



OPENING ADDRESS

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

In Conjunction with the
30TH EAROPH WORLD CONGRESS 2026
**(EAROPH - EASTERN ORGANISATION FOR PLANNING &
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS)**

24 APRIL 2026 (FRIDAY)
3:30 PM
HOTEL COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT, MELAKA

Bismillahir-rahmanir-rahim.

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

Salam Sejahtera dan Salam Malaysia MADANI

(SALUTATION)

**YANG AMAT BERHORMAT DATUK SERI UTAMA AB RAUF
BIN YUSOH**

Chief Minister of Malacca

**YANG BERHORMAT DATUK HAJAH AIMAN ATHIRAH
BINTI SABU**

Deputy Minister of Housing and Local Government (KPKT)

**YANG BERBAHGIA DATUK WIRA DR. M NOOR AZMAN
BIN TAIB**

**President of EAROPH International 2026-2028 and
Secretary-General, Ministry of Housing and Local
Government.**

DR. EMIL ELASTIANTO DARDAK

Vice Governor of East Java

**Distinguished Delegates, Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

1. Alhamdulillah, all praise be to Allah SWT for granting us this meaningful opportunity to gather here today for the Opening of the **30th Eastern Organisation for Planning and Human Settlements (EAROPH) World Congress 2026.**

Allow me to begin with a verse from the Qur'an:

***“And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance.
That you not transgress within the balance.”***

— Surah Ar-Rahman, Ayah 7-8

This verse reminds us that balance is a divine principle, one that governs not only nature, but also how we live, build, and progress.

In the context of our cities, it calls upon us to pursue development with wisdom, ensuring that growth does not come at the expense of harmony, that progress does not

outweigh sustainability, and that every decision we make today preserves the balance for generations to come.

2. It is an honour to stand before this distinguished gathering of city leaders, policymakers, professionals, academics, and practitioners from across the Asia-Pacific region.
3. Your presence here reflects a shared commitment, not only to advancing urban development, but to shaping cities that are more inclusive, more resilient, and truly responsive to the evolving needs of our people.
4. This Congress is not merely a meeting of minds. It is a platform for meaningful exchange, where ideas sharpened, experiences are thoughtfully shared, and above all, where our collective resolve is strengthened in addressing the increasingly complex challenges facing our cities today.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. Melaka is a most fitting host for this International Congress—a **state that has stood the test of time, evolving through centuries as a centre of trade, culture, and governance.**
6. As a historic city, Melaka offers an important lesson to us all. It reminds us that development and heritage are not opposing forces but can coexist in a way that enriches both the city and its people.
7. Cities that endure are those that evolve with intention—keeping their identity while adapting with wisdom to new realities. **In this regard, Melaka reflects a balance that many cities today aspire to achieve.**
8. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation and congratulations to the **State Government of Melaka, under the leadership of Yang Berhormat Datuk Seri Utama Ab Rauf bin Yusoh, as well as the Melaka Historic City Council (MBMB)**, for successfully hosting this important Congress.

9. This commitment in convening a global platform reflects Melaka's continued role not only as a historic city, but as a forward-looking and globally engaged urban centre.
10. Allow me to extend my warmest congratulations to **Yang Berbahagia Datuk Wira Dr M Noor Azman bin Taib on his election as the President of EAROPH International for the 2026–2028 term**. This is indeed a proud moment for Malaysia.
11. I believe that under his leadership, EAROPH will continue to strengthen its role as a platform for knowledge exchange, regional collaboration, and the advancement of sustainable and inclusive human settlements across the Asia-Pacific.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

12. Malaysia today is a predominantly urban nation, with close to 80 per cent of our population residing in urban areas. This transformation has brought with it significant economic opportunities, improved access to services, and stronger connectivity.

13. However, it has also introduced new and increasingly complex challenges. Our cities are under growing pressure to manage expansion sustainably, address inequalities, and ensure that development outcomes are shared equitably.
14. Urban development, therefore, cannot be viewed solely through the lens of physical growth or economic output. It must be understood as a continuous commitment to improving the quality of life for our people—**while safeguarding the resources and systems upon which future generations depend.**
15. We are now operating in a global environment defined by uncertainty and rapid change. **Climate risks are intensifying, energy transitions are accelerating, and resource constraints are becoming more pronounced.**
16. At the same time, expectations from citizens are rising. People are no longer seeking just economic

opportunity, they are seeking cities that are liveable, inclusive, safe, and meaningful to their everyday lives.

