His Excellency Mr. Kitack Lim
Secretary General
International Maritime Organization

Mr. Francis Zacharie
Secretary General
International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities

Dato' Hj. Baharin Dato' Abdul Hamid
Director General
Marine Department Malaysia

Captain Mohamad Halim Ahmed
Chairman of the Organizing Committee
THE 13TH INTERNATIONAL VTS SYMPOSIUM 2016

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It gives me a great pleasure to welcome all delegates, exhibitors and guests to the 13th Vessel Traffic Services Symposium 2016. This event is jointly organized by the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities, Marine Department Malaysia, Malaysia Maritime Institute and Light Dues Board. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks the organisers for their hard work and tireless effort in the preparation of the symposium.

2. Malaysia has been a member of IALA since 1962 and was first elected as council member in 2002. Since then Malaysia has taken part in many IALA forums, seminars, symposiums, meetings and conferences. Last year Malaysia hosted the 60th IALA council meeting in May at Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia remains committed to play important its role as an IALA member. Being a member of council of the IALA we have participated actively in all IALA proceedings.

3. The chosen theme for this symposium is Sustainable Safe Navigation where current challenges and opportunity in vessel traffic services will be considered by the forum. Vessel Traffic Services or commonly known as VTS is one of the pillars for a sustainable safe navigation for shipping. Throughout this symposium, I expect there will be many active exchanges of opinions and ideas and lively debate relating to provision, operation, maintenance and use of VTS.
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. The first VTS in Malaysia was established in 1982 in the Port of Bintulu. It was introduced to manage the shipping traffic coming in and out of the Port which was mainly LNG carrier that was of high safety risk. The port VTS helps a seamless and accidents-free shipping in Bintulu Port until today. The benefit of VTS in this case was evidently clear and proven which allows Malaysia to export millions on tonnes of LNG safely for the past three decades. From then on, Malaysia has extended VTS to other ports to enhance the safe operation in Malaysia ports.

5. The development of VTS in Malaysia has seen rapid increase in recent years proven by the number of VTS operators. As of today, we have at least 10 VTS operators in Malaysia including the coastal surveillance in the Straits of Malacca. The Malacca Straits coastal surveillance was established in 1998, through the implementation of the Malacca Straits Reporting or STRAITREP in accordance with IMO resolution MSC.73 (69).

6. In order to cope with the current shipping trend and challenges, I am pleased to inform that the government of Malaysia has plans to build new VTS Centre infrastructure in Port Kelang. This infrastructure will not only house the latest technology in VTS and aids to navigation monitoring system but also will be manned by competent and qualified VTS personnel.

7. The importance of capacity building and technical cooperation are vital for the development of the VTS. Hence, I am also pleased to announce a technical cooperation between ASEAN and Japan has been agreed where Malaysia is the project proponent. The ASEAN VTS Regional Training Centre is first of its kind and we are honoured that the Maritime Transport Training Institute known as MATRAIN located at Pulau Indah, Port Kelang has been chosen to host this training programme. The first training program is scheduled to commence in the middle of 2017.

8. An Expert Group of ASEAN Regional for VTS had their meeting on 2nd August 2016. The meeting discussed the establishment of ASEAN Regional Training Centre for VTS operators at MATRAIN and developed the framework for the VTS training programme. As a host to this programme, we are eagerly look forward for this initiative to come to realization.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. Safety of navigation for shipping has always been a primary agenda for Malaysia. Malaysia commitment remain high for maintaining safe navigation for ships and for that reason, I am pleased to inform that Malaysia have procured a 82 meter buoy tender vessel to expand our capability in maintaining aids to navigation. Its operation area will not only limit to the Strait of Malacca but also the whole of Malaysian waters. This vessel will also serves as a training platform for Marine Department personnel in the field of VTS and aids to navigation.

10. I could never say enough that training of personnel either ashore or ship based is a fundamental element in the field of safety of navigation. For that reason, IALA entrusted MATRAIN to conduct the Level One Aids to Navigation Manager Training Course. The recognition given to MATRAIN to conduct this high skill international course has put Malaysia at the centre stage for human resource capacity building in this region.
11. Both these notable achievements in the development of human resource capacity building for aids to navigation and VTS shall be penned down through signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between IALA and Malaysia for the Level One Ads to Navigation Manager Training Course; and an exchange of official documents between Japan and Malaysia to endorse the cooperation for ASEAN Regional Training for VTS Personnel. The signing and exchange of documents will take place at the Conference Hall 1 later today.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

12. To mark this auspicious event, commemorative stamps shall be issued by Pos Malaysia. The commemorative stamps symbolises the highest cooperation between Malaysia and IALA in making efforts towards “Sustainable Safe Navigation”. Along with this, an International IALA VTS Manual 6th edition will also be formally launched.

13. Taking the opportunity of the symposium this week here in Kuala Lumpur, a coffee table book, titled, “Safety of Navigation Modernisation: Monitoring Ships” will be launched. This book is an initiative taken by the Light Dues Board in promoting awareness in VTS. It provides readers with general background of VTS and some insight of efforts taken by Malaysia to enhance safety of navigation in its waters. The book is written by a group of officers in the Marine Department Malaysia and I believe it will add on to the series of literatures and references on aids to navigation for of those who have interest in this subject.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

14. Before I conclude my speech, once again I would like to thank you for making the symposium a success. I hope in the next few days you will have fruitful discussions with positive outcomes at the end of the symposium, and at the same time foster a good networking among yourselves.

15. While you are here in our vibrant city of Kuala Lumpur, please spend some time to visit and explore many sights and sounds that the city has to offer.

16. With that, it gives me great pleasure to declare THE 13TH INTERNATIONAL VTS SYMPOSIUM 2016, open.

Thank you.