

OPENING ADDRESS
BY
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MINISTER OF WORKS

For

THE OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY OF
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SLOPES MALAYSIA 2015

14 SEPTEMBER 2015
TAMING SARI BALLROOM, ROYALE CHULAN KUALA LUMPUR

Yang Berbahagia Dato' Sri Zohari bin Haji Akob
Secretary General, Ministry of Works

Yang Berbahagia Datuk Ir. Adanan bin Mohamed Hussain
Director General
Public Works Department and
President of Road Engineering Association of Malaysia

Yang Berbahagia Dato' Sri Chong Ket Pen
Managing Group Director
Protasco Berhad

Yang Berbahagia Dato' Dr Ir Ashaari Mohamad
Chairman, Organising Committee, ICS 2015

Yang Berbahagia Dato' Haji Ismail Md. Salleh
Director General, Malaysia Highway Authority

Yang Berbahagia, Dato' Sri Judin Abdul Karim
Chief Executive Officer, CIDB

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

Good Morning and Salam 1 Malaysia

1. It is with great pleasure and honor for me to be here this morning to officiate the fourth edition of the International Conference on Slopes 2015 (ICS 2015). I also wish to congratulate the ICS 2015 Organising Committee for hosting this timely event, a joint effort between the Ministry of Works, Public Works Department and Kumpulan Ikram Sdn Bhd.
2. Over the years, earthquakes, tsunamis, windstorms and landslides have occurred around the globe as an adverse natural process. Without exception, floods as well as landslides have hit Malaysia every single year and the recent flood in early 2015 can be considered as the worst that hit the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Having said that, flooding has been a worldwide occurrence with landslide incidences in recent years have become a regular feature.
3. As we are all aware, urban development is one area of socio-economic transformation that a community must undertake to upscale its living standards and improve their quality of life. However this requires that continuous infrastructure expansion to meet the needs and aspirations of the growing community must also increase. As the area of flat and undulating lands within cities became limited, housing

and commercial developments have gradually moved into hilly terrain in the suburbs and beyond.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. As hillside development gained in popularity, the abuse and over development has set the stage for man-made disasters particularly landslides which are attributed to human factors such as design and construction faults.
5. In Malaysia, there have been a number of landslides and the most notable one which caused the collapse of Block 1 of the Highland Towers that claimed 48 lives. Since then, numerous landslide incidents have occurred both at the surrounding areas of Highland Towers and in other parts of the country which have brought about the enactment of by-laws and regulations for the management of slope development. The Government increased focus towards the problems and incidences of landslides further led to the continuous formulation of guidelines and policies to ensure stringent approval for hill developments. Apart from these, mitigating the challenges of landslides will require us adopting global initiatives encompassing technology adaptation to reduce risks and repairs which are extremely costly and burdensome.
6. Another significant milestone in the transformation at the Ministry of Works was the rock fall incident at Bukit Lanjan in 2003 which led to a six-month highway closure and economic loss in millions of ringgit

that triggered the formation of the Slope Engineering Branch under the Public Works Department (PWD) in February 2004.

7. The aspirations towards the establishment of the Slope Engineering Branch were to safeguard and ensure safer slopes for the country using the appropriate technology in slope engineering. Most importantly it is to ensure that all slopes under the purview of the PWD are properly regulated and managed.
8. Among the strategies and actions adopted included formulating a national policy on slopes; keeping an inventory of all slopes; formulating new standards and guidelines on maintenance for slopes; producing design guidelines on slopes; promoting public awareness on slope hazards; implementing preventive maintenance on problematic slopes; developing staff competencies in slope engineering and developing a system on information management and dissemination.
9. To strengthen these initiatives, the Accredited Checkers by the Board of Engineers Malaysia (BEM) for geotechnical and structural designs for hillside development was introduced with the aim of mitigating the risk of landslides and improving slope engineering and management qualified engineers.
10. The PWD Slope Engineering Branch also commissioned and developed a “National Slope Master Plan Study” towards improving current practices of slope engineering and slope management. The

goal which is to reduce losses due to landslides culminated in the Malaysian National Slope Master Plan 2009-2023 that encompasses formulation of strategies and institutional framework, hazard mapping and assessments, early warning and real-time monitoring systems.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. The theme of this conference, **“Innovations in Slope Management”** is relevant to achieve sustainable development and meet the aspirations of the people in eliminating the risk of landslide occurrences as a result of rapid development.
12. Malaysia’s slope management fraternity has over the years developed and worked towards a more sustainable development for slopes. In identifying these problems, we will need a complete set of usable data on slopes in Malaysia which will help us manage slopes more effectively and efficiently. To date 30,000 slopes along the Federal roads have been identified and tabulated while 179 of which have had their slope hazards rated. The landslide hazard map and risk assessments which have been carried out to improve slope-engineering practices towards mitigating the risk of landslides and provide a birds-eye view of the slope hazard will enable us to strategise better planning for future infrastructure development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

13. The government is committed to further enhance the management of slopes in Malaysia and is willing invest for the betterment of the population in protecting its quality of life. However, this commitment can only be successful through collaborative efforts between the public and private sectors emphasizing comprehensive awareness and education on slope safe. Hence, good practice for slope engineering and slope management will result in the creation of safe slopes both during construction and throughout the lifespan of structures.
14. Moving forward, the government through the Ministry of Works and PWD believes that this conference is an essential part of the initiative for the betterment of slope engineering and management. The experts present to share their knowledge and work together on solutions towards mitigating the risk of landslides is most appreciated.
15. I am hopeful all the participants here will gain tremendously from this International Conference on Slopes 2015 and that you will be inspired to take appropriate actions and strategies in your respective countries to ensure sustainable development along the hillsides.

On that note it gives me great pleasure to officially declare the International Conference on Slopes 2015 officially open.

Thank you.