



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

AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF
THE WORLD CONGRESS OF MALACOLOGY (WCM) 2016

HOTEL JEN, PENANG
TUESDAY (19TH JULY 2016), TIME: 9.00 A.M.

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim, Assalamualaikum W.B.T.
Salam Sejahtera, Salam 1Malaysia and a very good morning.

*****Salutation list to be finalised based on the confirmed attendance***

YBHG. PROF. DATO' DR. AHMAD SHUKRI MUSTAPA KAMAL
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International Affairs), Universiti
Sains Malaysia representing the Vice-Chancellor, Universiti Sains
Malaysia;

YBRS. PROF. DR. AMIRUL AL-ASHRAF ABDULLAH
Dean, School of Biological Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia;

YBRS. ASSOCIATE PROF. DR. AILEEN TAN SHAU-HWAI
President, Unitas Malacologica;

Council Members, Respected Keynote Speakers, Fellow Participants;

Institutional Representatives, Distinguished Guests, Media
Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. First and foremost, please allow me to record my deepest appreciation for this invitation and I am truly honoured to address all of you today at the opening of **The World Congress of Malacology (WCM) 2016, the 19th International Congress of Unitas Malacologica.**

2. I would like to wish a very warm welcome to all participants of WCM 2016 to Malaysia. It is truly encouraging to see such a diverse crowd presence today, which I believe is represented by more than **40 countries.**

3. I believe this congregation is clearly a good indicator of knowledge sustainability through knowledge sharing among multinational and multigenerational scientists. I was made to understand that in the coming days, intensive research presentations from the participants will take centre stage surrounding a very niche study area, which is **Malacology.** This congress will be a great platform to shed light on the current knowledge of molluscs to everyone.

4. Of course, the congress would not even be made possible if not for the hard work and dedication put forth by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aileen Tan Shau-Hwai as the President of Unitas Malacologica and her team from the School of Biological Sciences. We should also applaud Universiti Sains Malaysia's generous support to host this conference. I was informed that this congress is a triennial event which dates back to 1962 and that this is the first time that it has been organised in Malaysia. I was also been informed that Dr. Aileen is also the first female President of the 53-year old Unitas Malacologica when she was elected back in 2013. Your dedication in the promotion of the Malacological field in our nation must be lauded and is deeply appreciated.

Ladies and gentlemen,

5. Research in Malacology, albeit in small scopes, has always been supported by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation of Malaysia (MOSTI). Over the last 10 years, MOSTI has successfully granted 19 funds related to multidisciplinary studies of mollusc. Of the 19,

14 funds were allocated to the research and potential development of the Bivalve aquaculture industry.

6. At MOSTI, we are tasked to transform Malaysia into a high economic growth country, a developed nation inclusive of socio-economic development. The need for research and development towards building a nation with enhanced quality of life is only possible through the development and retention of first world talent base. I believe WCM 2016 will serve as an excellent platform that would holistically tackle knowledge gaps and share trans-boundary good-case practices.

7. As we move towards a developed nation, we will also need to ensure to bring balance to our environment. Initiatives in the previous 5 Years Malaysia Plan have placed significant importance in R&D, commercialisation and innovation. As Malaysia advances towards becoming a high value-added and knowledge-based economy, innovation will continue to be the essence in this country's development agenda.

8. The Government has also worked closely with countless stakeholders to extract the value from R&D especially with regards to strengthening the tri-partite collaboration between research institutions, industry and academia. To further improve our global rankings, MOSTI under the Eleventh Malaysia Plan spanning from 2016-2020, will promote greater collaboration and integration across the Government, industry, and academia. We wish to invite players from the industry, who understands the market and industry trend to partner with technology development organisations and R&D institutions in bringing outputs of R&D into the market.

Ladies and gentlemen,

9. Bivalve aquaculture has been a big contributor in our economy for a long time. However, the status of Malaysian bivalve aquaculture, especially in cockle culture has declined tremendously. At the peak of the cockle trade in the year 1995, cockle landing tonnage amounted to

100,000 metric tonnes. Over the course of 20 years, the production of cockles has declined 83% to a mere 16,000 metric tonnes. In the past 2 years alone, cockle production decreased 58%, partly due to pollution. Malaysia has opened her doors to various local and international agencies, one of them being the **Japan International Research Centre for Agricultural Sciences**, to tackle the obstacle of reviving this industry. We are certainly open to more collaboration which could aid in strengthening trans-boundary relationships, not only for molluscs, but science for the betterment of humankind as a whole.

Ladies and gentlemen,

10. In a nutshell, science and technology will be meaningless without the sharing of its application to those who need it most. I am looking forward for greater partnerships between the Government, private sectors, educational institutions and community to enable a more prosperous world. I am without a doubt that all of you present today are more than capable to achieve the very best in your fields. So, remember to celebrate your achievements and breakthroughs while you are at it.

On that note, it gives me great pleasure to declare the “**World Congress of Malacology (WCM) 2016**” officially open.

Thank you.