UCAPAN OLEH

YB. DATUK SERI PANGLIMA MADIUS TANGAU
MENTERI SAINS, TEKNOLOGI DAN INOVASI

"STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP:
STRATEGIC PLANNING TO ACCELERATE
AGRIBIOTECHNOLOGY AGENDA IN MALAYSIA"

KOMPLEKS ABI, SERDANG
27 OKTOBER 2015

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Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Penganjur

Salam 1Malaysia, Salam 1 MOSTI dan Salam Sejahtera.

Terlebih dahulu saya ingin mengucapkan berbanyak terima kasih kepada **National Institutes of Biotechnology Malaysia (NIBM)** dan **Malaysian Biotechnology Information Centre (MABIC)** kerana telah sudi menjemput saya ke ***STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP: STRATEGIC PLANNING TO ACCELERATE AGRIBIOTECHNOLOGY AGENDA IN MALAYSIA***. Saya juga ingin merakamkan ucapan syabas dan tahniah kepada pihak NIBM dan MABIC di atas penganjuran Bengkel ini.

2. Saya yakin penganjuran Bengkel ini akan membawa banyak manfaat dalam konteks perkongsian ilmu dan maklumat, mengeratkan hubungan dengan para penyelidik, syarikat pelaburan mahupun dari industri bioteknologi.

3. Bagi memanfaatkan kehadiran tetamu antarabangsa, izinkan saya meneruskan ucapan dalam Bahasa Inggeris.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. **Biotechnology has been identified as one of the key technologies that will accelerate Malaysia's transformation into a high income developed nation by 2020.** Accordingly, the government has encouraged the development of biotechnology through its policies and financial support for research, development, innovation and commercialisation, infrastructure and human capital development in this field.

5. **Biotechnology has vast potential in variety of sectors and agriculture is one of the main beneficiaries.** It has been proven that agribiotechnology have increased food production, elevated poverty among farmers, and reduced use of pesticides worldwide.

6. Malaysia has **laid a strong foundation** in agricultural biotechnology, being one of the the world's leader in the production of several industrial crops such as oil palm, rubber, cocoa, pepper and tropical timber which asserts Malaysia's strong agriculture base.

7. Nonetheless we are still a **nation that imports most of our food and feed** and that our farming community is ageing. Another major setback is **the lack of seed research and industry in Malaysia.** Our farming community is heavily dependent on imported seeds.

8. I strongly believe biotechnology could play an important role in **reducing our dependence on imports and spur the nation's bioeconomy** in line with the **Bioeconomy Transformation Programme (BTP)**, launched three years ago. It is important to realise that **agriculture is beyond producing raw materials.** The paradigm has to be shifted towards producing high-value food products, bio compounds with industrial applications and also wealth creation from biomass.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. Biotechnology in agriculture ranges from **conventional breeding, tissue culture, and marker assisted breeding** to more advanced tools such as **genetic modification (GM) or commonly known as modern biotechnology.** Research in this area is very dynamic and is evolving into more precise technologies such as **gene editing and synthetic biology,** supported by the rapid development of advanced instrumentation that facilitates both **speed and precision** in acquiring desired traits in crops and animals.

10. The International Services for the Acquisition of Agribiotech Applications (ISAAA) reports that the GM or biotech crops have been adopted by ***18 million farmers worldwide in 28 countries*** and these crops are cultivated on **181.5 million hectares of land**.

11. Within the ASEAN region, the **Philippines has begun since 2003 cultivating Bt corn**, a variant of maize that has been genetically altered and **Vietnam has started cultivation of Bt corn** and **Indonesia, their home-grown drought-tolerant sugarcane.**

12. It was estimated that the adoption of biotech crops has increased crop production by **USD133 billion between 1996 to 2013**. There was also a **reduction in the use of pesticides** whereby 500 million kg of active ingredients were saved over a period of 16 years between 1996 to 2012.

13. Furthermore, **emission of carbon dioxide has been reduced** to an amount equal to removing 12.4 million cars of the roads. On top of this, biotech crops **bring socioeconomic benefits** to the farmers where it has helped to alleviate poverty for 16.5 million small farmers and their families.

14. While the benefits of biotech crops are well documented, the **technology is still shrouded with uncertainties** and there are many hurdles to be addressed before these crops could be successfully cultivated. To enhance public acceptance of agribiotech products, the public has to be engaged from the initial stages of research in order to gain public trust through continuous and effective communication strategies.

15. My Ministry has established the **Agro-Biotechnology Institute or ABI** under the governance of **National Institutes of Biotechnology Malaysia (NIBM).** With the vision to become a premier centre with the ability to place Malaysia in a strategic forefront position of the global agribiotechnology, ABI has embarked on the mission to **transform Malaysian agriculture sector through injection of new knowledge, discoveries and innovations in agribiotechnology.**

16. In this regard, the NIBM could form strategic partnership with relevant institutes and become one of the key players in realising the **National Biotechnology Policy and the Bio-Economy Transformation Programme goals**.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

17. In closing, I wish to take this opportunity to extend my heartiest congratulations to **Dr Mahaletchumy Arujanan**, Executive Director of MABIC for being recognised as one of the **100 most influential person in biotechnology in the world by Scientific American Worldview**, in June this year. Her **expertise in biotech communication** will complement the existing RDIC ecosystem of ABI to catalyse the agribiotech industry.

18. I would also like to **applaud the continuous collaborative efforts between NIBM and MABIC** in providing a platform for stakeholders to deliberate on relevant issues to drive the National Biotech Agenda. It is also to my pleasure to welcome all speakers and participants of this workshop especially the international biotech experts from the Philippines, India, Bangladesh, Australia, Vietnam and Indonesia.

19. On that note, I have the **honour to declare** this ***STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP: STRATEGIC PLANNING TO ACCELERATE AGRIBIOTECHNOLOGY AGENDA IN MALAYSIA,*** open and I wish you all the success in achieving the objectives of this workshop.

Sekian. Terima kasih.

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