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Welcoming Remarks at the Opening Ceremony of

**NRE/UNDP Policy Dialogue on Liability and Redress of the  
Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety**

Remarks by  
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Kuala Lumpur

Yang Berhormat Dato' S. Sothinathan, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment,

Yang Berbahagia Dato' Suboh Mohd Yassin, Secretary General, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment,

Distinguished guest

Members of the media

Ladies and Gentleman

Selamat pagi dan selamat sejahtera kepada hadirin sekian.

On behalf of UNDP, I would like to thank the Honourable Deputy Minister, Dato' Sothinathan, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, for joining us this morning at this Policy Dialogue on Liability and Redress of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. I also would like to welcome all participants from the government agencies, private sector and NGOs to this valuable dialogue. Your presence here indicates your commitment to manage the biosafety issues in Malaysia.

As you know, Malaysia is a signatory to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The Protocol provides avenue for countries to address the safe transfer, handling and use of Living Modified Organisms (LMOs) that may have an adverse effect on biodiversity, taking into account human health, and with a specific focus on transboundary movements.

Although the responsibility of producing a national biosafety framework in Malaysia is within the purview of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the implementation of the framework needs the cooperation of various government agencies and other stakeholders. Realising this, NRE and UNDP decided to conduct this workshop. The purpose of this workshop is to enable a wider group of audience and stakeholders to participate in the Dialogue, which will create better awareness and understanding on this issue; to study the options available and to allow for further deliberation in the context of the overall national biosafety framework. It will also enable policymakers to formulate regulations and policies on liability, and redress on biosafety which would be implementable.

UNDP together with NRE and with the funding from Global Environment Facility (GEF) will implement a national project on Biosafety this year. This 4–year project will develop national capacities in biosafety required to carry out risk assessments with appropriate scientific and technical skills; implement necessary activities for risk management; evaluate and strengthen the legal and regulatory frameworks and develop infrastructure for information exchange and data management, as well as achieve broad social participation in biosafety matters. The development of national capacities in these areas will consolidate the national framework for biosafety management, with lasting impact on Malaysia's vision to utilise biotechnology for sustainable development and economic growth.

It is my hope that the joint collaboration among the participating organizations and institutions will carry on beyond the workshop. The discussion today will bring together experts from various agencies, private sector and NGOs to share their expertise on the biosafety issues and we hope will continue during the implementation of the project activities.

We are fortunate to have an international expert on biosafety issues, Dr. Philippe Cullet from The International Environmental Law Research Centre, Geneva to share with us his expertise and views. UNDP would like to thank Dr. Cullet for agreeing to come here to Malaysia to assist UNDP on this capacity building initiative.

The UNDP Malaysia Country Office will continue to support environmental projects through our energy and environment country programme. This is in line with the government of Malaysia's concern and efforts to protect and conserve the environment in this country. We are already implementing various projects to protect the biodiversity of peat swamp forest in Malaysia and there is also a research project in the pipeline, on conserving of biological diversity through improved forest planning tools.

I would like to thank all the participants who have come here in spite of their busy schedule to contribute to the success of the project. Allow me to conclude by wishing all of you fruitful discussions.

Thank you.