

SIGNIFICANT SPEECHES, EVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

1st International Conference on Islam, Sustainability, and Resilience (ICISR 2021) (16 November 2021)

*Opening Speech by YB Dato' Sri Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man
Minister of the Environment and Water*

1. *Alhamdulillah*. Let us together express our gratitude to Allah SWT for all the blessings that He has bestowed on us. Salutations and greetings to our beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), as well as his family members and companions *radhiyallahu 'anhum*.

Allah SWT said in Surah ar-Rum verse 41:

“Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He [i.e., Allah] may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness].”

3. In this verse, Allah Almighty depicts a severe warning to those who are habitually involved in the crime of environmental destruction. Every action committed against the environment will ultimately have an impact, particularly on humans. May all the calamities that have befallen us invoke our repentance.
4. This realization [hopefully] urges us to rearrange our priorities regarding sustainable growth and finding a balance between material and social exigencies. The God-given natural resources are an *amanah* (trust) and responsibility towards future generations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

5. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to all who are involved in this conference, and congratulate, especially the main organiser, the

International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS) Malaysia, for organising such a meaningful conference today—the ‘*International Conference on Islam, Sustainability and Resilience 2021*.’

6. The two primary themes highlighted in this conference are ‘sustainability’ and ‘resilience’ according to the Islamic worldview (*tasawwur*). These two themes are central to the country’s recovery, which is on the brink of the endemic phase after grappling with the dual crisis of health and economy. We aspire to rise again stronger, with a new trajectory.
7. Based on the Global Risks Report 2021 by the World Economic Forum, the global community is expected to face various critical crises over the next decades. In addition to the spread of infectious diseases, we are also threatened by the climate change crisis which includes extreme weather and natural disasters.
8. Additionally, various other risks include geopolitical tensions between global superpowers, the threat of weapons of mass destruction, the economic crisis caused by *riba* (usury), unemployment and poverty, digital divide and cyber security attacks, identity and cultural crisis, as well as social unrest and mental health problems.

Ladies and gentlemen,

9. The latest assessment report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of the United Nations entitled ‘*Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis*’ has stated in clear terms that anthropogenic (human) activity is a major factor in triggering climate change throughout the history of life on earth.
10. There is no doubt that industrial, commercial, transport, livestock, and agricultural activities are major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and directly increase the average global temperature. To make matters worse, deforestation, grazing lands, and land degradation further exacerbate the situation.
11. On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic has crippled the economy, particularly the micro, small, and medium enterprises. The global economic performance contracted by 3.2 per cent in 2020. The International Labour Organization’s report in 2021 estimated a loss of 8.8 per cent of global working hours, equivalent to 225 million full-time jobs.

12. We are cognisant of the fact that this country's health and economic sectors are not 'epidemic proof'. Thus, the year 2021 indicates a very important starting year to develop a clearer direction, especially in ensuring more sustainable and resilient growth. Close cooperation between all quarters must be cultivated starting from the grassroots and up to the global level.

Esteemed participants of the conference,

13. We must keep moving forward. To address these difficulties, we should begin by promoting the culture of knowledge sharing, research, and development. Data published by UNESCO showed that Muslim countries are still lagging in these aspects. Only two per cent of the Gross Domestic Product of Muslim countries is allocated for research activities.
14. In contrast, South Korea and Japan spend more than four per cent of their Gross Domestic Product for researching new discoveries, latest technologies, and fresh public policies in addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges.
15. This crisis provides us with vital lessons on the need to prepare against any possibilities, in order to mitigate more complex risks. Preparations should include not only fiscal and financial resilience, but also competency in state leadership and governance, strategic communication plans, skills in making tough decisions, safeguarding the mental capacity of the people, and environmental sustainability.
16. Resuming activities 'as usual' is not an option, nor the best way out. New norms demand the adoption of new policies, systems, strategies, methods, and cultures. From an environmental perspective, we have established clear and important narratives in the 12th Malaysian Plan (MP) and the *green budgeting* of the 2022 National Budget.

