

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER INAUGURATING THE COLLOQUIUM ON POLICY ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT, ORGANISED BY UNITED NATIONS ASIAN CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (ACDA) AT BALLROOM, REGENT HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR ON 25TH NOVEMBER, 1974

Executive Secretary Maramis, Excellencies, Distinguished Members of the Policy Colloquium, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am indeed honoured to be invited to inaugurate this Colloquium organised by the Asian Centre for Development Administration or ACDA this morning. On behalf of the Government of Malaysia, I would like to extend to you all a sincere welcome to Malaysia and to this first major programme of ACDA.

We in Malaysia consider ourselves very fortunate to have been chosen as the first home of ACDA and I would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to all our friends in Asia for their understanding and co-operation in giving us this honour. I am confident that given the support and co-operation of everyone, ACDA will grow into an important institution not only to promote goodwill and co-operation among Administrators in Asia but also to play its part in assisting to resolve the problems facing the developing and emerging countries of Asia.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Eight years ago, I had the privilege of opening the Afro-Asian Seminar on National Development held here in Kuala Lumpur. I said at that time "most of the countries in Asia and Africa are newly emerging nations and a great number of them have gained political freedom only in the last ten or twenty years. All of us in this region agree and recognise that political independence is not the end of our national goals; it is the beginning of our task of shaping the destiny of our nation ourselves and of giving our people a better and higher standard of living, of meeting their expectations of having a rightful place among the free nations of the world, with a decent standard of living compatible with a modern and civilised society. There is an urgency for all of us to

develop and progress to keep pace with the passage of modern times. Therefore, there is this common characteristic of all emerging nations in Asia and Africa and I feel that this common characteristic and common ground could bind emerging nations more closely together so that they could work together and co-operate for their mutual benefit”.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

As members of this Colloquium, you have set for yourself an important task of discussing and deliberating together the important issues that face the newly emerging nations of Asia. What I had said in 1966 is true today as it was then, and that the nations in Asia must set upon themselves the task of shaping their own destiny and of giving their people a decent standard of living compatible with modern and civilised society. Your deliberations will therefore concern two major issues, namely, peace and development. As you know, we cannot have development without peace and security nor can we have peace without development. We on our part in Malaysia extend our hand of friendship to all nations of the world and look forward to play our role collectively in fostering world peace, friendship and harmony among nations and peoples. Like any newly emerging nation, we in Malaysia are also anxious to take advantage of the benefits of international co-operation to promote and foster economic and social development. In this context, we find it beneficial to work both through the United Nations system which concerns itself with global problems as well as through the regional and sub-regional systems which are concerned with Asian problems and opportunities. Development in the modern world can no longer be treated as merely a national responsibility. Development must be looked at from regional as well as global angles. We live in a modern world of inter-dependence. No nation can achieve real progress in isolation without the co-operation of other nations.

Recently, the Special General Assembly Session of the United Nations adopted a resolution on the New World Economic Order. We fully support the motive force behind the resolution and believe that the world's resources should be used equitably for the development of mankind. However, we are aware that to make the New Economic Order a reality poses new challenges for

developing countries. We can only rise to meet the challenges if we keep both our feet firmly in the ground and at the same time search for new avenues for action.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

There was a time when the world community had thought that development was synonymous with economic development. Of course, economic development remains the most important dimension of progress. But we have also learned that economic development by itself cannot meet the social needs. It can also generate unanticipated consequences as has been demonstrated by recent concern with environment and distributional aspects of development within and among nations.

What is really needed is to focus attention on the "quality of life" of our people and use that as the framework for our development efforts. It is therefore heartening to see that institutions like ACDA are now trying to apply comprehensive approaches to the study of development which transcend pure economic analysis and strive to bring wider perspective to bear on problems affecting national growth and social progress.

I sincerely hope that your analysis will draw upon the knowledge and experience available in different countries of the region to increase our understanding of the problems of development. In this connection, you may wish to study our own experience in Malaysia. In Malaysia, I have always stated that my basic thinking on development is that it is a mosaic, a combination of various parts. One cannot separate the various aspects of nation building and development because each is inter-related with the other. It is my view that you cannot separate development from politics or from day to day administration, neither can you separate development planning from implementation, and neither can you separate implementation from evaluation. Therefore, the first basic for economic development is the type of political leadership which can channel human emotions and energies into action and results. We in Malaysia would not have achieved the success in our development plans if we had not mobilised the resources of our country and the whole machinery of the Government to concentrate on development. We would not have achieved the results if we had not instilled in the minds of our officers at all levels

the urgency of implementing development projects and the desirability of working as a team in order to produce the results which the people desire.

This is the mosaic of development. There must be sensible planning and implementation and sound political stability. Unless we have all these, no free nation would neither put in their investment or enterprise nor give both technical and economic aid to our development programmes.

The technique of economic development planning is now well advanced throughout the world and it is fairly easy for any developing nation to have a plan prepared but the technique of implementation and of putting some push and punch into the translation of that plan from paper into clear results is a technique for which there is little international knowledge available at present from which developing countries could apply.

