



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

YANG BERTHORMAT

**DATIN SERI PADUKA HAJAH HAYATI BINTI PEHIN ORANG
KAYA SHAHBANDAR DATO SERI PADUKA HAJI MOHD SALLEH**

ATTORNEY GENERAL

PUBLIC OFFICERS' LAW SEMINAR:

Understanding the Law

and

Launching of

"Musings from Chambers: Chambers Decoded"

on

26 OCTOBER 2016

at

CIVIL SERVICE INSTITUTE

Bismillahirrahmannirrahim.....

Assalamualaikum..wr..wb,

Yang Mulia Dato Paduka Awang Haji Mohd Juanda bin A.
Rashid, Solicitor General, as Chairman of the Organising
Committee.

Yang Mulia, Puan Hajah Norezan binti Haji Hambali,
Director of Civil Service Institute

Permanent Secretaries, Senior Government Officers,

Distinguished guests, participants, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by conveying my utmost appreciation to the
Chairman and the Organizing Committee for inviting me to be
present this morning and to deliver a Keynote Address. I would
also like to congratulate and express my heartfelt gratitude to
the Chairman and the organizing committee from Chambers

and the Civil Service Institute for your laudable effort in putting together this Seminar. I understand that the Seminar is targeted for public officers and aptly entitled “Understanding the Law”. It is indeed both important and timely, and in support of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam’s various ‘titah’ reminding the public service to be progressive, proactive, efficient, and to uphold the integrity of the public service to ensure that it earns trust which is key to social and economic progress.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The legal aspects of what we do as public officers, are as a matter of fact, fragmented and compartmentalized in the sense that we are primarily required to perform our respective duties within the specified scope, in so far as the law is able to

recognize. To realize such is considered by many to be an expected norm, but to be able to tie-in with other aspects of correlation is even more desirable in that respect.

That is why this Seminar is not just about 'us' in Chambers but more about 'you' and 'us' as public officers. It is designed to endear you to us; in the sense that it serves as an introduction to the basic and general legal landscape that you are likely to encounter in the course of your day to day work in the hope that we can understand each other better and thus, work with each other better. In other words, help us to help you.

You may rightly ask Why me! Why can't I just leave the law to the lawyers, or my ministers. However, the legal 'know-how' is one of the key components in ensuring the desired results are attained, though numerous other expertise from

across other disciplines are required to ensure feasibility and sustainability of outcome. This seminar is intended to introduce general legal principles relevant to public officers in order to promote an effective performance of duties that entails one to be within the bounds of the law. I strongly encourage participants to interact with the presenters, in disseminating any relevant queries that may be beneficial to share with the other participants and to bring back the knowledge you gathered here to your organisation. We would also welcome your feedbacks and suggestions for improvement. Our hope is that you will leave the seminar wanting to understand the law more, or leave saying 'never again' but at least we can say we tried!.

Let us also explore how information are disseminated, particularly in so far as the public perception goes. To this cause, I have always believe that the accuracy of information being disseminated will determine the acceptable varying degrees of public reaction. An informed collective group is desirable to enlighten the general public on government initiatives and good intentions. It shall be incumbent then on all public officers to equip themselves accordingly.

The seminar contents are indeed a fair representation of the scope within which officers of my Chambers are accustomed to but which you as public servant, is also likely to encounter in the course of your day to day work. Each of us has different roles, different talents but ALL of us are entrusted by His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam to serve our beloved country, Brunei Darussalam. I

am therefore glad that we have many officers from different agencies, holding different responsibilities coming together for this Seminar which will cover a plethora of matters, including Constitutional matters which provide the basis of governance in general, including the authority to create, amend and repeal laws within the framework of legislation; aspects of international relations in so far as International Treaties and obligations goes; the essential concept of Criminal Justice System in having to bring criminal cases to Court and due processes that it may entail; the numerous aspects necessitating Civil Litigation and the possible utilization of recognized alternative dispute resolutions as supplementary avenues for civil redress amongst others.

I urge you to enter the Seminar sessions with questions, like these:- Why is the Constitution relevant to me? How much should I know? What legislation are relevant to me and my organisation? When should we give instruction to legislate new ones! What preparations we should make for effective implementation?

If you/your agency are given some 'powers' under the law, to what extent should you exercise your discretion? What should we do when we received poison letters? What should we prepare when there are appeals to my Minister? Brunei Darussalam had ratified the Treaty and our minister signed the MOU. What now? What are the common examples of situations I may encounter in work that may expose me to a position of conflict and liability and which I should avoid? What should I do if I am summoned to court? What sort of

procurement rules do we need to know – can they be challenged? Confidentiality and data sharing, what are the limits to documents and data sharing? On Integrity: the do's and don'ts', in the GO, FR: the Prevention of Corruption Act and other relevant legislation.

It seems an understatement to describe our legal scope of dealings to be merely as a matter of procedure. It has far more reaching implications which involves a lot of deliberations, conflicting professional opinions and endless exercise of anticipating contingencies to arrive to a mutual way-forward. A process which can be complex, and yet essential in producing the desired outcome. For any public officer like yourselves who have been exposed to the said process at some stage in their career, will be able to say that 'lessons learnt' are plentiful (and at times painful). However, I can vouch that this

can be very rewarding in itself and what better way to ensure continuity of progress than having to equip ourselves with knowledge and skills to contribute to the betterment of Brunei Darussalam as set out in national vision of 2035.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Yang Mulia Dato Solicitor General in his welcoming remark earlier has mentioned the launch of another piece of publication from my Chambers titled “Musings from Chambers: Chambers Decoded” in conjunction with this inaugural seminar, for which I have also contributed an article, depicting my own personal journey. Anyway, I urge you and your colleagues to read them. The musings are meant to be more ‘laid-back’ (light hearted) perspective of our experience and lessons learned along the way, that we want to share with you. In

closing, I wish to express my utmost appreciation to the Civil Service Institute for collaborating with my Chambers on organizing this seminar within the confines of this well-equipped lecture hall facilities. To all the presenters, thank you for sharing. Also to the Prime Minister's Office in rendering their cooperation throughout organizing this event, along with my steadfast officers and staff in their unwavering determination to see this event through. Our appreciation also to the various Government departments and agencies for nominating their representatives as participants in this inaugural Seminar. I wish you all a meaningful and fulfilling journey in the public service. As the saying goes, perfection may not be attainable but if we chase perfection, we can catch excellence (Vince Lombardi).

May our journey towards knowledge seeking and sharing be blessed by Allah SWT, always. Aamiin ya Rnabbal alameen.

With the kalimah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

salawat and salam upon prophet Muhammad Salullah Alaihi Wassalam, it gives me great pleasure and honor to launch this inaugural Public Officers Law Seminar, Understanding the Law.

وبالله التوفيق والهداية ، السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

~_~

[END]