

THE STRATEGY FOR ACTION

GIVES ALL A SENSE OF PARTICIPATION

At the official opening of the fourth International Seminar on Development in Kuala Lumpur on 21st October; 1968, Tun Abdul Razak explained the unique system adopted by Malaysia which enables the Government to be in complete control of the Development progress. In the course of his remarks he said, "Our system gives everybody a sense of participation". His speech follows:

While at this very moment there is in session an international gathering representing the policy-makers of the world, that is the United Nations General Assembly in New York, we have here this afternoon another type of international gathering, this gathering of development implementors.

The diplomats gathered in New York chart and debate the destiny of the world towards a more peaceful and better world. However, I firmly believe that such an objective cannot be realised without the addition of the driving force generated by the implementors.

That is why we in Malaysia attach so much importance to international seminars of this nature because you all here today are the implementors.

Gentlemen, we in Malaysia feel proud that during the past 11 years of our independence we have made successful strides towards the fulfilment of our objective of achieving stable economic growth within the evolutionary process of nation-building.

However, our path towards progress has not been all that simple or easy. Malaysia became an independent and sovereign nation after a long drawn-out Emergency against Communist terrorists and we were faced with the enormous and immediate task of rebuilding our country which had suffered from the destructive forces of war.

We not only needed action but also quick results. We had to prove to our people that the democratic process combined with

dynamic development not only respond to their felt needs but also lead them out of the darkness and despair towards a better world.

The approach in such a task as this required a plan of action. We had to establish a set of goals, both political and economic, which required the mobilisation of all our resources, natural, financial and human.

Having defined our policies the major task was implementation. It meant the establishment of a system by which immediate action could be taken with the result of not only being tangibly seen by our people but also have an immediate impact on our economy.

We had to evolve a system to enable the Government to shed old-fashioned, outdated ideas and substitute them with an entirely new and practical approach.

I am happy to say that we in Malaysia have been able to effect such a system suitable to her needs. We call it the Operations Room System.

This System permits the Government, that is myself and my Cabinet colleagues, to be kept fully abreast of development progress and to be in a position to eradicate delays and to ensure that the entire development effort is geared to achieving results. The virtue of this system is that it enables Government leadership to be in complete control of the situation and at the same time the administrators are kept on their toes and on top of their jobs so that a high standard of co-ordination is maintained.

During the Seminar and in your discussions on the development techniques and also in your field visits to the various development projects undertaken by this country, you will be able to see for yourself in tangible form the results which have been achieved through our methods.

However, the world is saturated with systems. We all know that no system in the world will work without the spark of leadership—not only the leadership at the highest level of Government but leadership that permeates right down the line.

We believe that our system gives everybody a sense of participation. The life and blood of the system lie not in the forms, on the maps, nor on the boards, but in the inter-flow of human communication through the various layers of leadership within the development process.

It also gives, at all levels, a sense of commitment to our national objectives. It brings the Government closer to the people;



Tun Abdul Razak briefing Dr Luns, the Foreign Minister of the Netherlands (seated third from right) when he visited the National Development Operations Room in Kuala Lumpur, on 9th July, 1968. On extreme left is Mr Manickavasagam, the Minister of Labour. On the wall are maps and charts indicating the progress of development projects throughout Malaysia.

it brings the people closer to the government, and thus enables the harnessing of all our energies, political, professional, technical, administrative, in both the public and private sectors—and even more important, the harnessing of the energy of every Malaysian in all walks of life into working towards the achievement of our economic aims and the progress of our nation.

Gentlemen, I understand that some of the topics that will be discussed in the course of the Seminar will be those related to *Agricultural Development*—with particular emphasis on the *acceleration and diversification of agriculture*.

This is of vital importance to all of us in this part of the world where agriculture is our mainstay.

Agriculture is more than just a way of life. It is a major industry-, an industry as important as that of steel, petroleum and other heavy industries.

In Malaysia, our agricultural industry at the present moment continues to form a vital part of our economic life, particularly at the time when the population explosion is upon us, and when a major proportion of the population of the developing world is afflicted by hunger.

Therefore, Gentlemen, during your deliberations when you have the opportunity of looking at the problems of agriculture from close quarters, you will be exploring the various possible and practical methods of implementing our agricultural policies so that your discussions, deliberations and exchange of experiences may generate new ideas which will benefit all of us.

We in Malaysia have taken several major steps towards modernising our agriculture and accelerating our agricultural development. We have invested millions of dollars in establishing and improving our irrigations systems, millions of dollars on the construction of a national network of agricultural access roads, and millions of dollars in converting our jungle into productive agricultural lands.

We have made great strides during the past 8 years in improving other agricultural facilities which are essential for agricultural development. In fact in the current Development Plan we are devoting no less than 24% of the total allocation or 4,550 million dollars of public development expenditure towards the increase in our agricultural output.

At the same time every encouragement is given to the private sector of our economy to take an active part in this great venture.

I need not worry you with the detailed break-down of our agricultural development programme but I would like to specify the aims of our agricultural planning and implementation. These fall into separate and definite categories.

Firstly, in the field of agricultural education, our aim is to increase the quantity and enhance the quality of agricultural educationists, researchers, and extension workers, so as to expand

the number of skilled farmers, and improve the skills of all individual members of the agricultural community.

Secondly, in the field of research, our aim is to support, on an intensive and continuing basis, research on agricultural, forestry, fisheries, and livestock products so as to break presently known yield barriers, and develop improved patterns of production, processing and marketing that will utilise most economically the human, land and water resources of our country.

Thirdly, in the field of production and diversification, it is our aim to stimulate our agricultural community to adopt improved practices and patterns of production over as much of the present and future cultivated area of the economy as possible, and encourage diversification.

In order to give our rapidly growing rural population greater opportunities of employment and a better way of life, our aim is to increase the acreage under cultivation in the country.

In addition to all this we are taking active steps to correct existing institutional shortcomings in the fields of land tenure, credit, the processing of agricultural commodities and marketing so as to enable our agricultural community to have access at reasonable cost to the means of production and be adequately rewarded for their efforts.

Furthermore, even while this Seminar is in progress, action is well under way towards the establishment of yet another boosting charge for our agricultural programme, the setting up of an independent research organisation, to be known as the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) which will enhance further our already existing research facilities.

MARDI, when established, will carry out scientific research for the agricultural industry of the whole country. It will disseminate the extension results of such research to the industry, both large and smallholdings.

In addition, its activities will add considerable force to our existing extension programmes in the field of agriculture by the effective dissemination of research results not only to the small and large holdings, but to the agricultural industry as a whole.

Gentlemen, the research functions of MARDI will not only be restricted to research on production, but will extend to research on processing and utilisation of our agricultural products.

Gentlemen, let me take you back with me in my thoughts to the day here in my country, when we won our *battle* against militant Communism, and launched a new *battle*. the *battle* against poverty, the *battle* for progress, fighting for the future of our Malaysian people.

In those days we realised that the first pre-requisite for development had to be a framework and climate of political stability. This, I think, is true for all development countries, and I think with modesty, we in Malaysia, have gone a long way to achieve this.

However, in this modern world of inter-dependence, there emerges a new dimension to development, a new factor necessary for development, and that factor is this: that *no* country anywhere in the world can develop in isolation, because by virtue of this inter-dependence; by virtue of the necessity to develop "*inter-nation*" harmony, the aspirations of any individual developing nation, such as ours, will not be fulfilled *unless* there is stability in the region to which we are a part.

As I have said earlier, the *essential* ingredient of development success is *complete* co-ordination between the various component parts of the development machinery. That is not enough. What is required in this day and age is a similar system of co-ordination and co-operation not restricted to the confines of any nation, but extending even further with the same spirit of co-ordination and commitment, which embraces all nations within the region whose aim, like ours, is to aspire to better progress for their people.

We strongly believe in, and subscribe to the principle not only of inter-dependence but also to the concept of "*inter-nation*" co-ordination. We subscribe firmly to the ideals of regional co-operation. Our active participation and support for ASEAN, ASPAC and other regional Associations is true testimony to our conviction and our committal to this ideal that binds our nations together in the interest of our people.

This distinguished gathering today is in effect a practical step towards the achievement of this ideal. I hope that the results of the pooling and exchange of ideas and experiences in this Seminar will further accelerate and strengthen the various steps we take towards the achievement of our common goal.

Gentlemen, on this note I declare this Seminar open.