

SPEECH BY

YANG BERTHORMAT

DATIN SERI PADUKA HAJAH HAYATI BINTI PEHIN ORANG KAYA

SHAHBANDAR DATO SERI PADUKA HJ MOHD SALLEH

ATTORNEY GENERAL

AT THE AGC OPEN DAY

AND THE LAUNCHING OF AGC REPORT 2013-2015

THURSDAY, 3rd SEPTEMBER 2015

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Kehadapan Majlis Yang Teramat Mulia Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Puteri Hajah Muta-Wakkilah Hayatul Bolkiah binti Kebawah Duli Yang Maha Mulia Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanah Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah.

Terlebih dahulu, dengan penuh hormat dan takzim hamba Tuanku dan seluruh Jawatankuasa Hari Terbuka Pejabat Peguam Negara 2015 dan Pelancaran Buku Laporan Pejabat Peguam Negara 2013 – 2015, serta pegawai dan kakitangan Pejabat Peguam Negara mengalu-alukan dan menyembahkan menjunjung kasih di atas kesudian Tuanku berangkat ke majlis pada pagi ini. Your Royal Highness's presence will no doubt inspire the students who are our special guests this morning.

Ampun Tuanku, hamba Tuanku menjunjung perkenan untuk memberikan sedikit ucapan kepada yang hadir dalam Bahasa biasa.

Yang Mulia Puan Naimah binti Md Ali, Solicitor General, and as Advisor to the Organising Committee.

Yang Mulia Awang Haji Mohammad Yusree bin Haji Junaidi, Assistant Solicitor General I,

and Yang Mulia Dayang Hajah Nor Hashimah binti Haji Mohd Taib, Assistant Solicitor General II, as Co-Chairperson,

Members of the Organizing Committee and the Editorial Committee led by Yang Mulia Puan Alice Khan, the Legal Draftsman.

Distinguished guests, senior Government officers, officers and staff of the Attorney General's Chambers (AGC), law students (potential lawyers and hopefully future AGC's officers), Ladies and Gentlemen.

We are grateful to Allah, the Almighty for his blessing in making it possible for us to gather today on this auspicious event to mark the Attorney General's Chambers' Open Day 2015 and the launching of Attorney General's Chambers Report 2013 – 2015.

This event is organized as part of Attorney General's Chambers' initiatives to encourage students to consider Chambers for their career. Chambers had continuously provided at the request of higher education institutions career talks for those students aspiring to do a law degree. The outreach has even gone beyond Brunei Darussalam with myself together with 3 officers reaching out to students currently undertaking the study of law in the United Kingdom in February 2015. I think some of you were present at that time and my officers and I had a very fruitful exchange with you all. It is most encouraging to see the

interest shown by students in pursuing law as their career as Chambers continues to face the challenging task of recruiting and retaining qualified lawyers. In line with the theme for our National Day this year, “Generasi Berwawasan” (Generation with vision) and the general theme for Hari Belia/Youth Day – “our Youth Our Future”, it is safe to say that the future of the legal profession lies on you (dear students) as the future generation of lawyers.

YOU WILL ASK, WHY JOIN AGC?

I would reply that with a bit of nostalgia and personal experience and by looking back to my career progression way back on 8 January 1981 as a Legal Counsel. At that time, the AGC building was located at the Secretariat Building in Bandar Seri Begawan. The numbers of officers and staff was just a handful then. Both the Honorable CJ who cannot be here today, and myself started our career in the cramped corridor of AGC, as legal Counsel and DPP. Is that a good enough reason for you to start your career with AGC?

May be not!! I but let me share with you with a bit of my personal journey in the hope that some of you will be further inspired. Three years after joining Chambers, I was seconded to Magistrate Court at Kuala Belait as a Magistrate. On 1 July 1986, I returned back to AGC and was promoted as Deputy Senior Counsel. In 1989, once again I was transferred to the Court but this time as the Chief Magistrate before promoted as the Intermediate Court Judge/Deputy Chief

Registrar of High Court on 1 July 1991 and later as Acting Chief Registrar of High Court/ Intermediate Court Judge in 1998.

In 1999, I was appointed as the Chief Registrar of High Court and in 2001 as High Court Judge before being appointed as High Court (Civil) Judge in 2006. After almost 20 years in the Court, I returned back to AGC and this time as the Attorney General in August 2009. Phew!! What a journey it has been!! It may also be appropriate to add especially for the ladies present here and the fact that, about 80% of our law officers are ladies, that I was the first Brunei woman to be appointed as a High Court Judge and as the AG, and I am indeed most honoured and grateful to His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam for the trust and honour given to me personally and to Brunei women in general.

