



KEMENTERIAN PERTANIAN DAN KETERJAMINAN MAKANAN
JABATAN PERTANIAN

OPENING ADDRESS
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DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF AGRICULTURE
(INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSION)

AT THE
WORKSHOP ON MOLECULAR DIAGNOSTIC OF SOUTH AMERICAN
LEAF BLIGHT OF RUBBER FOR THE ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION

18 AUGUST 2025 | MONDAY
M WORLD HOTEL, SELANGOR

1. First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude for the opportunity to gather here this morning for the opening ceremony of the *Workshop on Molecular Diagnostics of South American Leaf Blight (SALB) of Rubber for the Asia and Pacific Region*.
2. This five-day workshop, held from 18 to 22 August 2025, brings together 14 participants from 11 Asia-Pacific countries, namely Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, and Sri Lanka. It is truly my pleasure to welcome you all to our beautiful country, Malaysia, and I hope your journey here has been both pleasant and memorable.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. Before I proceed further, please allow me to extend my sincere appreciation to all parties involved in ensuring the success of this workshop. Special thanks go to the FAO as the main sponsor, the APPPC Secretariat, as well as the Department of Agriculture (DOA) and the Malaysian Rubber Board (MRB) for providing financial, logistical, and technical support. I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Embassy of Brazil and the NPPO of Brazil for their invaluable support, particularly in facilitating the provision of the SALB sample.
4. As we are aware, this workshop is an initiative by the APPPC Secretariat and its member countries to address the risk of SALB incursion into the Asia-Pacific region. SALB, caused by

the fungus *Pseudocercospora ulei*, is regarded as the most serious threat to global rubber production.

5. Over the years, many collaborative initiatives have been undertaken to address this critical issue, including the development of Regional Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (RSPMs) and the convening of regional workshops. This event marks the final workshop under this important APPPC initiative.
6. I recall that this workshop was originally scheduled for last year but, due to technical challenges, it is now being convened this year in Malaysia. As the lead country of the APPPC SALB Working Group, the Department of Agriculture Malaysia is honoured to host this important event, working closely with our regional partners to strengthen collective efforts in SALB management. I firmly believe that these efforts will not only benefit rubber-producing countries but will also contribute positively to the wider agriculture sector.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. I wish to highlight one of the significant expected outcomes of this workshop: the development of a standardized molecular diagnostic protocol for the detection of *P. ulei*. This protocol will enable member countries to implement consistent, science-based phytosanitary measures, thereby facilitating safe trade while protecting our region from the incursion of SALB.

8. Furthermore, the establishment of an expert group focusing on diagnostics, quarantine measures, and pest risk analysis (PRA) for SALB could be considered. Such outcomes will provide the necessary technical foundation for reviewing Article IV and Appendix B of the Plant Protection Agreement for the Asia and Pacific Region, particularly for member countries that have yet to adopt the second set of amendments.
9. In this regard, I sincerely hope that the strong agricultural cooperation and longstanding partnerships among APPPC member countries will continue to grow and flourish in the years ahead, paving the way for deeper collaboration and shared benefits.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

10. I will not take much of your time with a lengthy speech. Allow me once again to extend my best wishes to all participants and organizers. I hope this workshop will be fruitful and successful, and that you will also enjoy your stay here in beautiful and vibrant Malaysia.
11. With that, it is my great pleasure and honour to officially declare open the *Workshop on Molecular Diagnostics of SALB of Rubber for the Asia and Pacific Region*.

Thank you.