

~~UCAPAN: ADHO~~~~231 - 153/78~~

Mr. Chairman,

Honourable Ministers,

ADDRESS BY YAB THE PRIME MINISTER

OF MALAYSIA, DATUK HUSSEIN ONN,

AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE 14TH

F.A.O. REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR

ASIA AND THE FAR EAST, AT KUALA

LUMPUR HILTON, ON 31ST JULY, 1978,

AT 10.00 AM.

of the Government of Malaysia

to extend a cordial welcome to all the

distinguished participants to the 14th F.A.O.

Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East.

Mr. Chairman,
Honourable Ministers,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

~~It gives me great pleasure~~ on behalf
of the Government and the people of Malaysia
^{I would like} to extend a very ^{warm} ~~cordial~~ welcome to all the
distinguished participants to the 14th F.A.O.
Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East.

^{very}
 We are ~~indeed~~ privileged and honoured to
 be given the opportunity to host this august
 Conference. I hope that ^{all} ~~the~~ ^{arrangements}
~~Ministers of Agriculture, the Director~~
~~General of the Food and Agricultural Orga-~~
~~nisation and his staff as well as the other~~
~~distinguished delegates will find our~~
~~Malaysian hospitality to be completely~~
~~satisfactory.~~

Ladies and Gentlemen.

2. It was about four years ago that the
 world experienced a food crisis, which is

~~still fresh in our minds.~~ Simultaneous crop failures in many parts of the world, ^{greatly} ~~sharply~~ - reduced the availability of grains; prices of food soared to heights beyond the reach of millions of the world's poor and there was a breakdown in ^{the} transportation and marketing systems. The consequences were devastating.

There was hunger and malnutrition in many parts of the world especially in Africa and Southeast Asia. We were not prepared for it.

Although the crisis has passed, it was stern ~~Thanks to the Almighty, the crisis has come~~ warning to us all. We cannot afford to have a ~~to pass but we simply cannot afford to go~~ similar one in the future.

~~through a similar calamity in the future.~~

3. However, the crisis was a blessing too, ~~in disguise~~ because it made the international community aware of the need for concerted action, to solve ^{the} ~~persisting~~ food problems.

It made the world conscious of the nature and magnitude as well as the urgency of ^{the} ~~this~~ _{ahead of it.} task.

This awareness led to the convening of the United Nations World Food Conference in Rome in November, 1974. This Conference issued the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition and

called for the establishment of the World Food Council, to deal exclusively with food matters.

The subsequent endorsement in the same year of the creation of the World Food Council by the United Nations General Assembly was a positive step in ensuring that the resolution of the Conference ^{is} ~~are~~ translated into action.

4. It is commendable that the World Food Council in its first three sessions has focussed its attention on increasing food production in developing countries, especially the "food deficit" countries. This is as it

should be and no doubt all those involved, governments and agencies alike, will take positive measures to translate whatever *may be the* strategies into action programmes.

5. In this effort, the FOA has a big role to play. Admittedly, it is not an easy role. *However* ~~but~~ *we are* ~~I am~~ confident that the organisation will *be* *capable of meeting* ~~rise to meet~~ the challenges. Indeed, it cannot afford ~~not to~~ *fail* to. Food crises aside, the problem is already critical and enormous considering the fact that about 450 million people are suffering from severe malnutrition

and disease before they reach the age of four;
and at least 100,000 children go blind every
year because of severe vitamin A deficiency.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

6. In the matter of increasing food
production, Malaysia believes that the ultimate
responsibility for ensuring sufficient food
supply lies first and principally with national
governments. ^{therefore the} It is ~~thus an important~~ policy
~~objective~~ of the Malaysian Government to
produce enough food, not only for the national
needs but if possible, for export. We have

been fortunate that food shortages have ~~not~~ ^{so far}
 become a major problem. This is mainly due
 to the fact that, although ~~a proportion of~~ ^{we are not yet}
~~fully self sufficient in food, we fortunate~~
~~our food requirements is not produced locally,~~
~~in being able to afford to buy from~~
~~our sound financial position has ensured our~~
~~ability to import it from~~ other countries.
 Nevertheless, with the increase in our population
 at the estimated rate of 2.7% annually, and
 the increasing loss in foreign exchange through
~~our~~ ^{purchase} such ~~imports,~~ the need to produce food enough
 for our national requirements has become
~~more and more urgent.~~

..9/-

7. Malaysia is self-sufficient in such food as poultry-meat, fish and green vegetables. However, ~~where fish is concerned, with the~~ ^{with regard to fish, the population} ~~increase in population we have to put in~~ ^{it is necessary for us to make} greater efforts ~~in promoting~~ ^{to promote} deepsea fishing and fresh-water fish culture to ensure adequate supply of cheap protein for the people. Although our target is 100% self-sufficiency in rice, ^{which is} our staple food, we have so far been able to produce only 85% of our requirements. ~~It is~~ ^{we} hoped that with the increase in yields, improved cultivation techniques and ^{the} opening up of new rice areas, ~~this~~ ^{our} target will be achieved.

Our target for beef production is 100% self-sufficiency. *However, we are encountering* ~~Obstacles to the achievement~~ *many difficulties, nevertheless* ~~of this target are great but~~ we will do everything possible to overcome them. Our needs for *can be met without much difficulty by* ~~cooking-oils are easily met by our coconut~~ production and the increasing domestic uses of palm oil.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

8. The need to give priority attention by all nations, developed as well as developing, to the problem of increasing food supply requires no further stressing. The task of

ensuring sufficient food for everyone in

a fast-^{growing}~~increasing~~ population ^{can} ~~is~~ no longer

be taken half-heartedly. ~~something that can be left to chance. Statis-~~

~~tics show that~~ the world population increases

at the ~~estimated~~ ^{about} rate of $\frac{1}{2}\%$ annually. At the

same time the advancement of modern medicine

~~continues to reduce~~ ^{reduces} the mortality rates.

^{Food}
The production of food, however, has not kept
pace with this increase in population. The

exploitation of present agricultural resources

appears to have ~~approached~~ ^{reached} its limits, unless

major technological achievements in the

agricultural sector, make it possible to meet

the basic food requirements of a growing world population. ^{It appears that nothing less} ~~No less than an all-out~~ ^{than attacking the problem in its entirety, will suffice,} onslaught on the totality of the problem will suffice. This ^{requires} ~~calls for~~ a concerted effort ^{by} ~~among~~ the developing as well as the developed nations both at the global and regional levels.

9. In this effort, in so far as developing countries are concerned, there are two important areas where collaboration should ~~be~~ actively encouraged. One is research and the other is the development and mobilisation of human resources.

10. With ^{regard} ~~respect~~ to research, developing countries should collaborate with one another in research programmes concerning early maturing and high-yielding seed varieties, agronomic practices, reduction of harvest and post-harvest losses of grains, and such other factors ^{which} ~~that~~ can contribute towards increasing agricultural production. Such collaboration, apart from ensuring quicker results would also ensure the effective utilisation of scarce expertise.

11. With regard to the development and mobilisation of human resources there are two important areas ^{which} ~~that~~ have potential for collaboration at the regional level.

Firstly, ^{those concerning} ~~that which~~ concerns the build up of technical expertise ~~in quantity and quality~~ ^{wise} to plan and implement agricultural research and development programmes. In this case, collaboration provides opportunities for improving national centres for advanced study in specific technical fields as well as sharing of facilities with other developing countries.

The second area concerns the development of small farmers through a comprehensive programme of education and training as well as through other forms of institutional improvement.

Collaboration in this area would allow exchange of experiences and methodology between countries for securing small farmer participation in all phases of agricultural development.

resources management; forestry resources
12. Collaboration however, need not be confined to research and human resource development. It could be expanded to cover

other areas of development. The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is an example of such collaboration. Since its establishment in 1967, it has agreed to implement priority projects in six areas which include the supply and demand for food and other strategic agricultural products; regional plant protection centre; fisheries resources management; forestry resources and management; supply and demand for animal feed; and agricultural education and training. At their Second Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in August last year, the Heads of Government

^{Recognised}
~~endorsed~~ the importance of ASEAN ^{having} ~~to develop~~
closer dialogue with the developed countries
and international organisations in order to
expedite progress for cooperation in food,
agriculture and forestry. The Heads of
Government also recognised the desirability
of safeguarding the ASEAN countries from
possible food shortage by such measures as
the establishment of a "Food Security Reserve
for ASEAN", especially ~~for~~ rice. In this
respect, under the ASEAN Committee on Food,
Agriculture and Forestry (or COFAF), a Working
Group on Food Security Reserve is ^{set up} ~~established~~

to look into the possibility of establishing a system regarding regionally coordinated national reserves for rice. The setting up of ~~COFEAF~~ under ASEAN represents the political the ASEAN Committee on Food, Agriculture and will of Member Countries to take a serious ^{the} view of food security in the Southeast Asian Region.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

13. I ^{am} ~~have been~~ informed that besides reviewing the programme and activities of the Region, you will also be discussing problems and issues related to agrarian reform

and rural development. ^{As we know, in Asia,} ~~It is noteworthy~~

~~that in Asia,~~ there is a high incidence of poverty among the rural population that are engaged directly in food production. ~~In~~

~~my opinion,~~ ^{most unfair} it is ~~inequitable~~ that a sector which is directly involved in the important

~~task of food production,~~ ^{should be} is also ^{the} sector which suffers most ^{severely} from poverty. ~~Therefore~~

~~It is~~ ^{therefore} imperative that we should ~~not only~~ ^{also take} into ^{serious consideration} the economic ~~have the sole objective of increasing food~~ and social ~~production but we must also take into serious~~ ~~consideration the social and economic~~

~~improvement of the people in this sector.~~
~~Upliftment of those people involved directly~~
~~in food production.~~ Thus, our food production
 programmes must go hand in hand with agrarian
 reform and rural development. The redressal
 of poverty among small farmers, tenant farmers,
~~the~~ fishermen and other rural poor must
 therefore ^{be} ~~constitute~~ the main thrust of agri-
 cultural and rural development and not be
~~left to be~~ an indirect consequence of our
 food production programmes.

14. For these reasons, your deliberations
 on the problems and constraints impeding the

productivity of small farmers have far-reaching
 implications for the ^{improvement} ~~betterment~~ of the livelihood
 of the vast rural majority in Asia. ^{Malaysia} ~~He will~~
~~only be too happy~~ ^{will always be ready} to share and exchange expe-
 riences and ideas in this ^{field} ~~area~~ because it is
 important to ^{her} ~~us~~ that the problem of food
 production be viewed not just as a technical
 problem but as one that ^{includes human} ~~is inclusive of human~~
 and economic ^{factors,} ~~criteria.~~

Ladies and Gentlemen.

15. I am ^{very glad} ~~extremely happy~~ that ~~the~~ distinguished
 delegation ^{from} ~~of~~ the countries in the Asia and

the Far East Region are ~~gathered~~ here today

to review the progress of programmes and

activities in the Region as well as to

deliberate upon the problems ^{of food production} that confront

the world. ~~in terms of food production. It is~~

~~We hope that,~~
~~my hope, as is the hope of all of us, that~~

this Conference ^{will} ~~shall~~ achieve its purpose

of defining the policies and strategies with

respect to food production in the Region.

I wish this Conference

16. ~~May I wish this Session~~ every success and

have great pleasure in declaring
~~it is my pleasure to hereby declare open the~~

it open
~~14th FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the~~

~~Far East.~~



No. Siri	391
No. Penerimaan	123/78