A lot has changed of course in the 20 years since I first left Chambers in 1984. From a handful of officers at that time, the total number of officers and staff has now reached 201. For legal posts, there were 37 posts for Legal Counsel in 2005 and within 10 years it has reached to 59 posts which include 7 graduates from UNISSA. Another post, Deputy Senior Counsel posts were only 14 posts in 2005 and now it has increased to 22 posts. Senior Counsel posts were only 2 in 2005 but the number has triple to 6 in 2015. This shows that the demand for legal profession has expended within the last decade. This also means that the

opportunity for career progression has also increased as more senior posts are created to cater the demand. Just recently, advertisement for vacancy of 8 posts for Deputy Senior Counsel was opened to the Legal Counsels at AGC and is currently being processed by the Public Services Commission.

Apart from that, the Chambers also realized the need to synchronize the scheme of service with the market competitiveness especially in term of salary scale. With that in mind, a new scheme has been proposed to match with the market competitiveness and has been submitted to Public Service Department (PSD).

That said, I hope that your genuine love for this noble profession and your commitment to serve our beloved country will also drive you to start your career in AGC, which plays a pivotal role in Brunei Darussalam's legal system and in upholding the rule of law.

In addition to this, the Chambers through The Human Resource Unit in their continuous effort to improve the condition of the Human Resources in AGC is introducing Talent Management Program specifically for AGC. AGC Talent Management Program does not focus only on one aspect of human resource function but also including the whole processes or activities to recruit, identify, retain, develop and also using the talent for the benefit of the organisation.

As I have mentioned earlier, in February this year, I was given the opportunity to attend a meet and greet session with our law students in the United Kingdom. The main objective of the session was to introduce AGC and encourage the students to start their legal career at AGC because I for one, still strongly feel that AGC is the appropriate starting place to utilise and sharpen the knowledge and skills required of a lawyer and to provide you with the best exposure on diverse aspect of legal practise and areas including prosecution, legal drafting dan giving advice to the respective ministries and departments on various domestic and international matters.

I am aware of the main concern raised during my meeting with the law students in the United Kingdom on the difficulty of obtaining a place to do the Bar Professional training course. Chambers is also continuously encouraging our existing legal officers who had loyally served Chambers to obtain their professional qualifications. Chambers already held fruitful discussions with the Ministry of Education to assist you in this regard. I hope a suitable arrangement will materialize soon and you will be informed.

Chambers continue to receive a number of requests from students who are doing the degree in law as well as aspiring to do law to be attached with us. I hope the exposure to the variety of work in Chambers will inspire them to join

this noble profession. The feedbacks we got from them are most encouraging and I am happy to mention that some of them did actually returned and joined chambers as one of our new generation of lawyers.

Dear students,

This AGC's Open Day today is your day!! So, I urge you, to learn, explore, discover and ask plenty of questions when you tour our exhibition which had been put up by sheer hard work and commitment of the Committee and the various Divisions, even at 'no or very little budget' so I am told. But do not stop here. I can assure you that my officers will not hesitate to talk to you and answer your questions about a career in Law, should you wish to do so at any time.

Today we will also witness the launching of the AGC Report 2013-2015 which will showcase the progress and achievements of Chambers for the last 2 years. We are most grateful to Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Muta-Wakkilah Hayatul Bolkiah binti Kebawah Duli Yang Maha Mulia Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanah Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, for HRH's consent to officiate the launch.

I end with a 'marketing message!' to inform our law students here and those who are qualified and interested to join us, that there is an advertisement for Daily Paid Legal Counsel which opens from 30th August 2015 until 13th

September 2015. We look forward to welcome you as a member of our 'close knit AGC family' soon and in the near future. Most of all, I encourage you to serve our country in this honorable profession with exemplary passion and serve the country with compassion, with professionalism and integrity. We count on you, the younger generation to take the legal profession in Brunei Darussalam to greater heights into the future, wherever your career may take you further be it in Chambers, the judiciary or the private practice and others.

Finally, my deep appreciation goes to the Organising Committee, the Editorial Committee for the Report, all Heads of Divisions, Head of Units and the Admin and Finance Division and support staff who have contributed their valuable time and efforts towards the success of this Event and most of all to 'my AGC's family', each and every one, without whom every initiative, every event and achievement would not have succeeded.

Ampun Tuanku

Hamba Tuanku sekali lagi menyembahkan setinggi-tinggi menjunjung kasih atas keberangkatan Tuanku dan menjunjung ampun jika ada terdapat tutur kata dan suruk langkah yang kurang manis serta sebarang kecacatan dan kekurangan di dalam majlis ini.

Sekian.

وبالله التوفيق والهداية ، السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

Hamba Tuanku menjunjung anugeraha.