17. These challenges are deeply interconnected. They require us to rethink how we plan, design, and manage our cities—with greater integration, foresight, and purpose.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

18. In Malaysia, we are moving beyond the concept of “smart cities” towards what would be described as “wise cities.”

19. While technology remains an important enabler, it is not the sole determinant of success. A wise city is one that exercises sound judgment, **balancing growth with sustainability, efficiency with inclusivity, and innovation with responsibility.**

20. It is a city that recognises the value of its natural systems as critical infrastructure, respects urban

biodiversity, and ensures that decisions made today are guided by long-term benefits and not short-term gains.

21. This brings us to the theme of this Congress, “**City Assets for Community Gains**”, a theme that is both timely and deeply relevant.

22. Traditionally, city assets have been understood primarily as physical infrastructure such as roads, buildings, utilities, and facilities.

23. While these remain essential, our understanding must evolve. **Today, city assets must also encompass environmental systems, public spaces, cultural heritage, and increasingly, digital infrastructure.**

24. More importantly, these assets must not be managed in isolation. **They must be viewed as interconnected systems that collectively contribute to social well-being, economic resilience, and environmental sustainability.**

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to share a short Malay verse:

***Dari Melaka ke Kuala Kedah,
Singgah berlabuh di kuala lama,
Kota dibina bukan sekadar indah,
Tetapi membawa kesejahteraan bersama.***

This simple verse reminds us of an important truth:

A city is not built for beauty alone—but to bring shared well-being to all.

25. It captures the essence of our responsibility. Cities must be planned not only for form and function, but for the people who live within them and the value they derive over time.

26. In Malaysia, we are translating these principles into practice by adopting approaches that emphasise multi-functionality, risk-informed planning, and long-term value creation in how we design and invest in our urban assets.

27. Infrastructure designed for flood mitigation is now integrated with public spaces for recreation and community use. Community facilities are built to be adaptable serving both daily needs and emergency functions when required.
28. This reflects a broader shift towards embedding resilience into our urban systems, while ensuring that investments stay sustainable throughout their lifecycle.
29. It is important to recognise that sustainability is not merely an environmental concern, but it is an economic imperative.
30. Investments in green and blue infrastructure enhance resilience, reduce long-term costs, and strengthen the attractiveness of cities as places to live, work, and invest.
31. In this sense, sustainable cities are not only better for the environment, they are also more competitive and economically viable.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

32. At the heart of Malaysia's development approach is inclusivity, recognising that cities must be shaped by, and for, the people they serve.
33. Under Malaysia MADANI, we are guided by a simple yet powerful principle: **“Development must never leave anyone behind”** but instead, uplift every segment of society, ensuring that progress is shared, inclusive, and meaningful.
34. As our cities mature, the focus must shift towards renewal and regeneration of existing assets. **Urban renewal is not simply about redevelopment, it is about unlocking value, strengthening communities, and creating environments that are more liveable, sustainable, and resilient over time.**
35. At the same time, our approach must support **Malaysia's commitment to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.**

36. Cities play a vital role in this transition. Urban systems, buildings, infrastructure, utilities are among the largest energy consumers. **This requires a concerted effort to integrate renewable energy, improve efficiency, and adopt sustainable building practices across all levels.**

37. The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act 2024 represent a significant step forward. Yet, its success will depend on effective implementation, particularly at the local level, where policies are translated into action.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

38. The success of our cities depends on how well we govern, manage, and work our assets, and how effectively we translate plans into meaningful outcomes for the people.

39. Stronger coordination across all levels of government, alongside meaningful partnerships with the private sector and communities, is essential.

40. This requires not only sound policies, but strong institutional capacity, data-driven systems, and a continuous commitment to improving how assets are managed and optimised over time.
41. Malaysia remains committed to strengthening regional cooperation, particularly within ASEAN.
42. The challenges we face like climate change, urbanisation, resource constraints are shared across borders. Therefore, our solutions must also be collaborative.
43. Organisations such as EAROPH play a vital role in this journey—bringing together cities, professionals, and policymakers to exchange knowledge, share best practices, and navigate increasingly complex urban realities together.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to conclude with a simple reflection:

“Bandar yang baik bukan dinilai daripada apa yang dibina; tetapi bagaimana bandar itu menjaga rakyatnya.”

Because in the end, cities are not remembered for their skylines but for the lives they touch, the dignity they uphold, and the sense of belonging they create.

For true progress is not measured in structures we rise but in the lives we uplift, the communities we strengthen, and the future we safeguard together.

With **Bismillahirrahmanirrahim, it is my great pleasure to **officially declare the 30th EAROPH World Congress 2026 open.****

Thank you.

Wabillahitaufig walhidayah.

Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.