

Welcome Address

by

Datin HJH Edah BT. HJ Mohd Noor

President and Co-Advisor, 2000 Women Leaders Network Meeting

At the opening ceremony of the 2000 Women Leaders Network Meeting
ICC, Berakas, Negara Brunei Darussalam

Bismillah Hirahman Nirahim

Yang Teramat Mulia Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Puteri Hajah Masna Bt. Al Marhum Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Ambassador At Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Negara Brunei Darussalam.

Excellency Pehin, Dato-Dato, Datin-Datin, Delegates, Ladies & Gentlemen

Assalamualaikum,

Good Morning,

On behalf of the Women's Council Brunei Darussalam and the Organising Committee of the 2000 Women Leaders Network (WLN), let me first of all extend our heartfelt gratitude and sincere appreciation to Her Royal Highness Princess Hjh Masna for her gracious presence and for consenting to give a keynote address at this ceremony, Your Royal presence will greatly enhance the standing of WLN 2000 in the APEC process.

Let me also warmly welcome all foreign delegates to this year's WLN Meeting to Brunei Darussalam. I hope your brief stay in Brunei during the next few days will be a fruitful, pleasant and memorable one.

The Women's Council of Brunei Darussalam is indeed honored and proud to be the host for the first Women Leaders Network Meeting in the New Millennium. Ever since its inception, the annual WLN Meeting has become an effective forum particularly for the discussion of issues on women in business. On behalf of the Women's Council of Brunei Darussalam and the Organizing Committee, therefore, I would like to record our sincere appreciation to the Brunei Darussalam National APEC Secretariat for entrusting us to be the organizer of the WLN Meeting for the year 2000.

The Organizing Committee has not only drawn up a packed schedule, but also a beneficial plenary, non-plenary, workshop, and business matching sessions focusing on SMEs, HRD and IT/E-Commerce, the three sub-themes chosen for this Meeting, over the next three days. It is hoped that these sessions will promote a further understanding among delegates from the various APEC member economies, in general,

and also further the cause, concerns and goals of the Women Leaders Network in particular.

I am certain that there will be ample opportunity for all delegates to interact among themselves and to establish new networks and strategic alliances throughout the duration of this Meeting and the subsequent SME Business Forum. It is through these interactions and alliances that close linkages, in the form of business ventures, bilateral and multilateral co-operations and collaborations in areas of common interest, can be further enhanced and cemented.

I would like to place on record my sincere gratitude and appreciation to all members of the Organizing and Steering Committees and volunteers for their dedicated and often painstaking contributions in the organization and running of this Meeting. The support and help rendered to the WLN 2000 Meeting's Organizing Committee by the various government ministries, departments and agencies, too numerous to mention here, are also highly appreciated and gratefully acknowledged. We are very grateful to all our sponsors who have contributed generously to our cause and without which we would not be able to enjoy the various facilities which we are now using. I would also like to thank the speakers, the chairs and rapporteurs for accepting our invitation and to help bring this Meeting to fruition.

All that is left for me to do now is to wish all delegates to WLN 2000 a most successful meeting, and a highly rewarding and fruitful three days of discussion, debate and consensus. We look forward to your policy resolutions and recommendations that we need to submit to the Ministers next week.

Wabillahi Taufik Walhidayah, Asalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.