



Keynote Address

Yang Berhormat

Dato Seri Setia Dr Haji Abdul Manaf bin Haji

Metussin

*Coordinating Minister for Economic Policies and
Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry
as Chairman of Brunei Darussalam Central Bank
(BDCB) Board of Directors*

Launch of the Financial Sector Blueprint 2026-2035

29th September 2026

Serambi Suluh, Tarindak D'Seni

Bandar Seri Begawan

Brunei Darussalam

Bismillah Hir Rahman Nir Rahim
Alhamdulillah Rabbil 'Aalameen,

Wassalaatu Wassalaamu 'Alaa Asyrafil Ambiya
E'wal Mursaleen,

Sayyidina Muhammadin Wa'alaa Aalihee
Wasahbihee Ajma'een

Distinguished Board of Directors of BDCB,

Yang Mulia Dayang Hajah Rashidah binti Haji
Sabtu, Managing Director of Brunei Darussalam
Central Bank (BDCB),

Senior Government Officials and Senior Executives
of the Financial Institutions,

Honourable Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh,
Salam Sejahtera, and a very good afternoon.

1. Alhamdulillah, first and foremost, allow me to extend a very warm welcome to all of you to today's significant milestone. We are truly honoured to be joined by such an esteemed gathering of industry leaders, policymakers, and market participants.
2. We gather at a time when the global economy continues to face significant challenges, from geopolitical tensions and shifting supply chains to evolving energy markets and rapid technological change. Yet, as reflected in today's theme, "**Progress under Pressure - Opportunities amid Global Strains,**" periods of uncertainty can also create opportunities. Opportunities to innovate, strengthen resilience and advance sustainable growth.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. Against this backdrop, we can take encouragement from Brunei Darussalam's economic resilience over the past decade. Between 2016 and 2025, our economy recorded an average annual growth of 0.7%, reflecting its ability to withstand global uncertainties, including periods of market volatility and economic disruption. Furthermore, during the same period, our non-Oil and Gas sector has expanded from the year 2016 to 2025 with an average of 2.7% annually, fueled by major foreign direct investment (FDI) projects. Together, these developments underscore the strengthening of our economic fundamentals and reinforce our confidence in Brunei Darussalam's long-term progress amid a volatile global environment.

4. Our financial sector has played a vital role in supporting this resilience. Over the past decade, total financial system assets expanded at an average annual rate of 2.3%, reaching BND25.9 billion last year. More importantly, this growth has translated into greater support for the real economy. As of the first half of this year, banks' financing to businesses stood at BND6.2 billion, twice the level recorded in 2016. This highlights the financial sector's growing role in supporting businesses, investment and overall economic diversification in Brunei Darussalam. With strong capitalisation, ample liquidity, and improving asset quality, our financial sector remains well positioned to support the economy towards achieving Wawasan Brunei 2035. Indeed, today, the financial sector contributes approximately **6.0%**

of GDP, compared with an average of 5.6% over a decade ago.

5. Notwithstanding these achievements, we cannot afford complacency. As we continue our economic diversification journey, we must strengthen private sector growth, deepen our capital markets, improve access to financing for businesses, and accelerate digital adoption. These priorities point to one clear conclusion, while Brunei Darussalam's financial sector is entering this new decade from a position of strength, the next phase of development will require greater focus, deeper innovation, and stronger collaboration.

Distinguished Guests,

6. It is in light of these opportunities and challenges that we launch the **Brunei**

Darussalam Financial Sector Blueprint 2026-2035. This Blueprint will guide the development of our financial sector over the next decade and support our broader aspirations under **Wawasan Brunei 2035** and the **Economic Blueprint**.

7. Building on the achievements of the first Blueprint, this new roadmap envisions a resilient, inclusive, and innovative financial sector that safeguards stability while supporting economic growth and social well-being. At its core, the Blueprint is anchored in our mandate as a Central Bank to maintain monetary and financial stability, this will always remain our guiding compass. The Blueprint is further guided by three (3) strategic thrusts:

- a. **First, fostering a progressive and innovative financial sector.** We will continue to promote digitalisation, strengthen financial literacy and enhance consumer protection to ensure financial services are more accessible, efficient and inclusive for our society.
- b. **Second, advancing sustainability through finance.** We will support the integration of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles across the financial sector, while seizing new opportunities for sustainable financing including renewable energy and other sustainability-related projects. These efforts will not only bolster today's economic growth but contributes to a more

sustainable economy for generations to come.

- c. **Third, modernising our financial infrastructure.** We will continue to enhance the country's digital payment systems, improving interoperability, and reinforcing cybersecurity to ensure our financial system remains secure, efficient, and future-ready to meet the needs of our people and businesses.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- 8. Together, these priorities will enable the financial sector to play a greater role in supporting private sector growth, widening opportunities for households and businesses, encouraging responsible innovation, and

strengthen Brunei Darussalam's long-term economic resilience.

9. The success of the Financial Sector Blueprint 2026-2035 ultimately depends on shared efforts among government agencies, regulators, financial institutions, businesses, investors, educational institutions, and the wider community. I therefore call upon every stakeholder to embrace this Blueprint as a shared national agenda. Together, we must translate strategies into action, opportunities into outcomes, and aspirations into meaningful impact for our economy and, most importantly for our people.
10. Our ambition is clear, to build a financial sector that is resilient in times of uncertainty, innovative in embracing change, inclusive in

creating opportunities, and sustainable in supporting future generations. Through this Blueprint, we are laying the foundation for a stronger economy and a more prosperous future for Brunei Darussalam.

Distinguished Guests,

11. Before I conclude, let me take this opportunity to express my heartfelt appreciation to everyone who has contributed to the development of the Blueprint, particularly the dedicated team at BDCB, our partners across the Government, financial institutions and relevant industry leaders. Your insights and commitment have been invaluable. We will continue to rely on your support as we turn this Blueprint into reality.

12. May Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala bless our efforts and guide us in achieving our shared vision for a resilient and prosperous Brunei Darussalam.

Thank you and I wish you all a productive and insightful day.

Wabillahi taufik walhidayah, wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.