



**Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism
Brunei Darussalam**

OPENING REMARKS

**YANG BERHORMAT
DATO SERI SETIA AWG HAJI ALI BIN APONG
*Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism
Brunei Darussalam***

**Delivered by
Yang Mulia Pengiran Haji Kamalrudzaman bin Pengiran Haji Mohd Ishak,
Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism**

AT THE LAUNCH OF “EXPLORE LABI”

**Mendaram Longhouse, Labi
Brunei Darussalam**

Wednesday, 14th November 2019

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله رب العالمين، وبه نستعين على أمور الدنيا والدين، والصلاة والسلام على
أشرف الأنبياء والمرسلين، سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين

Your Excellencies, High Commissioners and Ambassadors;
Members of the Brunei Tourism Board;
YM Deputy Permanent Secretaries;
YM Representatives from District Office
YM Ketua Ketua Kampong dan Ketua Ketua Rumah Panjang

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

Salam Sejahtera and A Very Good Morning

1. A very warm welcome to Mukim Labi and my sincere appreciation to you all for coming all the way here to witness another launch of an exciting Brunei tourism product. It gives me great pleasure to be here today to welcome all of you to the launch of “Explore Labi”.
2. Mukim Labi covers an area of about forty-seven thousand, seven hundred and eighty-four hectares. It is an eco-tourism haven - full of greenery, flora and fauna, and fresh air. Today’s launch of “Explore Labi” is to help preserve all this and to establish this destination as a “**sustainable, responsible and inclusive**” eco-tourism development and wildlife sanctuary.

3. The principle of “sustainable, responsible and inclusive” tourism here aims to:

- Firstly, to be **sustainable**, means to further enhance the existing eco-tourism activities by placing emphasis on preservation efforts of Labi’s natural environment and its uniqueness, such as by organising tree planting projects, wildlife rehabilitation and release programmes and providing eco-tours catering to meet this objective.
- Secondly the principle of **responsible** tourism – means to encourage visitors to work together with the local community to support and cooperate in the conservation and protection of our nature and wildlife. Whilst at the same time, preserving and respecting the culture, history and heritage of the local community.
- Whereas, the principle of **inclusive tourism** means to engage the local community in community-based tourism activities which aims to generate the economy by producing and selling their local products and services to visitors. In addition, local residents are also encouraged to be actively involved in becoming tourism service providers, such as homestay owners, caterers, local guides and others.

4. Moreover, Mukim Labi is also proposed to be an alternative destination to Temburong, ideal for educational outings and adventures such as for summer camping, extra-curricular and team-

building activities, getaways and outward-bound programmes. There are also trails for trekking towards 2 of our popular waterfalls, that is Wasai Wong Kadir and Wasai Teraja, and wildlife watching. Mukim Labi boasts over 300 species of wildlife that are native to Borneo – 81 frog species, more than 10 species of snakes and reptiles, over 150 species of forest birds and many more. Here and in the Teraja area, you can also spot mammals such as gibbons, slow loris, longtailed porcupines, wild boars, and civets.

5. Agriculture also plays a big part in Labi due to its fertile soil. More than 6000 hectares of land has been gazette as agricultural development areas in the Belait District. There are plenty of farms and crop plantations, which you can also visit for all kinds of produce, such as coffee, paddy, various types of fruits and vegetables, and even a goat farm.
6. However, what makes Labi a unique experience for visitors is the opportunity to visit and even stay overnight at an Iban longhouse. There are currently 2 longhouses that are open to visitors – the Teraja Longhouse and here, the Mendaram Longhouse. These welcoming settlements belong to the Iban ethnic tribe who came to settle in Labi about 70 years ago. Now, they are the main drivers for community-based tourism in the Labi area.
7. In that regard, and in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism is offering interested proponents to submit Request For Proposals to develop, operate and maintain a one-stop visitor centre here in Kampong Labi. The opening of this centre aims to provide

visitors with facilities such as a registration counter, information centre, briefing and prayer rooms, souvenir and retail shops, F&B outlets, and stalls to sell local produce and handicrafts. In addition, this centre aims to kickstart Labi as a new tourism destination in Brunei for eco- and community-based educational learning programmes and systems, which will engage visitors and the local residents on environmental sustainability and educational research.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. Finally and above all, I wish to highlight the importance of observing and committing to ensuring the safety of all who come here. Service providers and operators for visitors and visitors themselves must not take this lightly. Whilst conducting activities here, especially where it involves going into the forest and potentially interacting with wild flora and fauna, safety precautions and security measures must be a key priority and it must be ensured and assured at all times.

9. In conclusion, I would also like to thank all the organizations, agencies and the local community here for providing all kinds of activities and opening your doors throughout the years and attracting visitors from all over the world. I also wish to congratulate all those involved in the making of the “Explore Labi” brochure for their dynamic involvement and support towards the success of this initiative and hopefully this can attract even more wildlife enthusiasts to Brunei and the Labi area. We also have some exhibitors consisting of tourism service providers and local villages displaying their products. Feel free to look around, explore and enjoy.

10. Thank you very much.

Wabillahi Taufik Wal Hidayah, Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.