

**ADDRESS BY Y.A.B. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AT
THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE FAO FARM BROADCASTING
SEMINAR AT THE MARA AUDITORIUM
ON 15TH MAY 1967**

**Yang Berhormat Menteri-menteri,
Mr. Chairman,
Ladies & Gentlemen:**

I am very happy to be with you here this morning to declare this Seminar open.

We are living in a modern era of great development and progress, a modern era of mini-cars, mini-skirts and seminars and I should like to congratulate the sponsor of this Seminar not only for organising it, but also for focussing our attention and the attention of the nation on this subject of farm education which is of vital importance to the welfare and prosperity of our nation.

During the last 10 years since we achieved independence, we in Malaysia had progressed considerably, both in the industrial and agricultural sectors of our national economy. Therefore, in order to maintain this progress, it is necessary that we concentrate our efforts of stepping up the rate of development in both these fields.

In my view, successful dynamic industrial development must go hand in hand with the progressive agricultural industry. They must go together and they cannot be considered in isolation. Without a thriving rural population, and without the necessary increase in the demand for products and manufactured goods, the scope of industrial development must necessarily be restricted.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, let us look at the facts of our country. At present, approximately 30 per cent of our goods domestic products comes from agriculture and about 55 per cent of our working population are engaged in producing this gross domestic product. The majority of our agricultural workers are in fact small holders operating under conditions which still require considerable improvement. The Government is, therefore, determined to do everything possible to achieve this improvement.

Another important fact which I must stress today is, agricultural development must not consist of merely establishing the physical environment but it is also dependent upon the creation of a progressive and dynamic farming community. As we know, the problems associated with developing physical environments in the

rural area are being tackled systematically and therefore form an integral part of our First Malaysia Plan. Indeed, implementation of this aspect of our development has achieved great success and the changes in physical environments through-out the villages something which we all can be well proud of.

However, we must ensure that the development of human environment proceed at the same rate as physical development if we are to achieve our people, particularly our farmers and rural dwellers, a higher and a better standard of living. Economic studies have shown that investment in human beings will be more profitable than investment in physical structures. Therefore, with the increasing tempo of development, the need for evolving new methods and new techniques and of getting them transmitted to the people at the point of implementation is of major importance. Now, where is the point of implementation – it is the producer and the farmer who makes the decision at the farm level. Many of our farmers today have had limited opportunities for proper education and as they are who the people make the decision in the way in which they carry out their daily work, it is important that we provide them with facts relating to more advanced techniques in the way that can be readily understood and absorbed by them. Now, as most of you know, the lack of a proper education among the farmers has resulted in many cases in the low level of illiteracy. However, the lack of literacy does not necessarily reflect an absence of intelligence; and hence our objective must be to convey to them the advice they need in the way that can be readily understood and assimilated by them.

It is necessary also for us to instill in the minds of these farmers a new spirit – a desire for improvement and for a better higher standard of living. Our development plan which, so far, has been successfully implemented, has opened their eyes to the fact opportunities for advancement if only they are prepared to put in the equivalent efforts in their daily work and are prepared to learn and to adopt new techniques and new methods. They must be made to realize that in this age of scientific advancement, they cannot achieve the progress they desire without changing their old ways and adopting new ideas, new methods and new techniques.

It is also the policy of this Government to provide our farmers with land of economic size to enable them to earn sufficient income. Now, if to these holdings could be brought new methods and ideas and if these holdings could be linked together by sound marketing organisation as we are planning to do, then we will have rural homestead and rural economy based on very real and sound foundation.

In our efforts to instill new spirit in our farmers and to educate them with new methods and techniques, the spoken word can provide a more effective medium of communication than the written word. And, as my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives, has already pointed out, Radio and Television have a major role to play in the field of farmers' education. Now only have these media a role to play in adult education related to the farmers of today but they have also a role to play in our formal educational institutions which are producing the farmers of tomorrow. A start in this direction has already been made in the introduction of School Broadcast Programmes and it is the intention of the Government to intensify its efforts in this direction.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, one of the main limiting factors in achieving our educational targets both in respect of farmers and rural youths, is the scarcity of manpower for agricultural expansion work and formal teaching. Every effort is being made by the Government to compensate for this scarcity of manpower. That is why the introduction of radio programmes and close-circuit television has improved and it will effectively supplement our present efforts in this important aspect of our national development.

Ladies and Gentlemen: I hope therefore as the result of the deliberations in your Seminar, you will be able to produce new ideas suggesting ways and means as to how we may make the most effective use of these two important media, Radio and Television, for the benefit of our farmers, both young and old.

As we in Malaysia develop and progress, our farmers will continue to play an increasingly important role in our march to prosperity. This march to progress and prosperity will necessitate the widening of the base agricultural industry, both in terms of producing a wider range of high quality foodstuffs and also in increasing foreign exchange earnings. In order to increase our export foreign exchange earnings, we must reduce the amount of import of high valued foodstuff and also increase our earning through export of our farm products.

Ladies and Gentlemen: I know in order to achieve this target, we have a difficult and complex task to undertake; but however difficult and complex the task may be, it must not deter us and we must use all resources in our disposal to ensure that our farmers, both present and future, are equipped to play an important role as is required of them in the development of our economy and in the progress of our Nation.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to declare this Seminar open.