



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

**YB DATO SRI DR. HAJI WAN JUNAIDI BIN TUANKU JAAFAR
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(PARLIAMENT AND LAW)**

FOR

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS
2021: TOWARDS A NATIONAL ACTION PLAN**

ON

21 SEPTEMBER 2021

Salutation

Yang Berbahagia Datuk Haji Mohd Rabin bin Basir

Director General, Legal Affairs Division, Prime Minister's Department

Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Othman Hashim

Chairman of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)

Mr. Niloy Banerjee

Resident Representative of UNDP Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei

Darussalam

Yang Berbahagia Professor Dato' Dr. Aishah Bidin

BHR Advisor and Fellow, Academy of Sciences Malaysia

Excellencies, Commissioners, Esteemed Speakers, Distinguished
guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalamualaikum Warrahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and Salam Sejahtera.

1. First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for the
opportunity to deliver this keynote address at the **National Conference**

on Business and Human Rights: Towards A National Action Plan. I

would like to extend my utmost appreciation to the Legal Affairs Division, Prime Minister's Department (BHEUU), Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for organizing this landmark event.

2. The field of business and human rights (BHR) broadly relates to the application of human rights standards and due diligence conducted by businesses. It relates to responsible business practices in which the principles of Human Rights should always be upheld.

3. In 2008, Professor John Ruggie of Harvard University who served as the UN Special Representative for Business and Human Rights from 2005 until 2011 put forward a Framework on Business and Human Rights. Under the theme “**protect, respect and remedy**”, it provides framework for better managing the human rights challenges posed by transnational corporations and other business enterprises. Hence the **UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)**, endorsed by the UN in 2011, is a guidance document that steers us through the development of a comprehensive action plan for Business and Human Rights.

4. The guiding principles are structured on three pillars: **the state's duty to protect human rights; the corporate responsibility to respect human rights; and victims' access to judicial and non-judicial remedies.** The document re-states pre-existing state human rights obligations and define a "socially-binding" responsibility on corporations to "do no harm" to individuals' human rights. It is important to note at this juncture that the UNGPs is a global standard for preventing and addressing the risk of adverse impacts on human rights linked to business activities. It is also an internationally-accepted framework for enhancing standards and practices with regards to business and human rights.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

5. The theme chosen for today's conference "**Towards A National Action Plan**" is in line with the Government's aim to uphold justice and the rights of individual as envisaged in the Federal Constitution. As the Minister entrusted with the portfolio of Parliament and Law, I have started my journey with many substantial reforms in mind ranging from Parliamentary Reform and Government Transformation. I am also excited to be a part of the development of the National Action Plan for Business and Human Rights (NAP-BHR) for Malaysia particularly due to its contribution in upholding the rule of law.

6. I was informed by the Legal Affairs Division that the development of our first Action Plan will focus on **three (3) thematic areas namely labour, environment and governance**. These thematic areas were chosen after extensive engagement with stakeholders including various departments and agencies under several ministries. I was also made to understand that the relevant departments and agencies will continue to be part of the development process and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the lead agencies namely, **Ministry of Human Resource (MOHR), Ministry of Environment and Water (KASA), and the Governance, Integrity, Anti-Corruption Center (GIACC)** for their support and cooperation in this matter.

7. Allow me to thank SUHAKAM for their continuous support to the government on advancing matters pertaining to Human Rights. I also understand that SUHAKAM had done some extensive work on Business and Human Rights since 2016 and I hope all their effort will be put to good use in this development process.

8. My sincere appreciation to UNDP and the EU for their assistance rendered in the development of this action plan. I would like to also thank the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Civil Society

Organizations (CSOs) for their invaluable support and cooperation in this process.

9. I hope that the good and strong collaboration between all relevant agencies whether from the government or private sector will contribute immensely to the development of this Action Plan. We definitely cannot ignore the importance of having a comprehensive public consultation with all the relevant stakeholders during the development process where everyone's views and opinions are taken into consideration.

10. Human rights standards as applied in business sector could certainly bring a new perspective of human rights, given that businesses are economic actors and their actions are shaped by business rules. It is also more important than ever that we stand up for humankind and uphold the principles of human rights where no single group is left behind.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

11. I hope this conference will be a fruitful one for all of you. I understand the constraints of having a virtual conference as it may not be as convenient as we hope. Nevertheless, having a platform of esteem

panelists and speakers who are able to share their experiences and knowledge is indeed a blessing.

12. Lastly, allow me to extend my sincere appreciation to all panelists and speakers, the organizing committee and all of you here today for your support in making this event a meaningful one. I humbly call upon each of us to stay united – “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much”. So “Let’s move forward for a better tomorrow”.

Thank you and stay safe.

Wassalamualaikum Warrahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

Prepared by :

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