

TR: 2.7.1966

**SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER  
FOR THE STATE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE  
CONFERENCE AT THE  
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPERATIONS ROOM,  
KUALA LUMPUR ON 12TH JULY, 1966.**

THE DEVELOPMENT MACHINERY

I have so many other commitments as Deputy Prime Minister nowadays I cannot possibly devote as much time to development as I was able to some years ago when development started after the ending of the Emergency.

Nevertheless, I am determined that there will be *no slowing up of the effort* on development, and there is no reason whatsoever why our present development machinery should not be *so institutionalised* that the machine will continue to run *efficiently and automatically* whether or not I am free to spend time on development myself!

As you know, many African and Asian countries are following our techniques of development. We have had many visitors coming here and studying our methods, and in a few months' time, we will be holding the first of a series of Afro-Asian Seminars on development.

It is, therefore, all the more essential that our methods are up-to-date, and *continuously kept up-to-date* with the maximum force and urgency of implementation so that representatives of Afro-Asian countries can see and believe that we really mean business in their field of development. We have gained an international reputation on development results; we must maintain it.

At the same time, for the *benefit of our own country and our own people*, we must ensure that at all times, there is a maximum concentrated effort on the implementation of all projects as are approved in our present Five-Year Development Plan.

Our last Five-Year Development Plan was a success, and we must make the present plan an *even greater success*.

I want to say to you quite frankly that recently I have *not* been satisfied with the way the development machinery is running at present.

I am speaking to Heads of Federal Departments on 14th July, and I propose to have regular Morning Prayers with Heads of Departments at least once a month, more often if I could find time, to revive the push and punch on development implementation at Federal level.

I am also not satisfied with some of you State Development Officers, and particularly disappointed in your lack of ability to give more *leadership* to District Officers on the ground.

Some of the recent briefings that I have been to have been *pathetic*, and it is quite obvious that many District Officers do not know either how to give a briefing or how to set up and run a District Development Operations Room.

This sad state of affairs reflects considerably on the efficiency of some State Development Officers Concerned. It is quite obvious to me that the only time that interest is taken in development or in a Development Operations Room, is the two or three days before my visit; then, after I have gone the whole spirit dies down, gets cold, and ignored until news is given of my next impending visit.

You, as State Development Officers have got to give more leadership to District Officers; teach them; encourage them; push them and guide them so that we bring the *tempo of development back* to the high standard that existed in the years 1960 to 1963.

Some of the charts, maps and lay-out of District Development Operations Rooms are a complete *mockery*. Some of the briefings are like long-paying monotone records of 12 to 14 pages long, with the District Officers having no idea of what they are intended to do during the briefing! It is *your* job to teach them.

The whole object of my tour on development is to find out from,

"a clear-cut briefing" and "a clear presentation", what progress has been made, and what delays and frustrations are holding up development, and also what problems exist which need quick solution. If this is not done, I am wasting my time touring.

There is a tendency nowadays during briefings, for people to get up and talk, and think that they are *pleasing me* with long stories while at the same time they are suppressing problems, hiding defects, and concealing delays.

This is not the method of development implementation with which we launched our last Five-Year Development Plan. The spirit is gone, the energy is gone and dedication to development is non-existent.

I am terribly sorry, and I repeat again, I put most of the blame for this sad state of affairs fairly and squarely on your shoulders as State Development Officers.

As State Development Officers, your job in addition to leading District Officers, is *first* and *foremost* to know everything that is going on in your States, and to watch development from day to day, and pick out delays and frustrations, try to solve problems yourselves, and if you cannot, then consult my Ministry without delay, and press for an early solution.

It is obvious that this is not being done; neither are you getting out and around the State sufficiently often to check on District Development Committees and development in general nor, are you giving the leadership required for success.

Also, as Deputy Chairman of the State Development Committee, you are the "staff officer" responsible to the Menteri Besar in his capacity as Chairman of the Development Committee, and it is your job to persuade *Menteri-menteri Besar* to hold frequent "briefings" and more frequent meetings of your State Development Committee, and sort out on the spot delays in development. This is not being done to my satisfaction!

If each State and District Development Committee is *running correctly* and well, properly self-propelled, then the whole national

development machinery becomes *institutionalised*, runs automatically and makes my task as Minister of Development easier, allowing me to spend more time on the bigger aspects of development, particularly future planning and the projection of new ideas in the field of National advancement.

Take for instance any State! It is quite easy to know about *every single* project in the State which is under implementation, because no project can *start* until money has been allocated, and you have only to carry out a meticulous analysis and examination of *both* the Federal Development Estimates and State Estimates, to find out about *all* projects in progress within the State; and then, having done this, and having clearly shown on maps and charts these projects in *your operations rooms*, you follow up, from day to day, and *find out for yourselves* what is the exact position.

It is not your job as Development Officers to sit back and wait for people to come to you with their troubles. Sometimes they will never come to you!

It is *your job* to be more *active* and more *aggressive* and put your finger into every aspect of development in your State and keep everything alive! Also you must ensure that the system of development progress reporting in the form of "471" must be *meaningful* and *up-to-date*.

There is no point in having a system unless we make sure that it is running properly!

I keep on saying, on my various visits, that both Districts and States must have, at least once a week, morning prayers, but I have an idea that this is not being carried out. It is your job as State Development Officers to ensure that my orders and directions *are* carried out.

It is also my intention *not* to get the development machine tied up with too much paper work and too many returns, but if I do not see an improvement on development in the next few months or so, I am afraid, I will have to ask you to send to the Ministry *every month* a diary of your movements and written reports of what you have actually done in the State during the previous month!

I hope I will not have to do this because you as State Development Officers, were specially hand-picked for your reliability, your energy, and your dedication to development, and it will be a tremendous admission of failure if we have to produce a system of checking out all your activities, when in fact, the whole concept of *our machinery* was based on assuming that you as State Development Officers are *both reliable and self-propelled!*

Recently the chaos that I discovered in Batu Pahat and Muar is mostly the fault of the District Officers concerned, part may be the fault of the State Government, but my own feeling is that the State Development Officer at the time must also be held responsible to a certain extent.

As I go around the country, I am asked for funds for all sorts of projects, both minor and major; I do my utmost to fulfil to these requests for projects by obtaining more federal funds and approving them for various projects throughout the country; and the moment that I have given out funds, I expect immediate results on implementation and action, in accordance with the correct principles of government spending.

And yet, I find in many cases where I have given out funds *months ago* - nothing has happened and at the end of the year there is a tremendous shortfall of unspent money; not because it was beyond the capacity of the P.W.D. or of the District Development Committee to spend this money; I find the shortfall is due mainly to the inability to get *on with the job*, arouse enthusiasm and to get moving quickly!

Take last year for example; I went around the country approving funds on the spot in the belief that you, as State Development Officers and District Officers throughout the country, would take immediate action on the approval of such funds, and yet, at the end of 1965, there was a shortfall of almost of \$3 million of unspent money for Mosque, Suraus and other projects paid for by Lottery Funds. *\$3 million* unspent lying in various States and Districts, together with an amount of over \$1 million on various minor projects.

There is no excuse for such inefficiency and inability to get on

with development projects, once the funds have been approved by me. I cannot continue to tolerate such lack of ability to implement projects and as a politician possibly allow the "rakyat" to suffer from such lackadisdical approach on the part of government officers responsible for the development, and I can assure you that in the future I am only going to allocate funds to areas in which I have confidence in the officers responsible.

If this state of affairs continues, I shall have to take some form of disciplinary action.

Up-to-date, we have been running development on the principles of dedication and enthusiasm, and it will again be an admission of failure if I have to run the development programme on the principles of a harsh disciplinary programme.

It is up to you to decide by your own action on development which methods I am going to adopt.

It is, therefore, your job as State Development Officers to ensure cooperation and coordination between departments, and to continuously whip up action on development by continuously going around the State and checking up meticulously on what funds have been given out on development, and to find out by your own efforts how these funds have been spent, to ensure that they are being spent correctly, and that speedy action is being taken to produce projects on the grounds.

I have laid down that as far as possible all projects *except those to be done by "gotong royong"*, will be the responsibility of the P.W.D., and if in a State or in a District there is an Engineer who does not follow my instructions, who is not cooperative, then it is your job as State Development Officer to try your best, firstly by persuasion, and this fails, secondly, then it is your job to report to my Ministry that you are not getting the full cooperation required for success.

We, in Kuala Lumpur are busy on many other things in the course of our daily work and cannot possibly be expected to know that is going on correctly and what is going on wrongly, and you as State Development Officers must keep us informed!

Further, I would like to repeat here quite frankly and honestly that we must stop this "sitting back" on the part of the District Officers and State Development Officers, and I hope you will take to heart what I have said, and when you return to your State try and free yourself from unnecessary paper work, and lengthy long drawn out meetings, and try and get yourself properly orientated to the position of State Development Officers as I visualise it to be, namely a "mobile coordinator" continuously checking, travelling, analysing and probing your finger into every aspect of development in the State, and reporting back to me, through my officers in the Ministry, the correct position, *spot-lighting the delays* and frustrations and *lime-lighting* progress.

At the last State Development Officers' conference some months ago I said I wanted a monthly State Development Officers' Conference in Kuala Lumpur, and this conference will, I repeat, be a regular conference to be carried on *whether or not* I am present and able to attend, and I want the Secretary to my Ministry to ensure that all the State Development Officers come to the Ministry *once a month* where you can have an exchange of ideas, reporting on progress, and general discussion on mutual problems, because I am determined to make the whole machinery of development, as I said before, automatic and institutional whether or not I am able to be present!

In addition to this monthly conference of State Development Officers everytime you come to Kuala Lumpur even if you come to visit other Ministries or other Departments, you *must* call in at the Ministry and talk to my officers here on what is happening in your State. Cases occurred recently of State Development Officers coming to Kuala Lumpur for two to three days on other matters, including State Development Officers from Sabah and Sarawak, and it is only after you have returned to your State that we have known that you had been in Kuala Lumpur.

I have said some harsh words. I mean them! Perhaps to those whom the "cap" fits will wear it and be a better State Development Officer as a result!