

OILS AND FATS INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS (OFIC) 2014

**SPEECH BY
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**OILS AND FATS INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS (OFIC) 2014
THURSDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2014
KUALA LUMPUR CONVENTION CENTRE, KUALA LUMPUR**

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Chairman
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YBhg. Datuk Dr. Choo Yuen May
Director General
Malaysian Palm Oil Board

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Salam sejahtera, Salam Satu Malaysia and a very good morning to all of you.

I am delighted to be here with all of you today, especially among the scientists and the technologist representing the edible oils fraternity. I commend the efforts to assemble this gathering of scientist's to discuss and exchange views issues in the edible oils sector.

2. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Malaysian Oils Scientists' and Technologists' Association (MOSTA) on their hard work in organising this event. I also wish to record my appreciation to MOSTA for the invitation to address this event. To all participants, I would like to extend a warm welcome and to those from overseas, Selamat Datang, and wish all of you a memorable stay in Malaysia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. The hosting of Oils and Fats Congress (OFIC) 2014 by MOSTA, also coincides with the Silver Jubilee establishment of MOSTA. MOSTA has indeed come a long way in fostering and advancing scientific discourse in promoting the use of edible oils, in particular palm oil.
4. The theme for OFIC 2014, Global Oils and Fats: Addressing Major Issues is indeed reflective of the current global oils and fats scenario and challenges. Edible oils are an integral part of the food supply chain and there is a need to ensure adequate supply and its contribution to meet nutritional requirements. In addition, we must also not forget the food safety aspect, and coupled with the growing global population and its consequent increase in demand for food products.
5. The palm oil industry faces intense challenges together with 16 other major oils and fats to meet the needs of the world's 7 billion people. According to the World Health Organisation, each person needs on an average about 30 kilograms of oils and fats per year. Hence, as the population increases, more oils and fats are required. In addition, the consumption pattern in the world's populous countries like India and China are envisaged to expand in tandem with economic growth and rising incomes. Further, there is a growing trend in converting oils and fats for non-food purposes, in particular for energy generation. However, there are only a few countries which are net exporters, with Malaysia being one of those. Currently, palm oil assumes an important component in the global oils and fats sector and accounts for 32.9% of global oils and trade.
6. The last few years has seen the world much dependent particularly on palm oil, in view of its versatility in a broad range of applications and its nutritional properties. This year's great news is scientific research that shows that saturated fats do not cause cardiovascular diseases, as well as pointing out the potential dangers of a low-fat diet. Also, palm olein fraction has been found to be as good or if not better than extra virgin olive oil.
7. While palm oil has this good story for the global community, the industry is still being continuously confronted with evolving issues, particularly related to inaccurate information about its nutritional benefits and its sustainable development. This has led to processed food manufactures, in particular in Europe to label their products as palm free. In addition, Singapore is contemplating the blending of palm oil, with other oils purportedly on health grounds.
8. These actions to a certain extent, exemplify the lack of knowledge on the nutritional benefits of palm oil, more so when recent scientific evidence shows that palm oil has similar characteristics as olive oil. I sincerely hope that oil scientist's who have gathered here today, will learn about and then expound the benefits of this versatile oil to the global community.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. Besides the nutritional benefits of palm oil, the palm oil industry has also been portrayed as advocating environmentally unfriendly practices such as deforestation, contributing to loss of biodiversity and greenhouse gas emissions. In this context, Malaysia being a major producer of palm oil is committed towards undertaking concerted efforts to ensure that the development of palm oil industry is carried out in a planned and sustainable manner. Indeed, the oil palm

industry has long been regulated in Malaysia. It is indeed one of the most highly regulated industries with the Government imposing more than 50 laws and regulations on the industry. These regulations cover land acquisition and use, protection of wildlife and the environment, and control of potential pollutants and contaminants.

10. Our laws and regulations relating to palm oil development are well defined and regulated by the relevant regulatory bodies, including the Malaysian Palm Oil Board. In addition, only land gazetted as legitimate agricultural land is allowed for planting of oil palms.

11. The Malaysian Government is committed towards ensuring long term sustainable development of this important industry. In line with efforts in promoting sustainable production of palm oil products and to address the concerns of environmentally unfriendly practices by the palm oil industry, the Malaysian government will implement the Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO) on 1 January 2015. MSPO is a Malaysian standard on sustainability for use by the local industry.

Ladies and Gentlemen

12. The increase in demand for palm oil has also put a pressure on the availability of trained manpower in the form of scientists, engineers and economists for the expanding oil and fats industry. I wish to urge and encourage universities, institutes of higher learning and professional bodies such as MOSTA to co-operate in producing the human capital required. In this context, I have been informed that at OFIC 2014, a special invitation to undergraduates have been extended to further promote their participation and career path in the palm oil industry.

13. In order for us to increase sustainable production for the ever expanding world needs, we should also focus and intensify, research and development and innovation in order for the industry to expand and prosper. I envisage that through research and innovations, we will be able to optimise the utilisation of oils and fats in terms of downstream products. This will result in stabilising the prices of the oils and fats and make them different from other commodities. Let us strive to make the oils and fats industry a vibrant and stable sector of the world economy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

14. I am pleased to note that OFIC 2014 has also brought together eminent experts and scientists from all around the world in the field of oils and fats to share their knowledge and experience. I am optimistic that OFIC 2014 will provide the window to deliberate among others, issues, challenges and innovations as well as the latest developments in the palm oil industry. I urge all participants not look at OFIC 2014 merely as a formal congregation of world oils and fats fraternity, but go beyond to find solutions for mutual benefits and interest in the oils and fats industry.

15. Lastly, I would like to take the opportunity once again to congratulate MOSTA for organizing this conference on the occasion of its Silver Jubilee Year. To all foreign speakers and participants, I hope you will enjoy our Malaysian hospitality and local culinary delights, many using palm oil during your stay here.

16. On that note, Ladies and Gentlemen, I officially declare open OFIC 2014. I wish all participants a productive conference.

Thank you.

Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities
6 November 2014