

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE
OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY OF THE
NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY CENTRE BUILD-
ING AT PETALING JAYA ON 1ST FEBRUARY,
1971

Encik Abu Kassim,¹ Y.B. Encik Mohd. Khir Johari,² Y.M. Tan Sri Raja Mohar,³ Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

The three previous speakers—my colleague, the Minister of Commerce and Industry; the Chairman of the N.P.C. and the Director of the Centre—have told us the *raison d'être* of this new building.

I am left with very little to say, really, except to add that apart from its expressed purpose, this building stands as a symbol of fruitful collaboration between our country, Malaysia, and our many friends including several well-known international bodies.

We, Malaysians, take immense pride in it for it gives expression to our desire for modernisation through industrialisation. In fact, this is a unique example of international co-operation.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

As we all know, the National Productivity Centre was first set up here in 1962, five years after we attained independence. Considering that Japan, the foremost industrial nation in Asia, only established one in 1955, and also our late start in the field of industry, I am proud to say that Malaysia has done pretty well indeed.

In 1966, Parliament passed the N.P.C. (Incorporation) Act, by virtue of which the Centre became an autonomous body. The record of its progress which the Chairman told us just now fully justified our Government's confidence in the Centre in contributing to our efforts for progress and prosperity.

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But much more is to be expected of it in the future. As you all know, the Government is now about to embark on the Second Malaysia Five-Year Plan which places strong emphasis on the programmes under the New Economic Policy. At the recent UMNO General Assembly, I spelt out the two objectives of the New Economic Policy, first of which is the eradication of poverty among our people irrespective of their racial origin.

This is a departure from the previous Five-Year Plans which placed greater emphasis on rural development programmes with the hope of uplifting the economic position of the rural people particularly the Malays. Whereas the present policy strongly underlines our belief that a programme to conquer poverty must transcend racial lines and it must benefit all our people, irrespective of race and irrespective of whether they are in towns or in the rural areas.

But it is in our second objective that the Centre is expected to play a major role. And that objective (which is to be carried out simultaneously) is to restructure society by having a programme which could ultimately result in the Malays and the other indigenous people participating fully in the economic and commercial life of the nation.

I would like to underline the watch-word participate because it is our belief and desire that this will be achieved without taking away, or, least of all, depriving the legitimate rights and interests of the other communities. What we envisage here is that over the next twenty years or so, we hope to bring a portion of the Malays and the other indigenous people into the commercial and industrial mainstream.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the tasks ahead of us are tremendous but I believe we will eventually succeed in achieving our aims and objectives. This will have to be done through an imaginative and deliberate programme of urbanisation and exposing the Malays to urban environment not only by bringing them to the towns but by bringing industries to the less developed areas in the country. There are many potentials in this field especially in the agro-based industries utilising our vast timber resources as well as agricultural products such as palm oil, pineapples, etc.

I have also mentioned on some earlier occasions our vision of transforming the Jengka Triangle and the other areas in Pahang and Johore into potential industrial centres of the future. When these objectives materialise, there will mean more opportunities not only for the Malays but also for the non-Malay citizens who will be absorbed into the newly established industries.

This will provide a lasting guarantee for national unity for it, in fact, means that the Malays and the other indigenous people—a great majority of whom are rural orientated—will no longer be wholly identified with agriculture as a vocation as at present.

In fact, a perpetuation of the identification of race with vocation would be highly undesirable and indeed dangerous in a country like ours if the natives felt they were being left out of the mainstream of modern life and denied the benefits of our new industrial era.

And it would be catastrophic indeed if in twenty years time from now the Malays and the other indigenous people in this country felt more than ever that there was no place in the new society from them and that survival would merely mean existence.

Ladies and Gentlemen. I am sorry if I painted a rather sombre picture just now. But I must say we are lucky for Malaysia is just launched into the industrial age and therefore the process of rectifying the economic imbalance by urbanising the Malays can be expedited with facility.

They would, of course, need capital assistance to launch them into commerce, but more important, they would need technical and vocational training to equip them for industry. In both areas, the National Productivity Centre is expected to and can play a significant role. Your catch-word “productivity” must be given its full meaning and I would like to see this translated into positive results.

Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the friendly Governments, U.N. Agencies, Colombo Plan and other International Bodies for their assistance in establishing this Centre. I would personally like to thank the experts who have come over

here and advised the Centre in the various aspects of its work and the planning and carrying out of its training schemes in various fields.

I have, therefore, much pleasure in declaring this new building open.



Tun Abdul Razak sedang merasmikan pembukaan bangunan baru Pusat Daya Peningkatan Negara di Petaling Jaya, pada 1hb Februari, 1971.

(Gambar Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia)