OPENING REMARKS

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DIRECTOR GENERAL

MALAYSIAN NUCLEAR AGENCY

At the

NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS MEETING ON NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY FOR CONTROLLING PLASTIC POLLUTION (NUTEC PLASTICS)

6 OCTOBER 2022

Assalamualaikum, Salam Sejahtera, and a Very Good Morning,

- YBrs. Ts. Dr. Ishak bin Mansor
  Director
  Technical Support Division

- YBrs. Dr. Hasni binti Hassan
  Director
  Radiation Processing Technology Division

- YBrs. Dr. Faridah binti Mohamad Idris
  Director
  Planning dan International Relation Division

- Ms. Celina Horak
  Technical Officer and Section Head
  Physical and Chemical Sciences Division
  Department of Nuclear Sciences and Applications, IAEA

- Mr. Denis Subbotnitskiy
  Programme Management Officer
  Asia and the Pacific Division
  Department of Technical Cooperation, IAEA

- Honorable Speakers

- Distinguished Guests and Participants

- Ladies and Gentlemen

1. First and foremost, it gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to this “National Stakeholders Meeting on Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution (NUTEC Plastics).

2. On behalf of the Government of Malaysia, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the IAEA for its support and commitment in organizing this meeting. I would like to thank everyone here today for being part of this meeting. I am pleased that this meeting is well attended by many stakeholders suck as ministries, government agencies, universities and industries. Your presence here in this meeting means a great deal to us. We look forward to the day when we can gather together again in person.

3. This meeting aims to strengthen partnerships and engagement of stakeholders in Malaysia, in addressing plastic waste pollution using nuclear technology. This meeting provides a platform to discuss ongoing efforts, innovative solutions and partnerships to confront plastic pollution.

4. Taking the first of these topics, of course that Plastic pollution is one of today's most pressing global environmental challenges and a direct threat to sustainable development. Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution or NUTEC Plastics is an initiative that builds on the IAEA's efforts to deal with plastic pollution through recycling using radiation technology and marine monitoring using isotopic tracing techniques.

5. Today, marine plastic and microplastic pollution are widespread, and it is a global issue. Marine plastics and microplastic pollution pose environmental, economic, health, aesthetic and cultural threats, including the degradation of marine and coastal habitats and ecosystems. Land-based activities such as mismanagement of solid waste, illegal dumping, and surface water runoff will cause marine plastic and microplastic pollution.

6. Malaysia as a Member State of NUTEC Plastics programme is ready to work with the experts from IAEA in

our efforts to deal with plastic pollution by utilizing radiation technology for recycling waste plastics and isotopic tracing techniques for marine monitoring. As part of the NUTEC Plastics initiative, the Malaysian Nuclear Agency is also a project counterpart in the RAS1024 programme, titled “Reutilizing and Recycling Polymeric Waste through Radiation Modification for the Production of Industrial Goods”.

7. Gamma and electron beam radiation technologies can complement traditional mechanical and chemical recycling methods in the modification of certain types of plastic waste. We hope that the establishment of a pilot scale facility will demonstrate the utility of radiation technology in plastic recycling and reuse, and its potential economic benefits especially to the relevant industrial players.

8. In the roundtable discussion, I hope that this meeting provides opportunities for stakeholders to discuss and share good practices, lessons learned, issues and challenges, with regard to the efforts to deal with plastic pollution in Malaysia through recycling using radiation technology and marine monitoring using isotopic tracing techniques.

9. I also hope all of you are able to actively participate in the discussion and take the opportunities afforded by this meeting to provide unique nuclear solutions to plastic pollution through the development and promotion of radiation technologies, toward:

   - to help replace petroleum-based plastics with biodegradable ones
   - to improve conventional recycling practice
   - to renew end-of-life plastic.

10. Finally, I wish all of you to have a good and fruitful meeting at the end of the event.

    Thank you.