby information can not only be retained in the country but also transferred to the public community and shared with other stakeholders in the Heart of Borneo project. Furthermore, this project can also provide alternative research grounds for students and enthusiasts alike.

It is our hope that through our close cooperation together with all the agencies involved here, we as a collective whole, would be able to make a meaningful difference to Brunei Darussalam in preserving its green heritage for future generations to come. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my deepest appreciation for your support in this Biodiversity Action Plan.

Thank you and please enjoy the rest of the presentation.

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