

OPENING REMARKS

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Honourable Datuk Hj. Mustafar bin Hj. Ali,

Deputy Chief Commissioner of Prevention
of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC),

Honourable Mrs. Thilagavathy S. Thamboo,

Deputy Director of the Malaysia Anti-Corruption Academy,

honourable guests, distinguished experts and participants, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and privilege for me to announce the opening of the Eighth Regional Seminar on Good Governance for Southeast Asian Countries. I would like to extend my heartfelt welcome to our honourable guests, distinguished speakers and participants who have come to join this significant forum.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest appreciation to the Government of Malaysia, especially to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission and the Malaysia Anti-Corruption Academy, for their great contribution and assistance in co-hosting this seminar.

The main theme of this seminar is “Current Issues in the Investigation, Prosecution and Adjudication of Corruption Cases”. It is often said that the most effective measure to eradicate corruption is exhaustive exposure and proper punishment of offenders who have committed corruption crimes. It is also said that proper punishment of offenders punishes one while warning hundreds. As a result, the public recognizes that corruption never pays off, which in turn builds trust in the criminal justice system and encourages the public to cooperate with law enforcement. To eradicate corruption, it is extremely important that we reinforce this cycle.

However, when turned around, this means that failing to vigorously enforce anti-corruption laws will result in a vicious cycle that will exacerbate corruption: the lack of public trust will lead to a lack of cooperation with law enforcement officials, and the criminal justice system will be undermined as corruption goes unchecked. Therefore, as professionals and government officials within our several criminal justice systems, our responsibility to eliminate corruption is very serious, and we must improve enforcement by enhancing our ability to investigate and prosecute corruption cases.

The United Nations Convention against Corruption seeks global harmonization of anti-corruption efforts. Eleven years have passed since the convention was adopted by the

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United Nations General Assembly. Since that time, law enforcement officers and government attorneys around the world have made tremendous efforts to eradicate corruption, and they have achieved magnificent results. However, criminals continually devise new methods to commit crime, and they exploit technical loopholes to avoid enforcement. Consequently, various new problems have arisen in the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of corruption cases. These problems weigh heavily on law enforcement officers and government attorneys.

Many of the root causes of corruption are similar; despite the many differences in legal regimes, we are very likely to be facing many of the same problems in each of our countries—especially the cross-border nature of corruption. In order to combat corruption, we should share valuable lessons derived from our experiences, discussing not only best practices but also examples of failure, the causes of such failure and effective countermeasures to make sure that past mistakes are not repeated.

Before closing, I would like to applaud the co-hosting Malaysian Government for its strong commitment to fight corruption. Malaysia has adopted “*Wawasan 2020*” (which translates as “Vision 2020”). One of the goals stated in this vision is to establish “a fully moral and ethical society”. In addition, the National Key Results Areas (NKRAs) of the Government place importance on “Fighting Corruption”, and the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) identify the eradication of corruption as one of the nation’s goals. Finally, Malaysia is well known for its diversity in race, culture, religion, language and cuisine—and for maintaining harmony among them. Therefore, Malaysia is a very suitable place to discuss corruption issues among our diverse group of criminal justice professionals from various countries.

I hope this seminar will strengthen international cooperation and help each participant clear higher hurdles in the investigation of corruption cases in the future. Thank you very much for your attention.