Ladies and gentlemen,

17. Among the key points in the recent 12th MP are Malaysia's aims to achieve net-zero GHG emissions as early as 2050, and its preparedness to navigate a circular economy as opposed to a linear economy, including offering various financial incentives related to sustainable behaviours.
18. I am optimistic and hope that we are prepared to embrace the aspiration of

creating a more sustainable country through developmental planning and green technology. These can be done through the cooperation of various stakeholders, including policymakers and the executive branch, financial institutions, industry players, and academics.

19. The World Economic Forum has outlined four key elements for state recovery in the post-pandemic era. The first is formulating a holistic framework based on crisis impact management. Second, investing in the high-profile risk management sector across the country. Third, improving the communication process and combating misinformation. Fourth [and finally], exploring new synergies between public and private sectors related to preparatory measures against future challenges in the field of technology and logistics.

Ladies and gentlemen,

20. At the ministerial level, we are committed to pursuing the environmental and water sustainability agenda. *Alhamdulillah* (praise to Allah), the government has established the Malaysian Climate Change Action Council (MyCAC) as a supreme platform, chaired by the Prime Minister himself. The council will serve as a catalyst toward achieving a reduction in GHG emissions by 45 per cent of the GDP by 2030 and zero net GHG emissions as early as 2050.
21. The Ministry of Environment and Water (MEWA) has also drafted the Low Carbon City Master Plan and Low Carbon Mobility Development Plan; introduced a domestic carbon trading platform; established the National Greenhouse Gas Inventory Center; reviewed the National Policy on Climate Change 2009; and drafted the Climate Change Act.
22. Apart from that, the MEWA has also introduced waqf-based public funding, namely Wakaf Air, in collaboration with the Malaysian Waqf Foundation (Yayasan Wakaf Malaysia), to fund small-scale water supply projects, especially in rural areas. This initiative is an exemplification of solving a sustainability issue through the application of an Islamic social finance platform. It is also proof that the sustainable agenda is not just the responsibility of the government and its relevant agencies, but also requires the support of individuals and the community, including the private sector and industry at every level of the *Malaysian Family*.

Ladies and gentlemen,

23. As a closing remark, it is my utmost hope that this conference will be an effective platform for discourse and germination of ideas and produce practical and dynamic solutions for the benefit of the people, religion, and country. Through the invocation of *Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*, I hereby declare that the ‘*International Conference on Islam, Sustainability and Resilience 2021*’ is officially open.
24. Thank you.

**Regional Symposium: The Ethics of War and Humanitarian Principles
in the Perspective of South-East Asian Ulama
(Zoom Platform and IAIS Facebook Live, 2 December 2021)**

Muhamad Sayuti Mansor

On the 2 December 2021, the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS) Malaysia together with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Journal al-Jamiah of the State Islamic University (UIN) Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia organised the regional symposium *The Ethics of War and Humanitarian Principles in the Perspective of South-East Asian Ulama*. It was a culmination of a one-year partnership between the three organisers exploring the important contributions made by Southeast Asian Islamic scholars to humanitarianism and the ethics of war. The symposium was moderated by Dr Ahmad Badri Abdullah, IAIS Associate Fellow, who kickstarted the event by giving brief opening remarks followed by welcoming remarks by Mrs Biljana Milosevic, Head of ICRC Regional Delegation for Malaysia. Professor Dato’ Dr Mohammad Hashim Kamali, Founding CEO of IAIS Malaysia, then opened the discussion with his illuminating keynote speech on “Islam and Peace” followed by introductory remarks by Mr Dominic Earshaw, the Regional Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs, ICRC.

The symposium featured presentations from three scholars from Malaysia and Indonesia who presented their original research on the tradition of Islamic humanitarianism in Southeast Asia. The first presenter, Muhammad Adam Abd Azid from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), demonstrated the scholastic legacy and contributions of Syeikh Idris al-Marbawi to the Islamic concept of warfare and *jihad* in the Malay World, especially during British