

**Opening Remarks by Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Singamanteri Colonel (R) Dato
Seri Setia (Dr.) Awang Haji Mohammad Yasmin bin Haji Umar,
the Minister of Energy at the Prime Minister's Office,
On the Occasion of the Oil and Gas Sector Job Fair 2014.
BRIDEX, Wednesday, 26 November 2014.**

Bismillah Hirrahman Nir Rahim,

All praise be to Allah Subbahanhu Wataala, salawat and salam upon our beloved Prophet Muhammad Salulahu' Alaihi Wassalam, his family, companions and faithful and honest followers till the end of time. Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, and a Very Good Morning.

Your Excellency Mr. Salim Al-Aufi, Undersecretary, Ministry of Oil and Gas of the Sultanate of Oman and members of the Omani delegation,

Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners,

Permanent Secretaries and Deputy Permanent Secretaries,

Senior Government Officials, CEOs and Managing Directors of the private sectors.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I would like to start on a lighter and happier note for all of you. At the very first Job Fair, I delivered some 15 or more pages of speech and I promise you all, this time around I shall keep this speech to no more than 10 pages, using the same font size.

2. Foremost I would like to warmly welcome our Omanis brothers and sisters who are here with us this morning. There are also representatives of Omanis companies here and I hope our local companies would take this golden opportunity to meet each of them and explore business ventures and opportunities here in Brunei Darussalam, Oman and elsewhere.
3. This is the 5th series of Job Fair and the 2nd this year that we have organised since 2012. We have managed to identify many areas for improvements and strive to surpass previous achievements through even tougher targets, especially in providing employment to our locals.
4. In my speech for the Job Fair 2012, I mentioned with dismay the situation where big contracts worth hundreds of millions were awarded to companies without much return in terms of local contents such as the employment and trainings of locals. Alhamdulillah, through the cooperation of various parties we are able to look at the issues and found ways and means to overcome them.
5. Today, we are seeing positive changes in mind-sets on the employability of our locals. This may be due to the introduction of terms in contracts that impose contractual targets on the contractors in the number of locals to be employed during the life of the contracts. In some cases the realisations came from the companies themselves, especially of the benefits from employing and

providing trainings to locals not only to the companies themselves but also to the nation as a whole.

6. Whichever ways, we should be thankful to the companies. It is them who shouldered the responsibility of providing opportunities to the locals and to provide further trainings that would turn these local employees into worthy employees. Our oil and gas industry is still very much industry-driven and the same goes in the areas of local contents including the provisions of trainings and so on. It is you the industry that really know what is needed to remain strong and to run as efficiently and smoothly as possible.
7. We should also not put aside the important contributions by the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Negara Brunei Darussalam for example, through fiscal incentives and human resource development schemes such as the Department of Economic Planning and Development (JPKE) “Skim Latihan Perkerjaan” (SLP) Scheme that effectively subsidised local employee development engaged by the companies, through tax allowances and salaries for a period of up to 2 years. We are equally indebted to the very hard work and dedication of the various parties both from His Majesty’s Government and companies in the oil and gas sectors, in laying the foundations of the training programmes under the Energy Industry Competency Framework (EICF).

8. So many individuals are involved in turning into reality our aspirations of providing the right trainings to school leavers so that they could be duly employed in meaningful jobs. On this, please allow me to give a special mention and our appreciation to the EICF and BMA teams and the staff of the Institute of Brunei Technical Education (IBTE), the Department of Economic Planning and Development (JPKE) as well as the representatives from Oil and Gas industry and the Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) for their dedication and passion.
9. Let me provide some facts and figures on the achievements made under the Energy Industry Competency Framework (EICF). Earlier this month, we received the first 244 graduates of ISQ (Industrial Skill Qualification) for Welders, Scaffolders, Marker/Fitter and Riggers courses under the said Framework. All the 244 graduates are now working with nine (9) different companies across the oil and gas industry. We are also very pleased to note that it is the first time for Brunei Darussalam to produce female welders with 6G/3G qualifications and there are twenty four (24) of them. Currently, there are 741 students in trainings under the EICF's ISQ and HNTec programmes. 366 of these students have been given conditional offer of employments (COEs) from several companies and I believe, the rest will have the opportunity to secure their own COE at this job fair.

