

OPENING STATEMENT
H.E. DATUK DOUGLAS UGGAH EMBAS
MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT, MALAYSIA
CO-CHAIR FOR THE 22ND ANNUAL EXCHANGE OF VISITS (AEV)
17 APRIL 2009, SINGAPORE

His Excellency Dr. Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Singapore

Mr. Tan Yong Soon, Permanent Secretary for the Environment and Water Resources, Singapore

Y.Bhg. Dato' Zoal Azha Bin Yusof, Secretary General, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Malaysia

Seniors Government Officers

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to be here for the first time to co-chair the Annual Exchange of Visits with His Excellency Dr. Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Singapore. I understand that this is the 22nd meeting between our two Environment Ministries under the Malaysia/Singapore Annual Exchange of Visits (AEV) framework to review the progress of work carried out by our Joint Committee on the Environment (MSJCE). I was made to understand that indeed this has been a useful bilateral forum to exchange views and experiences in tackling environmental issues of mutual interest.

I am happy to note that efforts are continuously being taken to control black smoke emission from motor vehicles plying across our borders to the extent that we can see the significant reduction in terms of the number of smoky vehicles on

the road entering both countries. Much has been achieved in enhancing the skill and communication capabilities in handling emergencies or incidences of chemical or oil spillages in the Straits of Johor caused by either the land transporters or some seafarers.

The MSJCE has been diligently exchanging information and know how on the various activities carried out by Malaysia and Singapore to further improve the water quality discharges into the Straits of Johor. Nevertheless, it has been recognized that it is a long term effort and hopefully both countries will in due cause benefit from the tremendous resources invested thus far by both countries in the relevant programme of actions or activities to clean up the Straits of Johor.

At the last MSJCE meeting, it was noted and agreed that some further effort by Malaysia and Singapore is required to tighten the control on oily desludging activities as well as the illegal dumping of tanker sludges in and around the Straits of Johor. On our part, we wish to inform that we have increased our surveillance programmes in areas identified as areas prone to such illegal activities.

For the last two years we have not experienced any haze episodes due to the continuous efforts by the Ministerial Steering Committee on Transboundary Haze Pollution and also favorable weather condition. However, Malaysia and Singapore should continue to share information and experiences on each other's collaboration with Indonesia to effectively tackle transboundary haze pollution. Lately a lot of attention has been given to climate change issues. I hope we will continue to explore further cooperation in combating climate change especially in the area of creating awareness and measures to be undertaken by every member of our society.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to Singapore for hosting this meeting. I hope our close working relationship in environmental cooperation will continue for the mutual benefit of both countries.

Thank you.