



OFFICIAL SPEECH BY

**YAB DATUK AMAR HAJI FADILLAH BIN HAJI YUSOF
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND
MINISTER OF ENERGY TRANSITION AND WATER
TRANSFORMATION**

**37th ANNUAL DINNER AND AWARDS NIGHT 2025
“MALAYSIA WATER INDUSTRY AWARDS 2025”**

**14 OCTOBER 2025 (TUESDAY) | 8:00 PM
SHANGRI-LA, KUALA LUMPUR**

Bismillahirrahmanirahim.

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

Salam Sejahtera and Salam Malaysia MADANI.

(SALUTATIONS)

Yang Amat Berhormat Tuan Chow Kon Yeow,

Chief Minister of Penang &

Chairman of Perbadanan Bekalan Air Pulau Pinang Sdn Bhd

Yang Berhormat Tuan Haji Akmal Nasrullah Bin Mohd Nasir,

Deputy Minister of Energy Transition & Water Transformation

(PETRA)

Yang Berbahagia Datuk Dr. Ching Thoo A/L Kim,

Secretary General of the Ministry of Natural Resources and
Environmental Sustainability (NRES)

**Yang Berbahagia Dato' Mohd Rodzwan Bin Mohd Baba
Sakri,**

Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Energy Transition &
Water Transformation (Water)

Yang Berusaha Mohamad Hairi Bin Basri,

President of The Malaysian Water Association (MWA)

Yang Berbahagia Datuk Ir. Abdul Kadir bin Mohd Din,
Chairman of Suruhanjaya Perkhidmatan Air Negara (SPAN)

Yang Berbahagia Dato' Seri Ir. Jaseni bin Maidinsa,
Chairman of Pengurusan Aset Air Berhad (PAAB)

Distinguished Heads of Government Agencies,

Esteemed Representatives from Water Utilities and Water
Industry Players,

Fellow Members of The Malaysian Water Association,

Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is indeed a great pleasure to be here this evening among so many respected leaders, partners, and friends of Malaysia's water industry. Allow me to begin by conveying my sincere appreciation to the Malaysian Water Association for the kind invitation to join you at this prestigious occasion, the **37th Annual Dinner and Awards Night**.

2. Let me also take this opportunity to extend my warmest congratulations to the Malaysian Water Association for reaching this remarkable milestone. For nearly four decades, **MWA has stood at the heart of Malaysia's water fraternity — uniting stakeholders, advancing research, and driving progress that has shaped the very foundation of our national water landscape.**

3. This evening is not only a celebration of excellence, but also a moment of reflection. **It is a moment to honour the dedication, perseverance, and professionalism of those who have worked tirelessly to ensure that water, the most essential resource of all continues to flow for the benefit of our people, our industries, and the generations yet to come.**

4. I am especially pleased that tonight's dinner is held in conjunction with the **Malaysia International Water Convention (MIWC 2025)** — a significant platform that reaffirms Malaysia's standing as a regional hub for knowledge, innovation, and collaboration in the global water sector.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. The **Malaysia Water Industry Awards (MWIA 2025)** presented tonight embody the very spirit of excellence that defines our water community. These awards recognise and celebrate the outstanding individuals, organisations, and companies whose dedication and innovation have raised the standards of integrity, service, and sustainability across the nation.

6. To all the award recipients — my heartfelt congratulations. Your success is more than a recognition of achievement; it is a reflection of the passion, vision, and resilience that drive Malaysia's water industry forward.

Ladies and gentlemen,

7. As many of you are aware, the Government has embarked on the **Water Sector Transformation 2040 (AIR2040)** — a bold and forward-looking agenda that charts our journey to modernise, professionalise, and future-proof Malaysia's water sector.

8. AIR2040 envisions a sector that is **efficient, sustainable, inclusive, and resilient** — one that not only supports

national growth but safeguards the environment and ensures water security for every Malaysian household and enterprise.

At the heart of this transformation lies one defining element —people.

9. The water sector is not merely about infrastructure or technology; **it is about the people who design, operate, regulate, and sustain it.** To realise the vision of AIR2040, we must invest in human capital mainly in upskilling our professionals, nurturing young talents, and cultivating leadership across all levels.

10. This is why we **emphasise digitalisation, innovation, and accountability,** because the true measure of transformation is not in the pipes we build, but in the capacity of our people to lead with purpose and serve with excellence.

