



**Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism
Brunei Darussalam**

OPENING REMARKS

**YANG BERHORMAT
DATO SERI SETIA AWG HAJI ALI BIN APONG
*Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism
Brunei Darussalam***

AT THE PROMOTION OF “BRUNEI RIVER HERITAGE TRAIL”

**Royal Wharf, Bandar Seri Begawan
Brunei Darussalam**

Wednesday, 17th April 2019

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Yang Berhormat Members of the State Legislative Council;
Your Excellencies, High Commissioners and Ambassadors;
Members of the Brunei Tourism Board
Permanent Secretaries;
Deputy Permanent Secretaries;
District Officers;
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

Salam Sejahtera and A Very Good Morning

1. First of all, I am pleased to be here today and to invite all of you to witness the launch of the “Brunei River Heritage Trail” – a product for our treasured *Sungai Brunei* - the banks and waters which flourished our city. The Brunei River carries with it, many rich history and stories, and therefore making it part of an important feature in the preservation of our Bruneian culture and heritage.
2. As you can see here, the Brunei River flows through our capital Bandar Seri Begawan and into Brunei Bay. It is the shortest major river in Brunei Darussalam, but also the most important. Historically, the pristine thick jungles of Borneo led to the establishment of our traditional settlements on stilts on the water and riverbanks, which we now know as Kampong Ayer. The use of traditional boats, the *perahu* or *sampan* – some of which you still see being used today - on the

Brunei River were the main method of transportation, communication and trade with those living inland.

3. On this heritage trail, you can also spot a few islands from the riverside, which symbolizes some of our famous myths and legends, such as the island of “*Jong Batu*” which tells the tale of *Nakhoda Manis* and his mother. Another island - called “*Lumut Lunting*” – tells the tale of an epic cockfight between the rulers of Brunei and the Majapahit Empire in the legendary tale of *Syair Awang Semaun*. Besides the islands and all along the river, you will also see lush green forest of mangroves filled with flora and fauna – and if you’re lucky, you can even catch a glimpse of our local wildlife, such as the proboscis monkeys and freshwater crocodiles.
4. Furthermore, not far from here and towards Kota Batu, you will find two museums located along the riverbanks. One is the Brunei Maritime Museum which houses the maritime history, culture and discoveries of Brunei which dates as far back as two thousand years ago, and next to it is the Malay Technology Museum which focuses on the traditional lifestyle and handicrafts of Brunei’s native ethnic groups.
5. Beyond the historical sites and landmarks that are dotted along Brunei River and Kota Batu, you will be able to spot Sungai Bunga Village which are identified by the neat rows of modern houses on the water. This modern resettlement is part of His Majesty’s Government’s initiative to provide housing fitted with modern facilities for Kampong Ayer, with schools, clinics and other amenities available for the community.

6. Brunei's new modern landmark, the 750-metre Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha Bridge can also be seen on this River Heritage Trail. Named after Her Majesty Duli Raja Isteri – wife of His Majesty Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, this is the world's second longest single-pylon cable-stayed bridge and is set to be an iconic landmark of Bandar Seri Begawan's skyline. Other key Islamic architectural landmarks you can spot are the Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Mosque with the Taman Mahkota Jubli Emas and if you look closely in beyond the dense mangrove trees, you can see the golden domes of the Istana Nurul Iman – the official royal residence of His Majesty.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. *Alhamdulillah*, Brunei Darussalam is experiencing a positive drive for tourism development. However, we must also strive to maintain, conserve and preserve our values, heritage, culture, and history. This heritage trail seeks to educate and create awareness both for our locals and our visitors on the historical development and birth of what we now know as Negara Brunei Darussalam today.

8. With the increase of connectivity by our national airlines, Royal Brunei, to around the region and beyond, we will see an increasing demand for diversity of tourism packages and products being offered - not only for the international market, but also for the local market. Last year, in comparison to 2017, the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism saw an increase of 7.4% of tourists coming into Brunei and we believe that this will steadily increase over time. *Inshaallah*, I hope we will all continue to do our part to preserve our culture and heritage and to continue to support and promote tourism for Brunei Darussalam.

Everyone is welcomed to explore the areas along the Brunei River – including those who are interested to conduct research and educational activities on our rich and humble history.

9. To conclude, I would like to thank and congratulate all those involved in realizing the “Brunei River Heritage Trail” and for their dynamic involvement and support and I look forward to working together with other stakeholders to support our local tourism initiatives. Today, we have some exhibitors consisting of tourism service providers as well as the local community showcasing and selling their products.
10. Please also take some time to visit the Royal Wharf Art Gallery where there is an on-going art exhibition by All Women Artists and there will also be an upcoming Comic Art Exhibition starting 19th April 2019. Feel free to look around, explore, participate and enjoy.
11. Thank you very much.

Wabillahi Taufik Wal Hidayah, Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.