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ADDRESS BY Y.A.B. DATUK HUSSEIN ONN,  
PRESIDENT, <sup>malayan</sup> ~~MALAYSIAN~~ ASSOCIATION FOR THE  
BLIND AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE  
ASSOCIATION AT HOTEL MERLIN, KUALA LUMPUR  
ON FRIDAY, 5TH SEPTEMBER, 1975 AT 7.30 P.M.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE AND FRIENDS,

*First of all, I would like to thank you for attending this meeting in spite of your being busy with your other work.*

~~IN LINE WITH OUR NORMAL PRACTICE, I~~

*This is the first time that I have the honour and*

~~HAVE GREAT PLEASURE IN REPORTING TO YOU ON~~

*privilege of addressing and reporting to you briefly*

~~THE ACTIVITIES OF OUR ASSOCIATION. IN SPITE~~

*the* ~~OF ITS MANY AND VARIED PROBLEMS, THE MALAYAN~~

*managed* ~~ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND HAS CONTINUED TO~~

PROVIDE THE NECESSARY SERVICES TO THE BLIND

IN THE COUNTRY THROUGH ITS TRAINING CENTRES

AND UNITS. ITS VARIOUS ON-GOING PROGRAMMES

ON EDUCATION, REHABILITATION, VOCATIONAL

TRAINING, PLACEMENT AND PREVENTION OF

*continued and in fact* ~~BLINDNESS HAVE NOT BEEN RETARDED. IN FACT,~~

*in some areas have been expanded.* ~~THEY HAVE BEEN ENHANCED AND IN SOME AREAS~~

~~EXPANDED.~~

2. ONE NOTABLE AREA WHERE OUTSTANDING SERVICE IS BEING PROVIDED TO THE COMMUNITY, ~~AS A WHOLE,~~ IS IN ITS WORK ON PREVENTION OF

BLINDNESS. IN MAY, 1973, A PILOT PROJECT CALLED "OPERATION CATARACT" WAS LAUNCHED IN SELANGOR, WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, TO PROVIDE FREE SURGICAL TREATMENT *to the people* TO ~~RURAL FOLKS~~ SUFFERING FROM CATARACT.

UNDER THIS SCHEME, ~~VOLUNTARY~~ *volunteered* EYE SPECIALISTS ~~volunteer~~ *to* GO TO THE ~~PATIENTS AT THEIR LOCALISED AREAS~~ *rural areas* TO ~~RESTORE EYE-SIGHT TO~~ *treat* THOSE WHO WOULD OTHERWISE REMAIN BLIND. ~~NEEDLESSLY~~ *These patients* DUE TO DISTANCE *and* OR TO COSTS, *could not make use of the facilities* WHICH PRECLUDED THEM FROM AVAILING *available in hospitals and eye clinics in the large* THEMSELVES TO FACILITIES IN THE LARGE TOWNS. *towns.*

FOLLOWING THE SUCCESS OF THIS PILOT PROJECT, TWO OTHER SUCH PROJECTS WERE CARRIED OUT IN KELANTAN AND PERAK, ~~RESPECTIVELY~~, IN 1974.

*104 persons were restored their eyesights.*  
~~RESTORING SIGHTS TO 104 PERSONS.~~

3. ~~YOU WOULD AGREE THAT THIS IS INDEED~~  
~~A USEFUL CONTRIBUTION THAT THE M.A.B. IS~~  
~~MAKING TOWARDS THE COMMUNITY, PARTICULARLY~~  
~~TO THE RURAL PEOPLE.~~ *great*  
MUCH OF THE SUCCESS OF  
THIS UNIQUE PROJECT CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE  
INITIATIVE ~~GIVEN TO IT~~ *taken* BY THE ~~CHAIRMAN OF~~  
M.A.B. PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS COMMITTEE,  
~~YANG BERBANGIA,~~ *under the chairmanship of* DATUK DR. KESHMAHINDER  
SINGH, AND TO THE ~~GOOD~~ SUPPORT GIVEN BY THE *staff of*  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH ~~AND ITS STAFF,~~ IN  
PARTICULAR ~~THEIR SENIOR OPHTHALMOLOGIST,~~  
DR. HAJI MOHD NOOR MARAHAKIM, *the Senior Ophthalmologist.*