11. Of course, as we advance towards 2040, we must confront the realities and challenges that lie ahead, **with courage, creativity, and collaboration.**

Distinguished Guest, Ladies and Gentlemen,

12. While we chart our course towards AIR2040, we must also recognise the realities that lie ahead. **The water sector today stands at a critical juncture where growing demand, climate uncertainties, and financial pressures intersect.** These are not obstacles to our progress, but catalysts that compel us to innovate, reform, and collaborate more deeply.

13. Allow me to highlight three key challenges that will define our collective response in the coming years:

i) Financial sustainability.

Many of our water utilities continue to operate under fiscal strain, with limited capacity to reinvest in infrastructure renewal, asset maintenance, and service quality improvements. This condition, if left unresolved, will erode the reliability and resilience of our water systems.

14. Hence, financial reform must become a priority. We need to establish a fair and sustainable financing framework, one that balances affordability for the rakyat with the financial strength of service providers. **Tariffs must reflect true costs, while ensuring vulnerable groups are**

protected through transparent and targeted support mechanisms.

15. Beyond pricing, sustainable financing also means creating a resilient financial ecosystem, one that attracts private investment, fosters innovation, and channels every ringgit spent into long-term value creation.

Only with financial stability can utilities reinvest, innovate, and build a water sector capable of meeting future demands.

ii) Rising urban and industrial demand.

As Malaysia advances towards becoming a digital and industrial powerhouse, the demand for water continues to grow not only from households, but also from energy-intensive sectors such as manufacturing, semiconductors, and data centres. Urbanisation, coupled with economic expansion, is intensifying pressure on our existing sources and supply infrastructure.

16. To manage this, we must adopt an integrated and data-driven approach that connects water planning with industrial development, urban design, and environmental

protection. Stronger demand forecasting, efficient water use, and diversification of supply through recycled water, rainwater harvesting, desalination, and groundwater management will be key to meeting future needs sustainably.

Ultimately, this is not only about providing more water, but about using every drop more wisely ensuring that growth does not come at the expense of long-term sustainability.

iii) Climate and environmental pressures.

The third challenge is one that cuts across every region, the growing impact of climate change and environmental degradation. We are witnessing more erratic rainfall, longer dry spells, and recurring floods that disrupt both supply and livelihoods. Pollution, sedimentation, and land-use changes are further threatening water security and quality.

17. To adapt, we must invest boldly in climate resilience. This means protecting our catchments, modernising infrastructure to withstand extreme weather, reducing non-revenue water losses, and adopting circular practices such as water reuse and recycling.

18. Equally important, we must integrate environmental stewardship and early warning systems into every level of planning and operations ensuring that our water sector remains strong, adaptive, and future-ready in the face of an uncertain climate.

The journey ahead requires collective will and shared responsibility.

19. The success of **AIR2040** depends not on government alone, but on an ecosystem of partnerships across federal and state agencies, regulators and utilities, academia and industry, the public and private sectors alike.

When we align our vision and pool our strengths, we turn challenges into opportunities. Opportunities to innovate, to modernise, and to deliver lasting impact for our people and planet.

20. The Government, through **PETRA**, remains steadfast in its commitment to provide clear policy direction, create enabling frameworks, and support collaboration with state governments and agencies nationwide.

21. Our focus is to **embed sustainability into every policy**, to **accelerate digital transformation**, to **unlock innovative financing models**, and to **expand public-private partnerships** that drive progress and efficiency.

The water sector's transformation must not only meet present needs — it must secure our collective future.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

22. As we celebrate this evening, let us remember that every drop we save, every system we strengthen, and every innovation we pursue today will ripple into a more secure and sustainable tomorrow.
23. With the continued leadership of MWA, and the unwavering dedication of everyone in this room, I am confident that Malaysia's water industry will continue to thrive as a beacon of excellence and a pillar of resilience for our nation.
24. Once again, my heartfelt congratulations to the Malaysian Water Association for thirty-seven years of outstanding service and leadership. And to all award

recipients, **thank you for raising the bar and inspiring others to follow your example.**

25. Let us continue this partnership united in purpose, grounded in integrity, and driven by a shared vision for a water-secure Malaysia.

26. As this wonderful evening unfolds, let us celebrate our achievements, strengthen our bonds, and look ahead with renewed optimism — **for together, we hold the power to shape Malaysia's water future.**

Thank you.

Wabillahi Taufik Walhidayah, Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.