

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE
OPENING CEREMONY OF THE FOURTH
CONGRESS OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC
ORTHOPAEDIC ASSOCIATION AT THE
FACULTY OF MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY
MALAYA, KUALA LUMPUR ON 20TH
AUGUST, 1973

Tuan Pengerusi, Tan Sri Dr Abdul Majid,¹ President West Pacific Orthopaedic Association; Y.B. Menteri-Menteri, Dif-dif yang terhormat, Tuan-tuan dan puan-puan,

Saya sangat berbesar hati atas penghormatan yang diberi kepada saya untuk membuka Kongres keempat Persatuan Orthopaedic Pasifik Barat ini.

Sesungguhnya, Malaysia merasa bangga kerana dipilih sebagai tuan rumah dan bagi pihak Kerajaan dan rakyat Malaysia saya mengalu-alukan para perwakilan yang datang dari beberapa negara sahabat di rantau ini dan juga dari France dan United States.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am indeed very happy to be with you all this morning and to declare open your Congress. Malaysia is indeed proud and honoured to host this Congress and on behalf of the Government and people of Malaysia, I sincerely welcome all of you to our Capital—Kuala Lumpur and wish you all a pleasant stay here. I am given to understand that we have gathered here several distinguished Orthopaedic Surgeons from the Asia-Pacific region and also from France and the United States. I, therefore, look forward to hear the fruits of your deliberation and hope that Malaysia will be able to derive considerable benefit from this conference.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a layman, I only understand the meaning of orthopaedics when one of my sons who incidentally was full of beans, as they

¹ Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan.

say, got injured while playing football. Fortunately for him, and thanks to orthopaedic surgery, he suffered no physical disability. However, we know that a number of everyday accidents result in physical disability and in some cases they may be permanent, or even fatal. Since the causes of disability are so very different in our respective countries, it is vital that we should find solutions for them.

Distinguished Delegates,

The hazards of modern life, particularly the every increasing morbidity and mortality resulting from road and industrial accidents cause great concern to us in Government. In fact, it should be the concern of everyone although people tend to take this for granted as the price we have to pay for modern progress. However way we look at it, we should not disregard the importance of planning adequate facilities for the care and management of the injured.

Although our Government is intensifying its efforts in road safety programme as well as trying to minimise industrial accidents, it is really impossible to eliminate them altogether. Only recently, I read of an accident involving a young factory hand who preferred to wear her hair hip-length for the sake of fashion and beauty. Unfortunately for her, she met her death when her hair got entangled in the machine she was working on. And all because she refused to wear the regulation headgear which the firm provided to every worker in the factory.

It is indeed fortunate that we in this era are able to benefit fully from the advancement and progress in this branch of medicine. It hardly needs emphasis that the specialised knowledge and expertise of the orthopaedic surgeon is indispensable and we are proud indeed to have an eminent orthopaedic surgeon in this country who is the professional head of our medical services.

I understand that your Congress is emphasizing orthopaedic education in its programme. This is indeed most opportune and very much needed by the community. However, in my view, we cannot and should not follow the training pattern as handed down to us a generation ago during the days before Independence. In fact, it is not feasible for us to adopt practices which are not suitable to our society.

We should instead train our young aspirants in orthopaedic surgery and traumatology in our own environment—the community in which they would eventually practise. More important, the training must be carried out by tutors who are well conversant with the problem of elective orthopaedic surgery and trauma as it exists in developing nations.

Distinguished Delegates,

Apart from this important subject of orthopaedic education, I also notice that many current problems relevant to our communities will be discussed. This will also include the latest concepts of joint replacements. Research papers too from an important part of the programme in order to cover the subjects completely.

I feel that your deliberations will be very fruitful for the advancement of orthopaedic surgery, particularly in our region. Both medical schools—here in the University of Malaya and the fledgling in Universiti Kebangsaan would certainly benefit from this Congress—the first international Orthopaedic Congress to be held in this country.

Before I declare the Congress open, I would like to say a word of praise to your President, Tan Sri Dr Abdul Majid Ismail and to the Chairman of the Organising Committee, Professor J. F. Silva, who have worked so hard to make this meeting a success. I hope this will be the first of many more to follow and I once again, wish all our friends from oversea a delightful stay in our country. Perhaps some of you might find the opportunity to see much more of our country and meet our people in their everyday life.

Dengan kata-kata itu saya rasmikan Kongres Keempat Persatuan Orthopaedic Pasifik Barat dengan harapan semoga persidangan ini mendapat sepenuh kejayaan.