10. Last year I mentioned of works being done toward the setting up a Brunei Maritime Academy. Today, the academy is a reality with first enrolment in April 2014. We now have 233 students at the Academy, out of which 151 have managed to obtain their Conditional Offer of Employments (COEs). Insya Allah, the rest will receive theirs subject to passing their medical check-up and basic safety training.
11. We also provide opportunity for unemployed HND-level graduates and above real work experience and challenges to enable them to secure employment in our industry. Together with the industry, we have rolled-out the National Graduate Apprenticeship Scheme (NEGAS) in July this year with 18 Graduates in the 1st intake and another 33 expected by end of the year.
12. What made our joint efforts feel most worthwhile are the many positive feedbacks that we have so far received from the employers on the qualities of the works and dedications of graduates from programmes provided under the EICF, and the technical knowledge that they possessed. I believe these qualities could and would improve with further training programmes and greater exposures during the course of their employments. It is also pertinent upon those newly engaged by the industry, to prove to themselves and their employees that they are worthy of the golden opportunity that they have been given. Having said all these, we would also like to hear the other side of the story to ensure that any

problems that may arise could be addressed and resolved as quickly as possible.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

13. Earlier on I mentioned that we have set tougher targets on the number of locals to be newly employed by the industry for each subsequent year since we first organised the Job Fair. We managed to surpass our targets of 1000 in 2012 and 1600 in 2013, by achieving a number of 1302 and 2610 respectively. We were never satisfied in our quests. We realised that there was and still is a pressing need to provide more jobs for our locals and that there are still plenty of opportunities to do these in the oil and gas sector.
14. Our target for 2014 is 3000 jobs to be filled by locals. To date, we have managed to help them secure 2,473 jobs. With just a little more than a month to go before the end of the year, we remain cautiously optimistic that the target can be achieved. During this Job Fair alone, more than 2000 vacancies would be offered to job-seekers and Insyah Allah, with the support of everyone, reaching the target of 3000 is still achievable.
15. For 2015, the Energy Department will again maintain the target of employing 3,000 locals in the oil and gas sector. We should not be distracted by numbers alone. It is important that the target represent real quality jobs and secured life-long career paths for the holders.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

16. Our local employees must strive to be a role model. Loyalty, honesty, integrity, focus and hard work are core values that will build trust of the management and also contribute indirectly to employment of other locals. From the feedbacks I received, these are some of the areas that our locals need to work harder and improve further on.
17. It is equally important for the companies to provide their employees with meaningful employment in terms of among others, reasonable remuneration package. I am pleased to note that in contracts awarded by the Brunei-Shell Joint Venture companies, the requirement to provide reasonable wage is now embedded in contracts awarded since November 2013.
18. We must continue to create a conducive working environment especially for those who are new to the industry and entering at the lower salary groups.
19. It is a must for every employee to be given ample opportunities to improve through systematic training programmes tailored to his or her employment and future progression needs. They must also be made fully aware from the very beginning on the very strict needs

to observe good governance and business integrity. All employees should be instilled with religious and righteous virtues – so that their works and well-beings and that of the companies, will be full of barakah and receive blessings of Allah Subhanu Wataala.

20. As a further step in our efforts to create more opportunities for the employment of our locals, an audit across all sectors within the industry must be carried out in order to confirm the employment-related figures that had been submitted by the industry and to identify areas where further improvements could be made. We also want to know for example, how many of those that have acquired employments since 2012 are still working in the industry. We are also interested to find out more about their progression plans both in terms of careers and careers' development. Such audit programme would also help us to identify problems that employers and potential employers may be facing and how these could be effectively overcome.
21. As part of its own auditing measures, the Energy Department has earlier this year launched an easy online local recruitment reporting system for up-to-date monitoring of locals recently recruited in the industry. The system enables us to obtain personal data such as e-mail addresses and phone numbers, which in turn would allow us to verify directly with the employees of their current employment status. We have also collaborated with Tabung Amanah Pekerja (TAP) to verify local recruitments as reported in the last two cycles of Local Business Development Reporting. However, the number from TAP is normally higher than those reported to the EDPMO – which is something that we are keen to understand further. The

third measure that we have adopted is to conduct site visits where we are not only able to meet and obtain information from the employees themselves, but also discuss their career developments with the employers.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Before I conclude, I would whole heartedly like to thank the organising committee and participants of this Job Fair be it as exhibitors, speakers and even as visitors, for your support and hard work toward making this event smooth running. I wish you all the best and let us pray to Allah Subhanu Wataala for the success of the event especially in achieving the objectives of providing our job-seekers with meaningful employment, Amin Ya Rabbal Alamin.

By reciting the qalimah Bismillah Hirrahman Nirrahim, salawat and salam to our beloved prophet Muhammad Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam, I am pleased to officially launch this November 2014 Job Fair.

Wabillahi Tauafik Wal Hidayah. Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.