

DRAFT

OPENING REMARKS

BY

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at

THE SEMINAR ON BIOSAFETY FRAMEWORK FOR BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

on

**Monday
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**Rizqun International Hotel, Gadong
Brunei Darussalam**

BISMILLAHIR RAHMANIR RAHIM

Awang Haji Khairuddin bin Haji Abdul Hamid, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources,
Dr Awang Haji Abdul Manaf bin Haji Metussin, Senior Special Duties Officer,
Heads of Departments, Senior Officials,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH, A VERY GOOD MORNING AND SALAM SEJAHTERA

Praises be to Allah Subahanahu Wataala, selawat and salam to our prophet, Nabi Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wassalam. Alhamdulillah, with the gracious blessings of Allah Subahanahu Wataala, we are able to gather here at this important event this morning.

It is a great pleasure and high privilege for me to deliver, the opening remarks at the Seminar On Biosafety Framework For Brunei Darussalam. I would like to take this opportunity to warmly welcome the two distinguished speakers from Malaysia, the participants and our government officials.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As part of the Agriculture Strategic Plan, the Department of Agriculture and Agrifood has embarked on the development of Biosafety Framework for Brunei Darussalam. This is most timely, considering that Brunei Darussalam is on the verge of expanding and enhancing its agricultural production and at the same time having to face the genetically modified organisms (GMO) now being promoted all over the world. Major development in biotechnology in advanced countries has brought to our shores various agricultural products no longer in its original form, but those resulting from genetic engineering works with various positive agronomic features. In expanding our agriculture we cannot ignore the presence of GMO and how it can affect our production, and perhaps also our agriculture security. Hence there is dire need for Brunei to have a stand on matters dealing with biosafety and biodiversity and be ready to face the new modern technologies in agricultural production.

It is important to note that GMO is today's reality, whereby the merits include increased yield, resistance to pests and diseases and various agronomic aspects of crop production that are considered beneficial. Faced with resource limitations, the adoption of GMOs in our agriculture practices cannot be ignored.

For the reasons above, I was informed that the Department of Agriculture and Agrifood has appointed Karya Bumi Planning Consultants, a local consultant firm working in hand with MAB Environmental Consultants Sdn Bhd, of Kuala Lumpur to prepare the Biosafety Framework.

Among the major objectives of this effort are:

1. To create the National Authority of Genetic Modification (NAGM) and identify its tasks, responsibilities, composition and related matters.
2. To identify existing related laws and regulation in Brunei Darussalam which can be utilized in the implementation of Biosafety regulations.
3. To develop the Biosafety framework and guidelines for activities that involves GMOs (genetically modified organisms) crops or their products.
4. To identify activities to ensure the successful implementation of Biosafety guidelines by NAGM of Brunei Darussalam.
5. To increase public awareness on biotechnology and Biosafety for better understanding and appreciation by the stakeholders.
6. To develop capacity building on both Human Resources and facilities on Biosafety program.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

One important task of this consulting assignment is the preparation of the Biosafety Framework which contains the implementation strategy and the capacity building as well as awareness program.

Another important assignment of the consultants is on the proposed formation of National Authority of Genetic Modification (NAGM), as has been implemented in many other countries. This National Authority will be responsible for all matters related to genetic modification, providing advisory functions on the living modified organisms (LMO) and Biosafety to the government, as well as specific functions that include production of standard

and guidelines, instrument and practices, and also regulatory control and framework establishment.

Upon its formation, this NAGM will be set up under the Department of Agriculture and Agrifood, and it will be assigned with several functions that include operational, enforcement and regulatory matters on the GMO.

There are several other major topics being addressed in the Consultant Report, thus far that include the following:

- 1) The study, review and assessment of the Biosafety Framework and guidelines from other ASEAN countries and related international laws and regulations suitable for Brunei.
- 2) The inventory and assessment of capabilities in biotechnology related to Biosafety management and implementation.
- 3) Preparation of work plan to be carried out by the Department of Agriculture and Agrifood, to consider the Short Term, Medium Term and Long Term plans.
- 4) Setting up and documenting Biosafety Framework guidelines and protocols for research and development.

In addition to the above, the Consultants have assessed and made a report of the existing manpower situation, existing laboratories, facilities and infrastructures available in preparation of the Biosafety Framework implementation, and had provided proposals and recommendations for improvements.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The seminar today will look into the various proposals provided by the Consultant, after which the Consultants shall prepare the Draft Final Report. As such, it is important for everyone involved to pay particular attention on the various aspect of the Biosafety Framework, the draft framework itself, the proposed NAGM, our capability assessment, the work plan and the guidelines and protocols so that a complete work on Biosafety is made ready for further deliberations by the government before its adoption and implementation.

To conclude my remarks, I wish you all the very best and thank you for the effort and support, which are all being done in the national interest of enhancing and improving, and also protecting our national agriculture.

Last but not least, I would like to congratulate and thank those who involved in organising this seminar.

With the kalimah Bismillahir Rahman Nir Rahim and Tawakal to Allah SWT, I officially open the Seminar On Biosafety Framework For Brunei Darussalam.

WABILAHI TAUFIK WALHIDAYAH WASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH.

Thank you