



**STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE  
DATO SRI ADENAN SATEM,  
MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT  
MALAYSIA**

**AT**

**ECOASIA 2004**

**(Session 1)**

**19<sup>TH</sup> June 2004**

**TOTTORI PREFECTURE  
JAPAN**

Your Excellency Ms. Yuriko Koike  
Minister of the Environment Japan  
As Chairman of the Congress,

Honourable Ministers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I like to congratulate the Honorable Ms. Yuriko Koike as the Chairperson of ECOASIA 2004. I am pleased and honored to be involved in this prestigious meeting which over the years has been successfully serving as a platform for Ministers and senior officials of the Asia – Pacific Region to discuss and provide direction on current and important environmental issues.

Being the minister of the newly established Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment which was formerly the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment, I am looking forward to acquaint myself with the subject matter of this Congress and to learn from my learned friends and colleagues present in this meeting. I will continue the efforts of my predecessor providing support to ensure the noble aim of this meeting in addressing current environmental issues is realised.

Honourable Ministers,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I like to commend the organizers for selecting *environmental education* as the theme for this session. In this regard, it is extremely heartening

and encouraging to encounter the initiatives taken by the Government of Japan and the Tottori Prefecture by involving participation of the local community, schools and industries in caring for and safeguarding the environment.

As we are aware, The Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) has recommended to the United Nations General Assembly that it consider adopting a decade of education for sustainable development starting in 2005. Therefore, by identifying environmental education as the theme for this year Ecoasia we are in fact making a jump start in this important matter.

Environmental education is very crucial if we are to ensure that this planet is a clean, safe, healthy and productive place to live in.

In this regard, we can put in place all sorts of policies and enforce every possible law to mitigate the pollution problem. However, it will be a running battle if we did not have the right attitude towards the environment. The ordinary citizen must be thought to be conscientious of not clogging the water system with rubbish. The housing developer must realise that they must put in place measures to stop the silt from flowing into the rivers. The manufacturer must understand that they must use environmentally sound technology so as to reduce their waste generation. Above all, they should not put profit over the well-being of people and the environment.

Such awareness can be achieved only if the children who would one day grow up to be ordinary citizens, industrialists, and developers have been indoctrinated with the spirit to respect the environment and the

knowledge to carry out industrial activities in an environmentally friendly manner. And this ladies and gentlemen, can only be done through environmental education as the very early age. In this regards, we have a saying back home that if we wanted to straighten the bamboo it must be done while it is still a shoot.

Honourable Ministers

Ladies and Gentlemen

Environmental education must not been seen as a subject by itself. We must look at it in a holistic manner where it must integrated into the whole educational system to address sustainable development. We are well aware that sustainable development has three main pillars; economic development, social development and environmental protection. We have to take all these three pillars into consideration without which our pursuit for sustainability will not materialised. Such approach is actually in line with Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The Plan request for the integration of sustainable development into education systems at all levels of education in order to promote education as a key agent for change.

Environmental policies are formulated to provide the strategies and plan of action to address the current environmental issues and problems and to prevent it from occurring in the future. Environmental education on the other hand prepares our future generation not to repeat the same mistakes that we did.

A well educated public on environmental matters will exercise the need for a clean environment as a right. People's awareness should be raised

to a heightened level that they are ready to take up the responsibility of sustaining environment. Unfortunately the story of the developing countries is a different one. With the limited financial resources, priorities are focused to meet the basic human needs with very little consideration for the environment.

In this regard I urge the developed countries and the international financial institutions to provide financial and technical assistance to initiate and sustain activities relating to environmental education and increasing environmental awareness among the people of the developing countries. Today with environmental problems crossing national boundaries, investment in environmental education, particular in the third world countries offers a promising solution for safeguarding the future of our environment.

Honourable Ministers,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In Malaysia, environmental education is an integral strategy of the National Policy on the Environment. We recognised that to achieve a deeper and better understanding of the concepts of environmentally sound and sustainable development environmental education must be promoted across the board incorporating information dissemination and training. In fact, under the 1974 Environmental Quality Act, the Department of the Environment is required to provide education to the public regarding the protection and enhancement of the environment.

As a follow-up, various activities are undertaken both in the formal and informal sector of education. In schools, various activities including

competitions, exhibitions, and campaigns are carried out on a regular basis and the coverage is increased from year to year.

Programs are also implemented with the partnership of the private sector. Institutions for higher learning have introduced environmental education at bachelor and master level and well as at PhD level. For the industry, private sector and the NGOs, annual dialogues are held to increase the stakeholder participation. Annual award programs have also been introduced such as the Hibiscus Award for the industry and commerce sector; the Langkawi Award for outstanding contribution from individuals and organizations and the Environment Journalist Award for the producer of the most inspiring environmental education program.

Nonetheless, environmental education and awareness-raising requires continues creativity and upgrading of skills. We therefore are happy to share and exchange experiences with member countries to enable us to produce better environmental education programmes and activities in the future.

Last but not least, I believed that this Congress will further enhance our understanding in this area and would entail a better cooperation and commitment in the future for a clean, safe, healthy and productive environment.

Thank you