



OPENING SPEECH

YANG BERTHORMAT

DATO SERI SETIA Ir. AWANG HAJI SUHAIMI BIN HAJI GAFAR

MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT

AT

PUJA MID-TERM AGM MEETING

Saturday, 16th February 2019

Dewan Betabur, Ministry of Development

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الحمد لله رب العالمين
والصلاة والسلام على أشرف الأنبياء والمرسلين
سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين
السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

1. Alhamdulillah, praises to Allah Subhanahu Wata'ala for letting us gather here at PUJA Midterm Annual General Meeting.
2. I would like to thank Pertubuhan Ukur Jurutera dan Arkitek (PUJA Brunei) for inviting and welcoming me to today's PUJA Mid-term Annual General Meeting (AGM). It is an honour to be given the privilege to address a group of professionals – Architects, Engineers and Surveyors, who have shaped our Construction Industry today.
3. Congratulations to PUJA for Celebrating their 35th year Anniversary this year. Since its formation, PUJA and Ministry of Development have been anchors in collectively reaching out and teaming up with all strategic partners and stakeholders to share knowledge and insights on construction-related issues and to ensure the building processes are in line with guidelines. I am sure the diversity of experts at this meeting will contribute towards innovative ideas that will help to enhance our progress in construction industry.

4. There are many aspects in the construction industry that make up the buildings we design and build. The utmost important aspect of all is the safety, health and security of each building, especially public buildings such as schools and educational institutions. Qualified person are expected to do their do due diligence to ensure buildings build are in compliance with Building Control Order and the safety and health of the public is a priority.
5. As key players in the industry, we shall not take this lightly and shall mutually come up with ways and strategies to be more efficient and rational in improving our services to Clients. We should always strengthen and streamline our building guidelines, making it adaptable as it is one of the tools that we refer to when it comes to handling building processes. We shall not compromise the safety and security of buildings, as it is one of the vital components, be it a home for our family, a shopping complex for attractions or a school for our children.
6. On the other hand, Ministry of Development is actively building on efforts to deliver strategic priorities where fundamental changes are required in the way the construction industry operates. The first goal of its main strategic direction is to achieve effective governance of the industry's policies and guidelines in preparation for an ever-changing market and technological conditions, be it in the regional and global economy. The initiatives that are actively being managed are the alignment of policies and regulations to improve governance, cost-effectiveness of projects implemented within reasonable time frame and strengthening the process and procedure of Occupancy Permit (OP) requirement before it can be issued or granted to the client or building owner.

7. The second goal is to optimize the capacity building of human resources and develop local contractors through stakeholder engagement and provide framework to support local participation. The initiatives that are currently undertaken are by supporting local business development on local content and enhancing the skills level of the construction workforce through education and training. Ministry of Development has also put forth its courses of action to review existing and to develop relevant construction guidelines and procedures. In addition, it will also promote the development of construction companies and workforce through local participation.

8. Ladies and gentlemen, the world is now a highly competitive place and trade barriers have been streamlined worldwide. Industries are free to locate themselves anywhere and Governments are actively competing to attract enterprises, jobs and prosperity they bring with them. Technological change reinforces these economic trends and knowledge is increasingly important both as an industry in its own right and as the basis for other industries.

9. These critical challenges that are brought upon us, cannot be combated alone in the construction industry, especially towards reaching the desirable outcomes in line with the needs of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR 4.0). Creating a modern, digitised economy in Brunei requires building; creating jobs, up-skilling, re-skilling and generating economic growth requires development and smartening our cities. Professionals from all private and public strategic partners within the construction sector are the heart of this transformation that Brunei is currently undergoing.

10. As stated in the Employers' / Employees Census 2017 statistics by Labour Department, there are a total of 25,211 workers in the construction industry alone. However, within the majority of the workers, a total of 22,510 are foreigners, whereas only 2,141 are locals and 560 are permanent residents. This ratio amounts to a total of 1,777 active business entities within the construction industry. Indirectly, the issue of youth unemployment relates to these challenges we are currently facing and are yet to overcome. The world is bursting with opportunities every day and it is time for us to jointly tackle our youth unemployment issue with positive spirit.

11. For instance, mentoring should be more widely encouraged – reassurance and motivation can do wonders for their mind-set and morale, affecting their employability. Companies, community groups and individual volunteers shall get involved and bring out every possibility. For instance, companies shall connect with jobseekers by providing mentors and apprenticeships, building on the concept of 'talent incubators' for diverse backgrounds and skills. This will help improve businesses and give our youths a sense of responsibility and purpose as well as more routes into the workplace. This can help ensure that our youths have the skills they need to get into work, and to ensure that Brunei's employers and employees are well placed to adapt to the workplaces of the future.

12. Under the Ministry of Development's Local Business Development Framework, the priorities are Local Ownership, Local Business Prioritisation and Local Employment. Under these priorities, the ministry's objectives are to identify policy solutions that will advance its agenda. This contributes to the facilitation of procedural enablers for local businesses to be awarded projects in the ministry and to identify critical

and viable job opportunities for locals to be employed. In early February, Ministry of Development had their first engagement with several key Construction Industry players chaired by Deputy Minister of Development, Ark. Awang Haji Marzuke bin Haji Mohsin.

13. Ministry of Development has always been an important affiliate of PUJA throughout the years and it has indeed been a great journey that has brought all of us together today. It is important for us to recognise our milestones and the commitment of our fellow respected members and continuous support from the Councils and Committee members.
14. Ministry of Development looks forward to growing and up-surfing alongside PUJA (Brunei) through more upcoming significant engagements as we move forward for the benefit of our country and PUJA members.

Wabillahi Taufik Walhidayah
Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh
Thank you