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SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
AT THE OPENING OF THE FIRST MEETING OF
THE NATIONAL COMMITTEES ON "FREEDOM
FROM HUNGER" CAMPAIGN IN ASIA AND
THE FAR EAST AT DEWAN TUNKU ABDUL
RAHMAN, KUALA LUMPUR ON 1ST OCTOBER,

Mr Chairman¹, Your Excellencies, Hon'ble Ministers, etc.

I feel glad and honoured this morning to be given the privilege of opening the first meeting of the National Committees on "Freedom from Hunger" campaign in Asia and the Far East.

Firstly, let me say that it is a great pleasure to welcome each one of you to Malaya.

The Government of Malaya are proud and honoured at being the first Host to this Conference and we hope that not only will each delegate here enjoy the time spent within our shores whether it be time at work or time at leisure.

I can assure you that wherever you go in Malaya whether it be in Conference Halls, in Offices, on Rural Roads or Urban streets, all of you are most welcome to our Country.

I have read with considerable interest your Plan for the World Food Congress to be held in Washington in June next year.

The thinking and planning behind this campaign, taken on a world-wide basis, seems to me to be extremely sound and I would like to pay tribute to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, together with a special and particular word of praise to the Director-General, Dr B. R. Sen.²

When one realises that the present world population, now a little over two thousand million, is expected to reach six thousand million in the not very distant future, the Plan for this World Food Congress and the importance of this "Freedom from Hunger" campaign cannot be over-emphasised and is most timely.

¹ Mr Ahsan-u-Din.

² Director General of FAO.

Within the walls of this Conference room all of us are probably quite clear as to the meaning and purpose of this international "Freedom from Hunger" campaign.

But I have some doubt that when the words "Freedom from Hunger" hit newspaper headlines or are passed from the lips of one to another that their full impact and meaning are really understood.

I do feel that as each member country sets up its Committee and organisation, the words "Freedom from Hunger Campaign" will have to be modified and re-interpreted from place to place so as to be received with the fullest psychological impact.

Take for example Malaya; if one were to ask the poorest and hungriest person one could find, he would probably deny that he was really hungry because the physical sensation of hunger is easily appeased by starchy or sweet food, such as carbo-hydrates but such food would not necessarily provide the nutrition essential for body strength and repair, normal physical and intellectual activity and a stable, emotional state of mind.

Our problem at present, is not really one of shortage of food but a problem of the right food with the right nutrition so that our people can lead a fuller and more active life.

I feel therefore that this international campaign to have the maximum appeal to each and every country participating, must be modified in words and in action to suit the conditions of the country concerned.

If this is not done the chances are that the campaign will remain sterile on paper and become nothing more than a repetition of echoes within Conference Halls.

I think, in implementing this Campaign, we can take a lesson from the modern skill of plastic surgery.

When a plastic surgeon is about to carry out an operation of skin grafting, he is, first of all, meticulous in his diagnosis of the basic skin surface on to which the new skin tissue has to be grafted; because if he does not take care he can carry out several dozen operations grafting the wrong type of skin which will never take root and remain alive.

So it is with a campaign like this. I feel that in each individual country in which this campaign is launched, time spent on the diagnosis of traditional thinking is essential so that new ideas of food production and nutrition can so be presented as to have such an appeal that they will, like a new successful skin graft, take root and become absorbed as part of the basic traditional thinking of the country concerned.

I understand for example, in some parts of the world, that girls and women of child-bearing age were usually forbidden to drink milk because milk was believed to be a cause of sterility and that school children were restrained from eating many fruits, vegetables, eggs and fish because such food were believed to be dangerous for young people.

How such traditional thinking arose I cannot imagine.

We have similar traditional thinking in Malaya that the best part of a fish is near the head.

This has never been proved as a scientific fact but it may be that our great grandfathers knew full well that the best part of the fish lay some distance from the head and encouraged their children to eat the worst part near the head so that the best part would remain for themselves.

On the other hand, traditionally in Malaya the old-fashioned method of pounding rice by hand has been replaced by modern rice mills which I understand abolish all nutritious value out of the rice with resultant loss of vitamin value which is having an adverse effect on the health of our people.

It appears therefore that it is essential that the different approach in this Campaign will have to be made in different areas and I sincerely hope that in your deliberation during this Conference it will be possible to bear this in mind.

Finally, gentlemen, I should like to wish the greatest success and I do hope that this Campaign, and the fruits deliberations, will have a lasting impact on this part of the world.

You will forgive me if I sound a note of warning.

As I said before I have the greatest praise for your plan.

