



اوتوري تي كبحسان كسلامتن  
كصيحتن. دان عالم سكيتر  
Safety, Health and Environment  
National Authority



WORKPLACE SAFETY & HEALTH CONFERENCE

IN CONJUNCTION WITH WORLD DAY FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK 2024

30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024, 08:00 AM – 10:30 AM

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS & OFFICIAL OPENING BY GUEST OF HONOUR:  
YANG BERHORMAT PEHIN DATU LAILARAJA MAJOR GENERAL (R) DATO  
PADUKA SERI HAJI AWANG HALBI BIN HAJI MOHD YUSSOF  
MINISTER AT THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE,  
MINISTER OF DEFENCE II AND MINISTER IN-CHARGE OF SHENA**

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

**Yang Mulia Dato Seri Paduka Awang Haji Khairuddin bin Haji Abdul Hamid,  
Deputy Minister of Finance and Economy (Economy),  
Ministry of Finance and Economy**

**Yang Mulia Permanent Secretaries,  
Yang Mulia SHENA Board of Directors,  
Yang Mulia Acting ICEO SHENA,  
Yang Mulia SHENA Senior Management Team,  
Yang Mulia Invited Penalists,  
Representatives of Government Ministries, Agencies and Industry,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**



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**Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh,  
Salam Sejahtera and a Very Good Morning.**

First and foremost, it is indeed a privilege to be with all of you today at the opening ceremony of the Workplace Safety and Health Conference and an honour to open my speech regarding a pressing issue that affects not only people at work but has consequences on multiple aspects and levels of our society: the impact of climate change on occupational safety and health.

Recalling back in 2018, the World Health Organisation's COP24 Special Report on Health and Climate Change described climate change as '*the greatest health challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with major threats to life, health and well-being*'. Further, in the "State of the Global Climate 2023" World Meteorological Organization's Report, last year was the warmest year on record.

**Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

When we speak of climate and the weather; we are also speaking of health and human well-being. Climate variability leads to consequences of extreme weather conditions which in turn affect the natural environment that provides clean air, food, water, shelter, and security. Its effect is already upon us, with health and safety for the people and workers affected, and all natural systems due to the increased temperatures, ultraviolet radiation exposure, contact with pathogens, indoor-outdoor air pollution, and extreme weather can increase existing risks or create new ones, such as heat-related disorders, vector- and water-borne diseases, allergies, accidents, and losses. The implications of extreme weather conditions are potentially high health costs, reduced quality of life, and productivity and economic losses.



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However, it would be wholly unrealistic of us to limit the definition of those who may be impacted by climate change to only persons who happen to work outside. Nearly every sector can be impacted, with risks for those in the agriculture sector, forestry, construction, emergency workers as well as indoor workers, especially in heat-intensive or physically demanding industries. The risk exposure may be further aggravated by other factors such as worker age, pre-existing medical conditions, and socio-economic status.

Climate change therefore warrants the study of new occupational hazards with due consideration of the risk exposure of specific vulnerable occupations. Risk mitigation strategies should also be adapted or customized to the diversity of our working population and the hazards we face in our region. While bridging the interactions of climate, occupational hazards, and worker vulnerability may be a relatively new area of research, emerging risks must also be identified to improve hazard and risk prevention.

We must take steps to observe and record diseases, injuries, accidents and occupational hazards as well as determine those workers and occupations that that are most at risk to allow us to produce an approach that is cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary. As policies begin with data, there is an eminent need to enhance our domestic research and knowledge on climate change effects on workers towards improving working options as an effective occupational safety and health response.

**Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am proud to recall that in 2021 during the United nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam reaffirmed our commitment to a low carbon and climate-resilient future in alignment with our National Climate Change Policy, where we have committed to reduce 20 per cent of our greenhouse gas



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emissions by 2030 and declared our move towards net zero by 2050, driven mainly through energy transition and forests preservation.

Further, in upholding His Majesty Kebawah Duli Yang Maha Mulia Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, Sultan dan Yang Di-Pertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam's Titah during the 28<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 28), His Majesty stressed that the climate change is the current generation's most urgent challenge as it is threatening its existence.

We had iterated then and we continue to express today that it is not just about climate mitigation, but it is also equally important that we forge climate adaptation – that we adjust to the effects, avoid harm and *insya Allah* create better opportunities.

**Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The burden of climate-related hazards at work is expected to increase in the future. These impacts are likely to cause significant consequences for the health, well-being and safety at the workplace particularly in our tropical Southeast Asian region, which is currently exposed to high temperatures and wetter seasons. For example, will we see the need to manage risk by changing how work is organised? Yet, we are faced with the challenge of limited information on the true cost of climate change-related health impacts on workers – information that would allow us to craft correct measures, whether at the policy, sectoral or industry level.

It is indeed encouraging that through platforms such as the Workplace Safety and Health Conference 2024, organised by the Safety, Health and Environment National Authority, we can motivate active discussions towards workplace preparedness such as hazard recognition, assessment of climate-



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change vulnerable occupations, determining strategies to eliminate or minimise the impact of hazards as well as the importance of having emergency planning and business continuity measures in response to natural disasters.

As we confront these challenges, we must begin with education and awareness to foster a mindset of adaptation and resilience measures to safeguard the well-being of workers.

Governments and authorities, industries and the private sector, workers and employers, and civil society organisations play a crucial role and must come together to develop and implement policies that promote prevention, sustainable practices as well as training, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prioritize the protection of workers' fundamental rights and well-being.

**Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The impact of climate change is crucial on occupational safety and health is not a distant concern nor a piece of scientific literature. It is impacting workers' productivity facing major categories of employees exposed to outdoor such as firefighters, security personnel, bricklayers, carpenters, and farmers - and this reality is placed upon us today without choice or options. It is only by recognizing the holistic approach and interconnectedness of national policy, environmental sustainability and workplace safety that we can build a more resilient and more equitable future.

Let us finally commit – together -- to rise to the challenge before it is too late.

Thank you and Wabillahi Taufik wal Hidayah  
Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh