WELCOME ADDRESS BY
YB DATUK DR. ABU BAKAR BIN MOHAMAD DIAH
DEPUTY MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

THE OPENING CEREMONY OF GEOTROPIKA 2016

17 FEBRUARY 2016 (WEDNESDAY)
SERI PACIFIC HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR

YBHG. PROF. DATUK IR. DR. WAHID BIN OMAR
Vice Chancellor, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM);

YBHG. PROF. DR. KHAIRUL ANUAR KASSIM
Dean of Faculty of Civil Engineering, UTM;

YBRS. ASSOC. PROF. DR. EDY TONNIZAM BIN MOHAMAD
Chairman of GEOTROPIKA 2016;

YBHG. PROF DATO' DR. IBRAHIM KOMOO
Chairman of Southeast Asia Disaster Prevention Research Initiative (SEADPRI-UKM)**,** Malaysia;

PROF. LEUNG CHUN FAI
National University of Singapore;

International Delegations from Various Regions of the World, Distinguished Guests, Technical Talk Speakers, Paper Presenters, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalamualaikum W.B.T and a very good morning to all of you.

1. First and foremost, I would like to extend a very warm welcome or ***"Selamat Datang"*** to Malaysia to all participants hailing from various regions around the globe. I would also like to record my appreciation to the organiser, Department of Geotechnics and Transportation, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) for inviting me to officiate the **10th International Conference on Geotechnical and**

Transportation Engineering (GEOTROPIKA 2016). My deepest admiration to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI), Himpunan Ahli Teknik Indonesia (HATTI), Public Works Department Malaysia (JKR), Malaysian Highway Authority (LLM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Southern Branch of Institution of Engineers (IEM), Road Engineering Association of Malaysia (REAM) and Lafarge Pro Solutions for the contributions rendered to ensure this conference will be a great success.

2. **GEOTROPIKA 2016** is a premier avenue for the presentation of new advances and research results in the field of civil engineering. I was made to understand that this conference will bring together leading researchers, engineers and scientists in the materials and process fields of interest from around the globe. GEOTROPIKA 2016 is also a celebration of 25 years of hard work and dedication by the Department of Geotechnics and Transportation, UTM to showcase the recent developments and advancements in design and construction of geotechnical and transportation infrastructures. This conference will also provide the platform to discuss and to deliberate future directions for the 21st century to face the ever-increasing risks of geohazards. I was also informed that GEOTROPIKA 2016 aims to establish scientific linkages at the global scale to share and disseminate valuable information on civil engineering researches and activities in the developing countries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

3. In the wake of potential problems in geohazards, the engineering and construction community are facing the daunting task to provide solutions and to adhere to the current needs of society without any negative impact to our future generations. Geohazards can be defined as a geological state which has the potential to create widespread damage and such examples would include tectonic issues, earthquakes and volcanoes, or other naturally occurring processes such as landslides and mud flows or more home induced matters like drilling through an over pressured geological zone. Thus, it is imperative that anyone in the industry dealing with geological environment should be cautious of the risks and how to avoid them.

Ladies and gentlemen,

4. I was made to understand that risk assessment is becoming a primary tools in order to identify future potential geohazards. This assessment would require various data and analysis to determine the potential threats as early as possible. Through synergised efforts from multiple Government agencies such as Malaysia Meteorological Department (MetMalaysia), Public Works Department (JKR), Department of Irrigation and Drainage (JPS) and Malaysia Remote Sensing Agency (ARSM), the data collected can be analysed at any given time and thus will provide the integrated mitigation action plan for the threats. At MOSTI, we firmly believe that through smart partnerships with the universities and industries will further strengthen the risk assessment of geohazards. In light of this, MOSTI is providing the necessary grants to increase and strengthen the collaboration, networking and smart partnership with another significant Party at the national or international level.

5. Recently, Malaysia had experiences major geohazards in these past 2 years (2014-2015) such as the Southeast Asian haze inflicting Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore; Sabah earthquake with 5.9 on the Richter scale and also heavy floods in the central and east coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Mitigation plans led by the Government through the National Security Council (NSC) were deployed as a response for the geohazards. I am also happy to note that the mitigation plan had also involved other parties (NGOs, industry, public and the ASEAN Governments) to ensure strategic mitigation measurement plan as I am sure apt and quicker response team and unit will be able to be deployed.

6. Based on our prior experiences, the mitigation plan would require a long term strategy instead of short term solutions. To this extent, the Malaysian Government has provided additional funds and research grants to fully prepared ourselves on any future occurrences. These funds and research grants would provide the opportunity for us to investigate the geohazards phenomenon and subsequently will provide a long term solutions in scientific findings and engineering for our socioeconomic benefits. MOSTI is in the view that improved risk

assessment and mitigation plans that will focus on the planning of land usage, policy on construction practices, development of an early warning system, recovery and awareness programme will be the major output from these researches.

Ladies and gentlemen,

7. It is my firm belief that **sustainable development** is another key solutions to face the geohazards. During the recent General Assembly of United Nations in 2015, seventeen (17) new goals were established for a new Sustainable Development Goals until the year 2030. The new goals is an action plan for the people, planet and prosperity. Malaysia has taken progressive action on this matter as the 11th Malaysia Plan was already aligned with the United Nations agenda. This reaffirms the Malaysian Government commitment to the wellbeing of the "rakyat". Sustainable Development in the 11th Malaysia Plan (RMKe-11) will include green growth for sustainable environments, resilient macro economy, society wellbeing improvements, human capital and infrastructure advancement.

Ladies and gentlemen,

8. The theme for GEOTROPIKA 2016, “Engineering Challenges Arising from Tropical Hazards” will covers all topics within the spectrum of geohazards research. I was informed by the GEOTROPIKA 2016 Chairman, Assoc. Prof Dr. Edy Tonnizam Mohamad, the fields included in the technical sessions of GEOTROPIKA 2016 are geotechnical, highway and transportation engineering. There will be five (5) keynote speakers and three (3) technical talks by the industry that will be delivered in this conference. There are 96 technical papers to be presented and two (2) parallel sessions for each time slot throughout GEOTROPIKA 2016.

9. I sincerely hope that GEOTROPIKA 2016 delegates will be able to develop shared strategies to meet the future challenges. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Department of Geotechnics and Transportation, Faculty of Civil Engineering, UTM especially to the

organising and the technical committee members, the co-organisers, collaborators, sponsors and the event managers from UTM SPACE, for all your cooperation and contribution to the convening and the success of this conference.

10. I would also like to congratulate UTM for their proactive approach to establish a center that will provide the integrated mitigation action plan to address tropical geoengineering issues existed in our beloved country and within the region. It is hoped that the centre of tropical geoengineering will become the catalyst in this field for the betterment of the nation and mankind.

11. My final words, I wish that all participants would have a fruitful interaction and discussion in this conference and also a pleasant and wonderful experience staying in Kuala Lumpur. On that note, I hereby officiating the opening of the **10th International Conference on Geotechnical and Transportation Engineering (GEOTROPIKA 2016)** and also to launch the Centre of Tropical Geoengineering, UTM.

Thank you.