4. ANOTHER MAJOR PROJECT UNDERTAKEN  
BY ~~THE~~ *our* ASSOCIATION LAST YEAR WAS THE  
ESTABLISHMENT OF A HOSTEL IN PETALING JAYA  
TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION TO BLIND PERSONS *including*  
*students.*  
~~AND ALSO TO NEEDY SIGHTED STUDENTS.~~

*subject*  
THIS ~~BOLD STEP~~ WAS TAKEN WITH THE SUPPORT  
AND ~~THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO IT BY~~  
THE ROTARY CLUB OF KUALA LUMPUR. IN ADDITION,  
WELL-WISHERS RESPONDED GENEROUSLY TO OUR  
CHARITY BANQUET ORGANISED SPECIALLY FOR THIS  
PURPOSE, AND SO HELPED TO MAKE IT A RESOUNDING  
*The amount collected was over \$70,000/-.*  
~~SUCCESS WHICH NETTED OVER \$70,000/-.~~ SPECIAL  
MENTION MUST ALSO BE MADE OF THE KIND *gesture of*  
~~PHILANTHROPIST,~~ TAN SRI LEE YAN LIAN WHO ~~NET~~ *donated*  
THE BALANCE OF THE COST OF THE BUILDING WHICH  
AMOUNTED TO OVER \$55,000/-, *I should also mention*  
*the contributions made by the architects, the contractors*  
*and many others who freely gave their services towards*  
*the building of the hostel.*  
5. ONE FUND RAISING PROJECT WHICH DESERVES  
SPECIAL MENTION HERE WAS THE WHITE CANE  
APPEALS CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED LAST YEAR WHERE  
MINIATURE PLASTIC WHITE CANES WERE ~~OFFERED~~ *sold.*  
~~FOR SALE.~~ APART FROM RAISING MONEY, THIS  
CAMPAIGN ALSO SERVED TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ON

THE USE OF THE WHITE CANE BY BLIND PEOPLE  
AS MOBILITY AIDS WHICH <sup>the public should give</sup> ~~SHOULD BE GIVEN~~ DUE  
ATTENTION <sup>and respect.</sup>

6. DESPITE THESE ACCOMPLISHMENTS, <sup>our Association</sup> ~~MAB~~  
<sup>yet</sup> HAS NOT SUCCEEDED IN SOLVING ITS PERENNIAL  
PROBLEM OF <sup>insufficient</sup> ~~NOT HAVING SUFFICIENT~~ FUNDS TO  
MEET ITS REQUIREMENTS. ITS FINANCIAL POSITION  
IS CRITICAL, MADE WORST BY <sup>increasing</sup> ~~INCREASED~~ COSTS OF  
~~LIVING~~, AND <sup>increasing</sup> ~~INCREASED~~ DIFFICULTY IN RAISING  
FUNDS TO ~~REDUCE ITS DEFICITS AND~~ <sup>to</sup> MEET ITS  
CURRENT <sup>expenditure.</sup> ~~COMMITMENTS~~. THE ANNUAL EXPENDITURE  
OF THE ASSOCIATION IS <sup>about</sup> ~~IN THE REGION OF~~ THREE-  
QUARTER OF A MILLION DOLLARS. ABOUT 50% TO  
60% OF THIS AMOUNT IS MET BY GOVERNMENT GRANTS  
WHICH, IN THE MAIN, IS TOWARDS <sup>the payment of</sup> ~~THE SALARIES~~ <sup>of</sup>  
~~OF SOME OF~~ ITS STAFF. A LARGE AMOUNT REMAINS

TO BE RAISED BY VARIOUS MEANS. THE PRESENT RELIANCE ON AD HOC FUND RAISING PROJECTS TO MEET CURRENT EXPENDITURE WILL NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM. ITS RESULTS ARE UNPREDICABLE; IT IS TIME-CONSUMING; IT RELIES TOO HEAVILY ON PERSONAL EFFORTS AND CONTACTS; IT HAS TO COMPETE WITH SO MANY OTHER CAUSES, SOME EQUALLY WORTHY. WHAT MAB NEEDS NOW IS A NEW DIRECTION- A NEW MODE OF GENERATING INCOME WHICH WILL BRING IN <sup>a</sup> REGULAR CASH FLOW. I <sup>would</sup> ~~MUST~~ <sup>like to suggest</sup> SAY THAT THE EMPHASIS OF OUR EFFORTS <sup>should</sup> ~~MUST~~ NOW SHIFT FROM FUND RAISING TO FUND CREATING.

7. THE MAB, WHILE CONTINUING <sup>to be</sup> ~~AS~~ A SERVICE ORIENTED ORGANIZATION CANNOT AFFORD TO DO ~~THIS~~ <sup>it</sup> AT A LOSS - IT MUST SAFEGUARD ITS EXISTENCE BY BEING ECONOMICALLY VIABLE AT ALL

TIMES. AS SUCH, IT HAS TO GEAR ALL ITS ACTIVITIES TOWARD PRODUCTION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. IT HAS TO MOBILIZE ITS RESOURCES TO CREATE LONG TERM DEVELOPMENTAL PLANS TO GENERATE REGULAR INCOME. TO THIS END, A ~~MASSIVE~~ DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMME HAS BEEN INITIATED TO DEVELOP THE VARIOUS PIECES OF LAND LEASED TO THE ASSOCIATION BY THE GOVERNMENT TO BRING IN STEADY INCOME. *It has been suggested that such* ~~SUCH~~ *should* LONG TERM DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS/INCLUDE:-

FIRST, THE LAUNCHING OF A BUILDING FUND TO PUT UP A MULTI-STOREY COMPLEX TO HOUSE THE HEADQUARTERS (WHICH IS PRESENTLY OCCUPYING THE DILAPIDATED P.W.D. STORES IN JALAN BRICKFIELDS), TO HOUSE THE BRAILLE PUBLISHING UNIT, THE BRAILLE LIBRARY, A WORKSHOP FOR BLIND WORKERS AND A SHOW ROOM TO DISPLAY ARTICLES MADE BY THEM AND OTHER

ANCILLARY SERVICES, INCLUDING A CONFERENCE HALL. IN ADDITION, PROVISION WILL BE MADE TO LET OFFICES <sup>spaces</sup> TO BRING IN REGULAR INCOME.

-- SECOND, TO DEVELOP THE 85 ACRES OF LAND IN TEMERLOH, ADJACENT TO ITS AGRICULTURAL TRAINING CENTRE, TAMAN HARAPAN, BY PLANTING OIL PALMS. <sup>To out-into effect the we will need</sup> ~~IN THIS SCHEME, THE HELP OF FELDA~~ <sup>schemes</sup> ~~NEEDS TO BE SOUGHT TO CARRY IT OUT.~~ <sup>assistance from some authorities or bodies</sup>

-- THIRD, TO PUT UP <sup>a</sup> PETROL STATION <sup>on</sup> ~~IN~~ THE TAMAN HARAPAN LAND WHICH IS LOCATED NEAR THE MAIN TRUNK ROAD TO KUANTAN. IN VIEW OF THE NEW TEMERLOH BRIDGE BEING IN THE VICINITY, <sup>the project should be viable.</sup> ~~THERE IS POTENTIAL FOR SUCH A PROJECT.~~

-- FOURTH, TO LOOK INTO WAYS AND MEANS <sup>of utilising</sup> ~~TO UTILISE~~ THE REST OF THE P.J. LAND (37,000 SQ. FEET) WHICH NOW HOUSE THE ROTARY HOSTEL FOR THE BLIND.

8. IN THIS CONNECTION A SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON MAB DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS HAS BEEN FORMED UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF ..... (TO BE APPOINTED AT THE BOARD MEETING) TO LOOK INTO THE ABOVE PROPOSALS. THE BUILDING FUND COMMITTEE HAS ALREADY BEEN PROPOSED WITH ~~DATIN SUHAILAH HUSSEIN~~, AS CHAIRMAN AND DATUK TAN SENG TECK AS DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (SUBJECT TO ACCEPTANCE). <sup>It is suggested that</sup> THE FUND ~~WILL~~ BE LAUNCHED WITH THE SALES OF LOTTERY TICKETS WHERE A PORTION OF THEIR PROCEEDS WILL GO TOWARDS THIS BUILDING FUND. <sup>we would make</sup> ~~SPEAKING AS~~ <sup>an appeal to the Government for grants towards</sup> ~~MAB PRESIDENT, IT IS HOPED THAT THE GOVERNMENT~~ <sup>this building project.</sup> ~~WOULD CONSIDER GIVING A DOLLAR-FOR-DOLLAR GRANTS TOWARDS THIS DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECT.~~

*All these are long term plans. Our association*  
9. ~~FINALLY, AS IMMEDIATE MEASURES TO~~ <sup>is currently faced with a strained financial position.</sup> ~~RELIEVE MAB'S GRAVE FINANCIAL POSITION, THE~~ <sup>we have to think of immediate measures to relieve us of some of the strain.</sup>

*plans and measures have been suggested:*  
THE FOLLOWING ~~STEPS WILL BE TAKEN TO MEET~~  
~~THE PRESENT CRISIS:-~~

-- ONE, TO INTENSIFY <sup>our</sup> ~~ITS~~ FUND RAISING  
PROGRAMMES • ~~THROUGH STRATEGIC PLANNING AND~~  
~~IMPLEMENTATION. IN THIS WAY, IT IS HOPED~~  
~~TO EVOKE BETTER RESPONSE FROM THE PUBLIC.~~  
~~THE MONEY RAISED WOULD HELP TO MEET CURRENT~~  
~~EXPENDITURE.~~

-- TWO, TO REQUEST THE MINISTRY OF  
EDUCATION <sup>for an early</sup> ~~TO EXPEDITE~~ ITS DECISION TO GIVE  
FULL ASSISTANCE TO THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH  
SCHOOL <sup>for the Blind.</sup> IN JOHORE BAHRU. THIS WILL HELP TO  
REDUCE <sup>our</sup> ~~MAB'S~~ FINANCIAL BURDEN WHICH <sup>we have</sup> ~~SHE HAS~~  
CARRIED FOR THE PAST 18 YEARS.

-- THREE, TO APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENT  
TO EXTEND ITS PRESENT 90% SUBSIDY SCHEME  
TOWARDS STAFF SALARIES TO INCLUDE ALL STAFF

*with*  
WORKING ~~IN~~ M.A.B. PRESENTLY, THE SUBSIDY  
IS ONLY GIVEN TO TWO CENTRES WHICH CONSTITUTE  
ABOUT 70% OF ITS WORK FORCE. THIS STEP WILL  
HELP TO REDRESS DISPARITIES IN SALARIES WHICH  
NOW EXIST AMONG THE STAFF WORKING IN MAB'S  
VARIOUS CENTRES AND UNITS. THIS WILL ALSO  
HELP TO CONTRIBUTE TO A MORE CONTENTED AND  
HAPPIER GROUP WHERE MOST OF THE STAFF MEMBERS  
HAVE DEVOTED MANY YEARS TO ~~THE WORK FOR~~ *the service of* THE  
BLIND.

-- FOUR, TO APPROACH FIRMS, COMMERCIAL  
*industries*  
HOUSES AND ~~INDUSTRIAL AGENCIES~~ TO "SPONSOR"  
BLIND STUDENTS IN OUR VARIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS.  
THIS WILL HELP MAB'S MAINTENANCE COSTS  
TREMENDOUSLY. THE AMOUNT ~~REQUESTED~~ *of sponsorships we have in* IS ABOUT *month*  
\$100 PER STUDENT PER MONTH AND THERE ARE *about*  
200 STUDENTS AT ANY ONE TIME.

FRIENDS,

IO. AS YOU CAN SEE, SERVICES FOR THE  
BLIND ~~REMAIN~~ <sup>are</sup> COSTLY BUT VERY <sup>essential,</sup> ~~VITAL.~~ ~~THEY~~  
~~ARE ESSENTIAL TO EQUIP OUR BLIND PERSONS~~  
~~FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING.~~ ~~CONTINUOUS EFFORTS~~  
~~ARE THEREFORE BEING MADE TO KEEP THE SERVICES~~  
~~GOING TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BLIND~~  
~~TO BE REHABILITATED, TO BE EDUCATED AND~~  
~~TRAINED AND TO OBTAIN GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT,~~  
~~CAUSES IN THE PAST. I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT IT~~  
~~WILL CONTINUE TO RESPOND NOW AND IN THE FUTURE.~~  
*The community has a moral obligation to those who are less fortunate. While the Government will extend every assistance possible, it would like the community to feel and share the obligation. Our community has responded generously to worthy causes in the past. I have no doubt that it will continue to respond now and in the future.*

II. ~~BUT WE HAVE THE ABILITY. WE HAVE~~  
~~THE RESOURCES. WHAT WE NEED IS DETERMINATION,~~  
~~CONCERTED EFFORTS AND JOINT ACTION TO ACHIEVE~~  
~~OUR OBJECTIVES - OF REBUILDING MAB'S ECONOMIC~~  
~~STRENGTH AND MAKE THE ASSOCIATION WHAT IT~~  
~~HAS SO LONG BEEN - A STRONGHOLD AND BEACON~~  
~~LIGHT OF HOPE FOR THE WORLD OF THE SIGHTLESS.~~

12. BEFORE I <sup>sit down,</sup> ~~TAKE THE CHAIR,~~ I ~~WISH TO~~  
~~SAY THAT~~ I HAVE <sup>a</sup> ~~THE PLEASURE TO PERFORM A~~  
VERY PLEASANT DUTY <sup>to perform.</sup> ~~TO-NIGHT.~~ THIS IS TO  
PRESENT A PLAQUE OF APPRECIATION TO TAN SRI  
H.T. ONG, OUR PAST PRESIDENT, <sup>for his great</sup>  
~~service to our Association and the blind.~~

13. ~~AS WE ALL ARE WELL AWARE,~~ TAN SRI  
ONG HAS BEEN INVOLVED WITH THE WORK FOR THE  
BLIND FOR MANY YEARS. AS THE PRESIDENT OF  
THE MAB <sup>for nearly 10 years</sup> ~~SINCE 1966,~~ HE <sup>served</sup> ~~HAD DONE TREMENDOUS~~  
~~WORK FOR THE ASSOCIATION AND FOR THE BLIND~~  
<sup>extremely well.</sup> ~~WHOM IT SERVES.~~ UNDER HIS ABLE LEADERSHIP  
AND GUIDANCE, A NUMBER OF SERVICES HAD BEEN  
LAUNCHED. ONE NOTABLE SERVICE WAS THE  
PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS PROGRAMME, WHERE A  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF EYE  
SPECIALISTS AND ~~GOVERNMENT~~ OFFICIALS FROM  
<sup>the</sup> ~~ALLIED~~ MINISTRIES WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1967.

UNDER THIS COMMITTEE, A NUMBER OF PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS ~~HAD BEEN~~ HELD TO AROUSE PUBLIC AWARENESS <sup>and interest</sup> ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS. IN 1969, A MOBILE EYE CLINIC WAS OBTAINED FROM <sup>the</sup> UNITED KINGDOM THROUGH A DONATION WHICH NOW PROVIDES PREVENTIVE SERVICE TO THE RURAL PEOPLE.

14. TAN SRI ONG HAD ALSO SHOWN GREAT PERSONAL INTEREST IN <sup>the</sup> VARIOUS AFFAIRS OF THE ASSOCIATION, IN SPITE OF HIS ~~ONEROUS~~ <sup>many and heavy</sup> DUTIES, PARTICULARLY IN ITS FUND RAISING PROJECTS. HE HAS THUS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUCCESS OF MANY SUCH PROJECTS. ONE PARTICULAR PROJECT WHICH ~~IS~~ <sup>was</sup> INITIATED AND WHICH IS STILL <sup>in existence</sup> ~~BEING USED~~ TO-DAY, IS THE CHINESE OPERA SHOW STAGED TO RAISE FUNDS. ALTHOUGH HE IS UNABLE <sup>as</sup> NOW TO BE ~~VERY~~ INVOLVED WITH THE MAB <sup>as he was before,</sup> ~~BECAUSE~~ ~~OF HIS NUMEROUS COMMITMENTS,~~ I AM SURE HE WILL

CONTINUE TO GIVE US HIS <sup>encouragement</sup> ~~INTEREST~~ AND SUPPORT.

15. IN RECOGNITION OF HIS DEDICATED SERVICES TO THE BLIND, THE ASSOCIATION HAS DECIDED TO BESTOW ON HIM <sup>the honour of</sup> AN HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP. SO FAR, TAN SRI ONG IS THE SECOND PERSON TO RECEIVE THIS MEMBERSHIP. THE FIRST RECIPIENT WAS <sup>the late</sup> DATUK DR. HAJI MUSTAPHA ALBAKRI BIN HAJI HASSAN. ~~IN THIS CONNECTION,~~ I NOW HAVE <sup>great</sup> PLEASURE IN PRESENTING HIM <sup>with</sup> A SMALL TOKEN OF <sup>our</sup> APPRECIATION.

THANK YOU.



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