

**WRITTEN STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY
DR. ABDUL MANAF METUSSIN**

DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMY (ECONOMY)

**AS ACTING GOVERNOR OF
THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK
FOR BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

Your Excellency, Chairman of the Board of Governors, Fellow Governors, President of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Foremost, on behalf of the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, let me convey our sincerest thanks and appreciation to the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Morocco for the warm welcome and generous hospitality. I would also like to thank His Excellency Dr. Bandar bin M. H. Hajjar, President of the IsDB Group and the Bank Secretariat for the excellent Meeting's arrangements.

Mr. Chairman and fellow Governors.

The global environment is constantly changing especially with the rapid pace of technological development. IsDB member countries are constantly adapting to these changes in order to realise the vast opportunities and overcome challenges that comes with it. Alhamdulillah, with the on-going vast and deep reforms being implemented by the IsDB under His Excellency The IsDB President's leadership, the IsDB continues to further strengthen and enhance its responsiveness to the economic and development needs of its diverse membership.

In this regard, we commend these on-going efforts and would like to encourage the IsDB to continue especially in implementing reforms that promotes strong governance and foster efficient systems in all IsDB entities which will further foster economic development and social progress of the Muslim communities as well as improve the welfare of the Ummah. We believe that this is in line with the essence of this year's theme, "*Transformation in a changing world: The Road to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*". The SDGs provides a shared blueprint for prosperity and a more sustainable future for all.

Please allow me, Mr. Chairman, to share our views on the key focus areas that the IsDB can assist member countries in achieving not only the SDGs target but also in achieving long term sustainable growth and development.

Firstly, **quality and robust education system/environment is critical for long term growth and development.** The quality of growth and development is closely correlated to the the quality of education of its population. Therefore, having an education system that is robust and relevant will equip the population with the knowledge and skills to create new markets, open up opportunities as well as deepen the talent pool which will overall contribute towards achieving sustainable growth in the long run.

We are encouraged to note that IsDB and the World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) have launched a US\$2.5m package to boost scientific capability for the developing world, boosting sustainability sciences and supporting refugee scientists as part of a landmark programme to build capacity in sustainability science, to advance progress towards the Sustainable SDGs.

For Brunei Darussalam, The Government continues to give priority and invest in generating competent and skilled human resources that can contribute to the nation's economic development. In ensuring that our education system is in line with our current and future needs, we among others continuously review the development of standards for literacy in Science, Digital and Finance; enhance the skills and capabilities of teachers and school leaderships through the implementation of the Brunei Darussalam School Leadership Program, of which monitors and provisions capacity building needs for leaders; strengthen the quality of teaching and learning geared towards skill development for the 21st century; and upgrade the ICT connectivity and network of our education institutions.

Secondly, **strengthening and enhancing food security**. Sufficient food and nutrients are prerequisites for a healthy and productive life, where malnourishment hinders economic development and increases cost to the government and society. In this regard, we would like to commend the IsDB for providing support to its most vulnerable member countries in achieving food security, such as through the Bank's investment of an average USD 1 billion annually in agriculture and rural development projects and programs. We would also like to encourage that the IsDB look into ways to promote and encourage Smart Agriculture with a view to boost production quality and efficiency for farming products. The IsDB could also play a vital role in connecting/linking Smart Agriculture Centres around the membership and act as a platform in which the latest knowledge, technology and know-hows can be shared.

In this vein, Brunei Darussalam has established the Center for Agri-Food Science and Technology Research Center (CrAFT) under Universiti Teknologi Brunei (UTB) which serves as a platform for networking of researchers and pooling resources from various schools and faculties of the university to work on agri-food related projects. CrAFT focuses on R&D services to enhance the value, productivity and profitability of agriculture and food sectors through which it works closely with parties from the public and private agri-food sectors and collaborates with local and overseas R&D organisations in the development of science and technology.

Lastly, **facilitating trade and investment opportunities amongst members**. The volatility in global trade emphasise the need for The Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) to further enhance cooperation in intra OIC trade. According to The Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) Outlook 2017 report, intra OIC trade is on a declining trend. There are vast opportunities to be taken from strengthening intra OIC trade. Therefore, we must continue to facilitate trade between each other in which the IsDB can play an important role in providing technical assistance, sharing the relevant know-hows and in financing support.

Mr. Chairman,

With that, let me conclude by wishing the Bank further success and may all of us always remain under the blessed guidance of Allah Subhanahu Wa Taala.

Thank you.