

**SPEECH BY  
THE CHIEF MINISTER OF SARAWAK  
IN CONJUNCTION WITH  
THE INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT ON PEACE  
6<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017  
BCCK, KUCHING**

***SALUTATION***

The Junior Chamber International President, Miss Dawn Hetzel,  
The Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture, Youth and Sport  
Datuk Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah  
Heads of Departments  
Guest speakers  
Peacemakers, Actors and Promoters  
Ladies and gentlemen  
Salam Wa'allaikum Waramatullahi Wabarakatuh  
And Good Evening.

***KUCHING, CITY OF UNITY***

Let me extend to all of you a very warm Sarawak Welcome to Kuching City, the first city in Malaysia to be given the award of "City of Unity". I believe this is very relevant to our pursuit of peace as unity cannot come to prevail without peace, or may be the other way round. In this context, we are proud of our city of Kuching where people of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds have proven to be capable of living together as peaceful neighbours for generations. We are people

of different races and religious beliefs but we have strived all these while to understand each other and accept the peculiarities of a fellow Sarawakian who might be living, sitting or standing next to us. We try to go beyond tolerating our neighbours who might be different from us by accepting them with all the dignity we should accord to a fellow human being.

Ladies and gentlemen,

### ***THE AGE OF UNCERTAINTIES***

We in this part of the world watch with concern a number of things that have wrought uncertainty in the world today. Firstly, the vagaries of economic fluctuations caused either by design or otherwise are certainly not condition conducive to economic progress, especially to a developing economy like ours. The drastic drop in oil prices to less than USD50 per barrel from over 100 USD have undermined a lot of economies around the world especially oil producing countries. It can be very challenging even for a small oil producing country like Malaysia which derives about 22 % of its national revenue from oil and gas and related products.

Secondly, the uncertainties following BREXIT and United States foreign policies after the Obama era, though happening half a world away, do have a strong bearing on geo-political stability in these parts of the world.

Global terrorism and extremism in the name of religions have caused so much misunderstanding among societies and painted distorted pictures

of religions which are not helping at all to secure peace and unity in many parts of the world.

The uncertainties in the world today compared to the past century appear to be very much true to what author economist John Kenneth Galbraith tried to examine when he wrote his book "The Age of Uncertainty" in 1977:

*"... the golden age of stability and predictability that was the third quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century seemed to have drawn to a sudden close, to be succeeded by a period of heightened global uncertainty."*

That was Galbraith's contention 40 years ago and seemingly it comes true as we experience it today.

Ladies and gentlemen,

### ***NORTH KOREAN THREAT***

The threat and counter-threat of a nuclear attack between the United States and North Korea is only helping to add more to a worrying possibility that a war can break out at any moment. There is always a likelihood that a military strike from either side can develop into a full scale world war, God unwilling. War and conflict never pay because no one stands to gain. All we have is destruction and loss of innocent human lives. War is no option at all to bring about peace in many troubled parts of the world but the answer to a safer world is always elusive.

Ladies and gentlemen,

### ***CARE OF ENVIRONMENT, SARAWAK CONTEXT***

The condition that can lead to peace and harmony in our society may not necessarily be confined to the relation between us and our neighbours. Learning from other countries like New Zealand, we believe that the existence of the environment side by side in harmony with its human masters is also a key to bringing about social harmony and stability.

Sarawak is a land rich in flora and fauna. We are proud of our wealth in our rich and diverse environment which we want to preserve and conserve at all cost for the simple reason that environmental degradation is also capable of creating economic and social uncertainties. Unrestrained logging and the resulting destruction of forest and wildlife habitat will but result in the depletion of our natural resources thus rendering the concept of sustainable development unworkable. Without the guarantee of future resources by way of the sustainable development of our resources, the prospect of a bright economic future would seem dim.

For this reason, the State Government of Sarawak has instituted this policy that there will be no more timber concession on State Land. Short term timber extraction licenses are only given for clearing of merchantable timber in areas approved for development purposes. The government has also stopped the issuance of permit for the purpose of setting up large-scale oil palm plantation on government land except for

those on Native Customary Rights lands. These steps that we take are for the obvious reason that we want to stop the destruction of our natural forest and instead conserve them.

We want to preserve more of our forest as Totally Protected Areas (TPA). As of last year, about 860,000 hectares of our forest has been gazetted as Totally Protected Areas. The TPA comprises of national parks, nature reserves and wildlife sanctuaries. The government has earmarked 31 more TPAs covering about 452,000 hectares and by 2020, the State would have at least 1.3 million hectares of Totally Protected Areas out of the total land size of 12.445 million hectares, which is about 10 %.

We believe that our rich bio-diversity is a treasure trove of materials that can be unlocked through research and development. Fully realizing the potentials of our bio-diversity, soon after I came to office as Chief Minister, I have put in place a policy that will enable researches to be conducted on our plants and animals with a view to give much greater value to our bio-diverse nature rather than simply extracting the raw materials for export like we used to do. Research and development is the way to go in order to be assured of the sustainability of our natural resources, and be assured of a better future for ourselves, the stability of our economy and eventually creating an inclusive environment conducive to the creation of a peaceful and socially united society.

Ladies and gentlemen,

***JCI AND CAMPAIGN***

Against the backdrop of the global uncertainties, I believe peace is always possible when we make a conscious effort to work towards building a peaceful society. It is heartening to know that in 2016 JCI made that conscious effort to take part of the responsibility of creating a more peaceful world with the launch of the "Peace is Possible" campaign. I have learned that this campaign ignited a movement of young people across the globe who are working diligently in their communities to build bridges that foster peace. It is the grassroots efforts in community after community, country after country that will build a more peaceful world for future generations.

It is the global reach of the "Peace is Possible" campaign that has brought all of you from over 100 countries to come to Kuching. Nothing more significant could have brought you to this Land of the Hornbills other than your personal and collective pursuit of peace in our societies. At this time in world when we are witnessing the spread of radicalism, nationalism and extremism, this International Summit on Peace is a welcome relief. You have chosen to unite here in Kuching to find sustainable solutions to these global challenges by exchanging ideas, and sharing experiences. The Government of Sarawak joins you in this laudable effort to work, to consciously work towards building a peaceful world.

I hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity to be empowered to leave here as peace makers, peace actors and peace promoters. I hope you go back to your diverse communities and put into practice what you learn here. But as you work hard towards this noble goal, I urge you to enjoy Kuching, enjoy the culture, the cuisines, the people

and the landscape. I sincerely hope that you will enjoy what Kuching has to offer starting with this dinner tonight.

Once more, welcome to Kuching, welcome to Sarawak! Together we can make peace possible!

Thank you very much.