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SPEECH BY

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**AWANG KIFRAWI BIN DATO PADUKA HAJI KIFLI
AT THE OPENING OF THE LEGAL YEAR
9 FEBRUARY 1999**

It gives me great pleasure to be able to give a speech as Attorney General. On behalf of the Attorney General's Chambers, I wish to thank the Court staff, the private legal practitioners, law enforcement officers and other Government officers for their cooperation and assistance in our continued effort to uphold the rule of law and the proper running of our machinery of justice.

LEGISLATION

In 1998 several legislation have been passed. I do not wish to mention all of them.

Several new offences under the Penal Code were introduced in 1998. Section 277A of the Penal Code provides for offences caused by fire which are meant to stop open burning during the long dry season last year.

Section 435 provides for the offence of mischief by fire or explosive substance with intent to cause damage punishable with death, if such act causes death to any person.

Section 308A of the Penal Code provides for the new offence of infanticide punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 10 years, and shall also be liable to fine.

This is the offence committed by any woman who caused the death of her child under the age of 12 months and at that time her mind was disturbed due to the effect of giving birth to the child.

New offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act have recently been created. Unauthorised traffic, possession for the purpose of trafficking, manufacture, import and export of the drugs methylamphetamine (also known as shabu/ice) and MDMA (also known as ecstasy) of specified quantity would be punishable with death.

Emergency (Public Health) (Food) Order was made last year to ensure that food imported and sold for the public are fit for human consumption and not dangerous to the public health.

Emergency (Halal Meat) Order was made to ensure that meat imported or sold to the public are halal, fit for consumption by Muslims.

Emergency (Syariah Courts) Order was made last year to make specific provisions in respect of the establishment of Syariah Courts, appointments and powers of Syariah Judges and jurisdiction of Syariah Courts and other matters connected with the proceedings of Syariah Courts. These Courts would replace the existing Kadhi Courts.

LAW REVISION

With regard to Laws of Brunei, the Attorney General's Chambers has already commenced the preparation of further volumes of the current Revised Edition, to cover Emergency Orders which have been made since 1984. Final proofs have already been dispatched to the Printing Department.

DEPUTY PUBLIC PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

I have been informed that the recent setting up of Deputy Public Prosecutor's office in the Court Building has been found to be useful to Police Prosecutors and other law enforcement officers. I also hope the Court and members of the Bar would

find it convenient to be able to meet my officers in the Court Building, and hope we can resolve any outstanding and urgent matters.

CRIME STATISTICS

As is customary on this occasion, I would like to refer to the incidence of crime in the country.

According to statistics compiled by the Royal Brunei Police Force, there were 2,750 reported cases in 1998 compared to 3,269 in 1997 and 3,152 in 1996. 2,120 arrests were made and 1,217. were resolved. There was a reduction in the number of offences against the person from 340 in 1997 to 338 in 1998. Offences against property also decreased from 1,529 in 1997 to 1,230 cases in 1998.

The traffic statistics compiled by the Royal Brunei Police Force show that in 1998 there was a total number of 2,692 cases compared to 2,945 in 1997. 50 persons died in 39 fatal accidents compared to 61 deaths in 1997.

In 1998 the total number of persons arrested for offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act was 432 compared to 510 in 1997.

The Anti Corruption Bureau received 146 information in 1998 compared to 167 last year. 2 persons appeared in court to face charges under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The Royal Customs and Excise made 150 arrests compared to 285 in 1997 for offences under the Customs Act. 87 cases compared to 198 in 1997 were brought to Court and 8 cases were compounded.

The Immigration authority prosecuted 441 persons in 1998 compared to 577 in 1997 and 876 other persons paid composition fees.

CONCLUSION

May it please Your Lordship, that brings me to the end of my address.

I am very pleased with the good relations which have long existed between my Chambers and the Judiciary as well as with the private practitioners, and I hope they will continue in the years to come. I look forward to attend the Legal Year Dinner organised by members of the Brunei Bar.

On behalf of my Chambers I wish to thank the Commissioner of Police and his officers for their assistance and cooperation. I also like to thank those who have arranged and participated in this ceremony.

Finally may I take this opportunity to wish Your Lordship and everyone present this morning a successful and prosperous 1999.