We in Malaysia have evolved a technique of development planning and implementation—the Operation Room Technique—which, I am pleased to say with humility, have produced results in development which we are extremely happy with. By this technique, we were able to instil in the minds of our officers and implementors a sense of urgency, a sense of dedication in development, a spirit of initiative and feeling of belonging to an administrative Government machinery which is dedicated to development and to the service of the country.

This sense of urgency and the change of attitude throughout the whole of the Government Service were necessary in order to bring about a new life throughout the entire Government structure to wipe out the vestiges of colonial heritage. Of course, the process of changes must continue and there is still room for further improvement.

The next important thing is that there should be co-ordination and co-operation in all Government Departments at all levels. I used to say that the main deterrent factors which tend to delay development are what I called the “deadly sins of bureaucracy” such as inter-departmental jealousy in the execution of Government functions, conflicting departmental interests, lack of determination in carrying out national policies, lack of day to day co-operation between Government officers on the ground mainly due to lack of knowledge of each other’s tasks and responsibilities. There was

lack of sufficient directive control at the top to ensure that Government at all levels functions as an efficient machine, manned by purposeful, single-minded teams and driven towards the goal of development. It was therefore necessary to develop a technique for implementation and a system which would eradicate these "deadly sins of bureaucracy"—a system by which we could obtain maximum co-operation and co-ordination at all levels. We therefore set up development planning and implementation teams at various levels—federal, state and district—and the work of these teams was continuously supervised and monitored through the various Operation Rooms. I am glad to say that this technique has made tremendous impact on the machinery of the Government and enabled co-operation and co-ordination to be achieved at all levels. The Operation Rooms which we set up at the National, State and District levels enabled me particularly at that time when I was Minister of National and Rural Development to keep my finger on the pulse of development progress from time to time. Although now with other responsibilities I have less time to continuously keep my finger on the pulse, I do see to it that the machinery is operating as well as can be expected and occasionally I still stretch my hand on the pulse.

I do hope that in the course of your deliberations, you will be able to consider the technique of development which we in this country had adopted for the benefit of the people and also which various other countries have adopted.

As I said, in the field of development, we emerging countries in Asia have our own goals. At the same time, we have common problems and by exchanging ideas and views, by exchanging our experiences, we can assist each other in solving our problems and in this way we will be able to achieve our national aims in the field of development at a faster and greater rate. The time has come for us to realise that development efforts and our progress are not merely the exclusive of each other and not merely national in character but are interdependent.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

The ACDA's programme which will engage you for the next few days should enable you to reflect on your experiences and together share your thoughts and ideas. But we must realise that deliberations are useful only if they lead to better action and

positive results. In our race for progress, we cannot afford to engage in purely intellectual exercises. We must set our sights on the pressing problems faced by our respective countries and by mankind and we must concern ourselves with strategies for action to meet and resolve these problems.

There is no limit to the problems with which we are faced today. Like everywhere else, we are facing the consequences of imported inflation and stagflation which is followed closely by portents of coming depression. The energy crisis resulting in the increase in the price of oil, industrial goods, shipping services, and consumer goods, have sapped the economic vitality of most nations particularly those of the developing world. Added to this is the problem of the shortages of food faced by many countries in Asia and Africa and some are living almost under famine conditions.

It is clear therefore that if these pressing and complex problems are to be tackled and resolved, there is need for united efforts, bold approaches and decisive actions. In Rome recently, the international community has been deliberating on problems of food and population. A number of recommendations have been made to meet the world food crisis. Certainly these efforts are greatly appreciated but the important thing we must ask ourselves is, will all these lead to immediate decisive action? Should we all wait for initiatives on the global level to materialise or should we not take measures at regional and sub-regional levels? Perhaps, it might be worthwhile to consider launching an Asian Food Bank in anticipation of the measures which might be taken at the global level. Besides, it is clear that we cannot solve the food problem without attention to population policies. It is therefore imperative, in my view, that we should review and revitalise our population policies and programmes and prepare the necessary administrative arrangements for implementing them.

However, Ladies and Gentlemen, one thing is clear. Most of the problems we are faced with today cannot be solved within national boundaries alone. Nations are so interdependent that we have to learn to work together in evolving collective solutions to these problems. That is why we all welcome the establishment of various international and regional institutions which can play a significant role in promoting collective and joint efforts to resolve these problems. But, if these institutions are to succeed, it must be the duty of all of us to give them all the support they need.

We in Malaysia welcome the establishment of ACDA as another pillar in regional co-operation. We have given it support to the best of our ability and will continue to do so. I am confident all member states of ESCAP will make use of what ACDA has to offer and will maintain close interest in its progress and development.

I do hope that the discussions and exchanges of views that you will have in the next few days will extend to the study of problems of national as well as regional and international levels. Only in this way will we all benefit from our co-operative efforts as well as from Organisation such as ACDA.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

In conclusion I wish you every success in your deliberations and a pleasant and fruitful stay in Kuala Lumpur.

Thank you.