

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT
THE OPENING OF DISTRICT 330 ANNUAL
ASSEMBLY AT BANQUET HALL, FEDERAL
HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR ON 1ST JULY,
1972

Mr. President, Rotary Club of Pudu, Dr. Walter Rintoul,
District 330 Governor, Rotarians, Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is both a pleasure and privilege for me to be with you all here this morning and to have the honour of declaring open the 38th Assembly of Rotary International District 330.

I would like to extend our warm welcome to distinguished Rotarians from neighbouring countries which make up District 330 of Rotary International. Many of you probably might have been in Kuala Lumpur before and thus not unfamiliar with our surroundings. However, I wish all of you, particularly those who are visiting us for the first time, a very pleasure stay in our Capital.

We in Malaysia are naturally proud that you have chosen Kuala Lumpur as the venue of this August Assembly. I heartily congratulate the Pudu Rotary Club, which I understand has only a membership of thirty-five in all, for accepting the responsibility of being host to this Assembly.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Many of you have travelled here from far and near, representing more than 2,000 members from sixty-seven Rotary Clubs. In fact, District 330 is probably unique in the sense that it covers seven countries in the region whereas other Rotary District are usually of several clubs formed within one single country.

You have come to this Assembly with a common intention i.e. of seeking a full and open understanding on a variety of issues, both involving as well as affecting the relationship among the peoples of this region. It is a fortunate co-incidence that three of the member countries of District 330, namely Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia are also members of ASEAN. This fact alone,

besides the fact that we are inheritors of a common social and cultural heritage, binds us together in a common future and common destiny.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In this context, the Governments of the region are committed to national development particularly in the pursuit of better well-being, peace and stability. However, the success of Government's efforts is heavily dependent on the response from the people and their sincere co-operation in order to achieve the national objectives.

It is important, therefore, that the people should not only understand their role but should be prepared to play their role sincerely and meaningfully, be it on an individual basis or on a collective basis. This contribution will certainly add to the whole sum of the nation's achievement.

Collectively, through A S E A N and other regional organisations, the countries in this region have worked closely together in various fields of endeavour. A S E A N particularly is gaining strength and we sincerely hope that in the years to come, it will be an important and strong organisation which could serve for the benefit of countries in this region.

Individually, each country strives to develop itself in its own ways. Obviously, each country in the region has its own problems in national development. In Malaysia, our major problems stem from economic and social factors—the over-riding need to promote national unity.

In a country such as ours where the people are of diverse races with different social and cultural background, the task of national unity is indeed formidable. But I can say that with the co-operation of the people, we have made satisfactory progress.

We have embarked on a bold attempt to accelerate the achievement of national unity. We have launched the Second Malaysia Plan and through the New Economic Policy, which is embodied in the Plan, we hope to eradicate poverty among all races, to restructure the society in order to correct the racial economic imbalance through the modernisation of rural life, and a rapid and balanced growth of urban activities.

In short, we are earnest in our endeavour to develop our country to provide a better living for our people of all races so that they will live harmony and prosperity.

I have no doubt that your Movement can play a significant role in the nation's development effort. The most important requisite in national development is a sense of unity and belonging, which in turn instils faith and generates motivation in the individual to contribute his part to achieve the common aspiration.

The Rotary Movement projects this faith and motivation among its members to render service, over and above that expected of the individual in society. The Rotary ideal "Service Above Self" fully testifies the strength of your common faith in humanity and your love for your fellowmen. What better way is there to describe your Movement than that is most aptly summed up in the definition as "the experience of men of different faiths, different opinions and different nationalities, growing in fellowship wherever they may be". You require no better testimony.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the context of the region, Rotary District 330 covers a sizeable area of Southeast Asia which has a population of well over 200 million. Motivated by your common ideal, the movement has succeeded in no small way in bringing together so many men of different faiths and different languages, binding together men of business, the professions and in public office who believe in goodwill, in fairness and social justice. These are ideals which are so important for all of us today where our people are so fully involved and committed to national development.

It is a matter of concern to us that in some countries, namely South Vietnam, Laos and the Khmer Republic, the situation for development is not obtained because of the conflict. We hope that peace and stability will be restored as soon as possible so that the people can earnestly pursue their normal life again and provide the basic framework for their future well-being.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Within the framework of regional co-operation, the Government finds the task of promoting goodwill and human understanding a formidable one. Yet Rotarians seemed to have achieved this

simply by applying your 4-Way test in all undertakings. Perhaps this is something for the Governments to learn, but unlike the Rotary, it is not always possible for Governments to apply the 4-Way test because of other considerations.

As leaders in your respective fields in life, not only do we hope to obtain your expertise in mobilising our people but also to play a leading role in whatever project undertaken by Government. I am sure this aspect of your work will be given special attention during your deliberations. At the same time, I hope you will also go back with greater international understanding and goodwill after your brief stay in our country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Having said all that, it is now my pleasant duty to declare open this Assembly of Rotary International District 330 and I wish you all success in your deliberations.