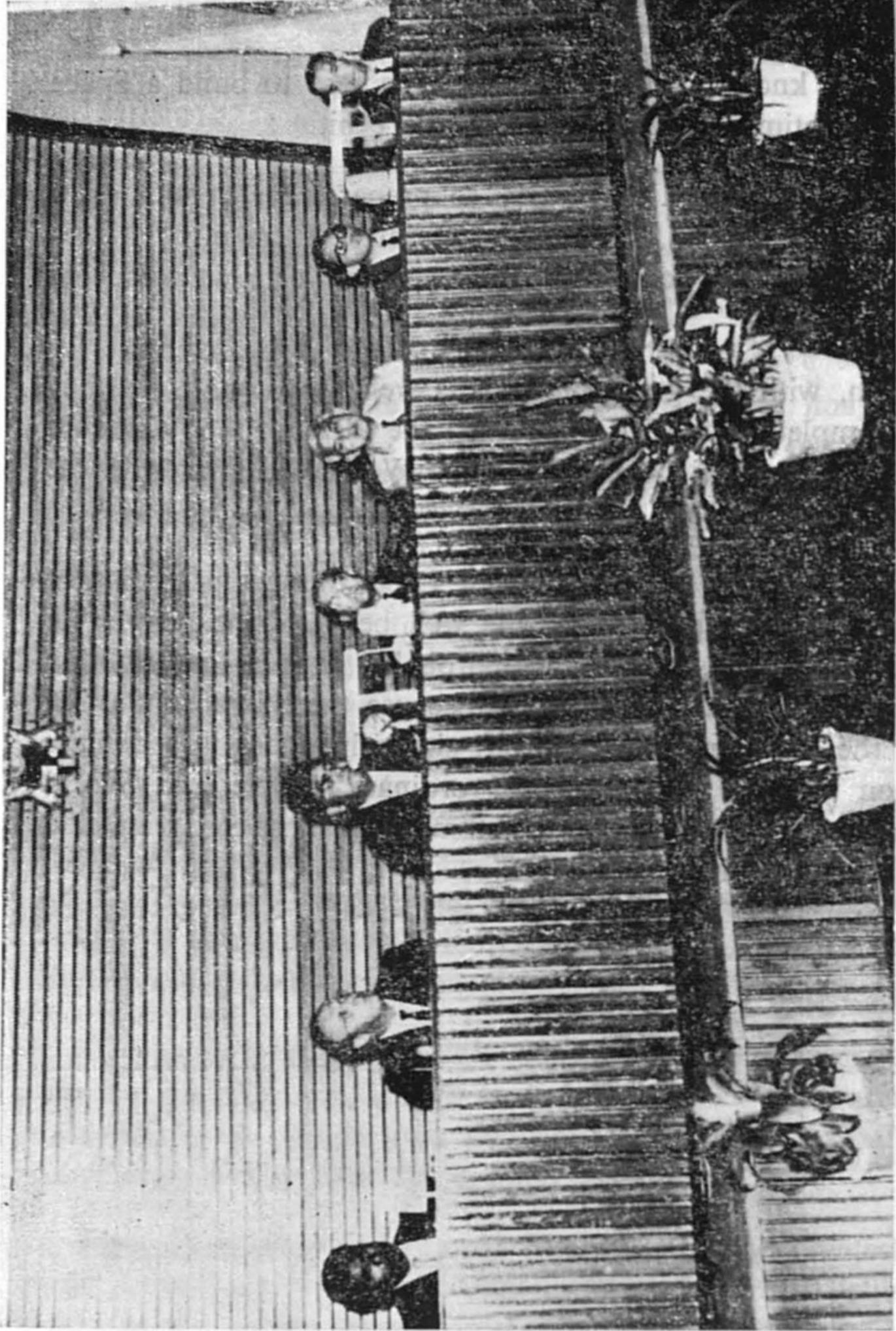
We too in Malaya produced a Five-Year Plan which incorporates many of the items enumerated in your international Plan, such as correct methods of land utilization, land settlement, better agricultural methods, adult education and many other things essential for the well being of our people, particularly in the Rural Areas.

But as you know in this Space Age it is easy to build a Space Ship but sometimes difficult to get it into orbit.

Similarly, with Plans. It is easy to prepare, design and draw up Plans but to launch, sustain and maintain them in orbit is a much more difficult task, as we in Malaya discovered, in launching our National Plan.

Our Plan, with the grace of God, is well away on its journey towards completion and I do hope that the Plan for the "Freedom from Hunger" campaign throughout the World will meet with the success and the support that it deserves.

Inclosing, I should like to say that I feel this campaign is not only a great asset, designed for the well being of the peoples of our various countries, but is also probably a great contribution to the future of international peace because there is a connection between the head and the stomach; similarly, there is a definite connection between the minds of ordinary people and World Peace because "The head, like the stomach, is most easily infected with poison when it is empty".



Tun Abdul Razak bin Hussein merasmikan Persidangan Pertama Jawatankuasa Kebangsaan Kempen "Freedom from Hunger" bagi kawasan Asia dan Timur Jauh di Dewan Tunku Abdul Rahman, Kuala Lumpur pada 1hb Oktober, 1962

(Gambar Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia)



Tun Abdul Razak bin Hussein berada di Lapangan Kapal Terbang, Kuala Lumpur untuk mengucapkan selamat jalan kepada Y.T.M. Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, Perdana Menteri untuk melakukan lawatan resmi ke Pakistan dan India pada 1hb Oktober, 1962.

(Gambar Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia)