



SPEECH

**YANG BERHORMAT
PEHIN UDANA KHATIB DATO PADUKA SERI SETIA
USTAZ HAJI AWANG BADARUDDIN BIN PENGARAH
DATO PADUKA HAJI AWANG OTHMAN
*MINISTER OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS***

**OCCASION:
OPENING REMARKS ON THE OCCASION OF DIALOGUE WITH
THE SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS**

**ON:
THURSDAY, 9 MUHARRAM 1445 / 27 JULY 2023**

**AT:
DEWAN MULTAQA, MINISTRY OF RELIGIOUS OFFICE**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَبِهِ نَسْتَعِينُ عَلَى أُمُورِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ
وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

(Salutations)

His Excellency Mr Heng Aik Yeow, High Commissioner of the Republic of Singapore to Brunei Darussalam,

Pengiran Dato Seri Paduka Haji Mohd. Tashim bin Pengiran Haji Hassan, Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs,

Ms Teo Zsin Woon, Permanent Secretary (Development) of the Ministry of National Development and Permanent Secretary (Development) of the Public Service Department as the Head of the Delegation and the esteemed delegation of the 30th Senior Management Programme,

Awang Haji Mohammad Rosli bin Haji Ibrahim, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Religious Affairs,

Mr Shaun Grosse, Deputy High Commissioner of the Republic of Singapore to Brunei Darussalam,

Heads of Department, Officials, Ladies and Gentlemen

First and foremost, I would like to thank Your Excellency Mr Heng Aik Yeow, High Commissioner of the Republic of Singapore to Brunei Darussalam for the initiative to hold our meeting this afternoon.

For the 30th Senior Management Programme (SMP) participants, I warmly welcome all of you to Brunei Darussalam.

As you know, the meaning of Darussalam is Abode of Peace.

Yes it is true ! Brunei Darussalam that you are visiting now is a peaceful country. Its government is very stable and the system is workable. There are no incidence of serious crimes that affect the safety and security of the people. Alhamdulillah (Thanks to Allah the Al Mighty), there are no frightening threats and situation as such.

Despite that, Brunei Darussalam is not listed in the Top 10 countries categorized as a peaceful country in the world. The Global Peace Index, 2023 does not enlist Brunei Darussalam as one of the Top 10 peaceful countries, compared to your country, Singapore.

Congratulations Your Excellency Mr Heng and all of you, SMP participants!

The Republic of Singapore is ranked second after Japan. Followed next in order of ranking by eight other developed countries, namely Czech Republic, Slovenia, Portugal, Austria, Denmark, Ireland, New Zealand and Iceland. ([https:// www. globalcitizen solution.com/most-peaceful-country-in-the-world/uploaded](https://www.globalcitizen.com/most-peaceful-country-in-the-world/uploaded) 27 May 2023)

Please accept our sincere congratulations.

Meanwhile, we are conscious that Brunei Darussalam's *Abode of Peace* is not comparable to the peacefulness of the 10 world countries readily known as developed countries.

Indeed, we need to be more active and serious in developing and making it belong to the category of developed countries, inshaa Allah (God Willing), especially through the goals and platform of Brunei Darussalam's National Vision 2035.

2. I understand your visit is short, surely compact.

I am thankful that the 30th SMP that you are participating in includes a visit to the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Initially, intended as a dialogue with me as the Minister of Religious Affairs concerning issues of your interest, but with all due respect, I requested this to be a meeting session accompanied by leaders in the Ministry especially the Deputy Minister, Permanent Secretary and Heads of Departments/Divisions/Unit.

In what ever format we are in, I hope you can fulfill your wishes, as conveyed by His Excellency Mr Heng Aik Yeow in his letter to me, "*For the participants*

to gain a better understanding of the key development in Brunei - the background and context of the special relationship between Singapore and Brunei, as well as explore ways to sustain and strengthen the bilateral relationship for the long-term”.

Therefore, I welcome such good wishes. It is very true for each generation that currently or are going to bear heavy responsibility to ensure the 'special relationship between our two countries' is preserved through a better understanding of the key development in Brunei and also in Singapore.

Such is the meaning that we can observe while learning, and at the same time appreciate the development in each country.

We may find developments in our respective countries, which is the best way and choice respectively in accordance with our respective national interests. But we understand and appreciate it.

I am not going to mention it specifically.

3. We are now in The Ministry of Religious Affairs, therefore it is appropriate for me to present briefly about the Ministry :

3.1- In a nutshell, the Ministry of Religious Affairs is responsible in executing the policies and directions made by the Brunei Islamic Religious Council (Majlis Ugama Islam Brunei – MUIB).

3.2- We are guided by our 5- Year Strategic Plan, currently 2020-2024, to ensure areas of focuses will be delivered strategically and systematically.

3.3- The main areas of focus are Religious Education, Islamic propagation and Social Welfare.

3.4- Apart from that, some services rendered are Hajj and Umra Management, Mosque Affairs, Zakat (Alms) and Wakaf (Endowment) Management, Prosecution and enforcement of Islamic Law, Halal Compliance Management, and other support services such as estate management, Islamic event managements, international relations, public relations, IT services, administration and others.

4. You may be interested to know about MIB (Melayu Islam Beraja), surely because the information that you have for now: it is Brunei Darussalam's philosophy as mentioned in the Proclamation of Independence on 1 January 1984.

You are correct that MIB is Brunei's national philosophy. And it is also necessary to relate that, it is called and became the philosophy of the independent and sovereign country of Brunei based on its history of almost seven hundred years.

And there is more information that you need to add about the Proclamation of Brunei Independence in 1984 and the significance of MIB being proclaimed.

The fact of the Brunei Darussalam' Proclamation of Independence contain four segments.

Firstly, about the history of Brunei's relationship with foreign powers, especially with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland through friendship-agreement (1847) , later became a protectorate state (1888), and a self-government and a written constitution (1959). On that basis, around twenty years later in 1979, both parties agreed that in 1984 Brunei would resume all international responsibilities as an independent and sovereign nation;

Secondly, it is the political determination to maintain the independent Brunei as to forever be a sovereign, democratic and independent Malay Muslim Monarchy upon the teachings of Islam according to Ahlis Sunnah Waljamaah and based upon the principle of liberty, trust and justice and ever seeking with the guidance and blessing of Allah.

Thirdly, it is the determination and desire that a country with such a model/pattern and philosophy is to be developed for the well-being of its people; and

Fourthly, the desire to establish friendly relations and international cooperation on the basis of mutual respect for the sovereignty and integrity of the country without any interference.

Therefore MIB is the model of Brunei's statehood by philosophizing its historical and cultural values as well as its religious best practices.

That's about MIB. It is called “a Malay Country” because its historical background is so stated the same way that there are countries that are called by their nationalities such as some “Arab countries”, while in Asia there is Japan, there is China, and so on.

It is called a monarch state “Malay Islamic Monarchy” or “Malay Muslim Monarchy” because of its history.

It is called a democratic country, indeed as such as in its culture there is a strong element of consultative practices, discussion in meetings and the Monarchy. The practice of discussion and meeting is the main feature in the concept and practice of democracy.

So for Brunei the democracy of its independence and sovereignty is democracy based on Islamic teachings called its *Shura*, which is consultative democracy that is practiced in its Monarchy system at different levels. And in this era, it is embodied in the way it is governed through formal meetings and according to the Constitution.

This is contained in Article 5 of the Constitution, the Privy Council; Article 10, Council of Ministers (Council of Ministers); Article 23 National Assembly (Legislative Council).

So it is hoped that additional information about MIB that I have mentioned just now will be beneficial in understanding Brunei in the past, now and in the future.

Moreover, MIB is a national philosophy protected under the Constitution (as stated under):

Article 42 Clause (e) : Any Bill, motion, petition or business that may have the effect of lowering or adversely affect directly the standing or prominence of the National Philosophy of Melayu Islam Beraja;

Article 53 Clause 1 (A) Subclause (a) : from any comments directly or indirectly derogatory of the National Philosophy of Malay Islamic Monarchy.

5. Back to the close relationship between Singapore and Brunei.

We are confident that the relationship between our two countries has been forged wisely in the fifties by our leaders, Duli Yang Maha Mulia the 28th Sultan of Brunei, the late Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien and the late First Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, who was honored with a Brunei Royal decoration, *Darjah Kerabat Laila Utama Yang Amat Dihormati, DK* carrying the title *Dato Laila Utama*.

Thereafter, the leaders who took over in Singapore or in Brunei, His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam very much understand and appreciate the existing bond of friendship.

That is why in the following eras until now it has developed into areas of cooperation that are mutually beneficial to both parties.

And I believe, in that direction the next generation leadership will always aim to preserve it well.

The Senior Management Program you are following now is a manifestation of that pure intention. So that from time to time the two countries are in a mode to ensure the continuity of the friendly relationship between Brunei and Singapore in its genuine spirit that has been forged for almost seventy years now.

Looking back, I personally believe in the importance and effectiveness of creating the spirit with a mode to guarantee the continuity of close relations between our two countries, not just the relationship at ministerial level and high-ranking officials levels in a formal setting.

I propose to establish relationships at the public and grassroots level. The general public would like to see that the People's Consultative Council in Singapore and the Mukim and Kampong (Village and Mukim) Consultative Councils in Brunei regularly exchange visits between them.

And based on personal experience as a former Brunei Government scholarship student who had the opportunity to study in Singapore, years of experience in the Lion City, especially in the atmosphere of Singapore in the 50s leading to the 60s I admit that I know and understand Singapore, respecting it as a successful country in ensuring its multi-racial and multireligious people's harmony.

I believe the same is true of my fellow former scholarship students who were sent to Singapore between 1950 and 1982, whose number almost reached five hundred people. Now everyone is in their golden age! We understand Singapore very well now. Singapore succeeds in style as a developed country that caters to the needs of its people who are multi-racial and religions.

Thank You.

وبالله التوفيق والهداية
والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

- Pehin Udana Khatib Dato Paduka Seri Setia
Ustaz Haji Awang Badaruddin bin Pengarah
Dato Paduka Haji Awang Othman,
Menteri Hal Ehwal Ugama.

Pejabat Menteri Hal Ehwal Ugama,
8 Muharram 1445/ 26 Julai 2023.