

SPEECH

BY

HON. DATO' SERI LAW HIENG DING
Minister of Science, Technology and the Environment,
Malaysia

**AT THE
CEREMONY OF HANDING OVER
THE REVOLVING FUND OF THE STRAITS
OF MALACCA AND SINGAPORE
AND
THE TWENTY SECOND MEETING OF THE
REVOLVING FUND COMMITTEE (RFC)**

21 – 22 AUGUST 2001

**PELANGI BEACH RESORT
LANGKAWI, MALAYSIA**

Good Morning,

Mdm. Hajah Rosnani Ibarahim
Director-General of Environment, Malaysia

Capt. Raja Malik Saripulazan Raja Kamaruzaman
Director-General, Marine Department

Mr. Tjuk Sukardiman
Director-General of Sea Communication,
Department of Sea Communication, Indonesia

Capt. Mark Heah
Harbour Master, Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore

Mr. Keisuke Inui
Executive Director, Malacca Straits Council

Distinguished guests and delegates.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the pleasure to extend a warm welcome to all the honoured guests and distinguished delegates to the handing over ceremony of the Revolving Fund of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore and the 22nd Meeting of the RFC here, in Langkawi, which is well known as The Legend Island of Malaysia.

I am also pleased to be here and it is a great honour that I have been invited to this beautiful island to witness the Hand Over Ceremony of the Revolving Fund from Indonesia to Malaysia for the next 5 years.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The subject of oil pollution has been of great concern in today's world for cheaper and rapid trade using sea transportation. The Straits of Malacca and Singapore, shared by the littoral States, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore are the sub region's most important and busy sea route, for export and import of products within or outside the region. Over the years, the alarming increase in terms of number and size of ships passing through these Straits had posed serious threat to the littoral States due to the high potential of ship collisions and oil spillage. The volume of annual shipping traffic through the Straits of Malacca in 2000, was 49,062 vessels compared to 39,607 vessels in 1999. It was found that the vast majority of the incidents that had occurred was collision of ship which causing oil spillage. The lack of funds and insurance coverage limited the remedial actions to be taken in combating the oil spillage from the collided ships affecting the Straits.

However, the establishment of the fund since 1981, to give support and mitigate oil pollution in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, has assisted us very much to offset additional expenditure incurred in preventing the impact of oil pollution causing degradation to the marine environment. I would like to emphasise here, that the sincere efforts of the Japanese Non-Governmental Association for the contribution of the Fund to the littoral States; Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore are duly recognised and highly appreciated.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With the rapid progress of economic growth and on going industrial activities being carried out in the region, at present, the statistics have shown that there is a tremendous increase in the imports and exports of chemical substances in the Malaysian ports; transported by sea.

In the event of an accident involving the transportation of chemicals, this would lead to tragic results causing death, injury and widespread environmental and property damage. Recently, the phenol spillage from MV Endah Lestari at Pasir Gudang, Johor had caused damage and adverse impacts to the environment. In view of that current situation, I believe that there is an urgent need to broaden the scope and the objectives of the Revolving Fund. It is of utmost importance, to include the extension of the Fund, to also give support and mitigate chemical spillage in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.

This is to further promote the cooperation and understanding of the 3 littoral States and Japan in enhancing the protection and preservation of the marine environment in these Straits. I do hope the other member states will be supportive to the suggestion.

On this note, I wish to inform that Malaysia will undauntedly do our very best to manage the Revolving Fund, as outlined in its scope and objectives.

To all the delegates, I wish you all a successful and fruitful meeting.