

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
AND MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AT
THE OPENING OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE
OF THE MALAYAN ASSOCIATION OF YOUTH
CLUB IN KUALA LUMPUR ON 8TH APRIL, 1961

Mr Chairman, Hon'ble Ministers, Members of the Advisory Council, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very happy to be with you today to declare open your Annual Conference of the Malayan Association of Youth Clubs.

I would be happier, however, if instead of standing here as Deputy Prime Minister I could, in fact, roll back the years of my life and become the youngest member of one of your Clubs; because all of us, as we grow older, would give anything for the opportunity to re-live and re-capture the days, and the spirit, of our youth.

Youth is a time which is a wonderful season of hope; when the vigour of imagination and emotion is at its best; when the freshness of energy, enthusiasm and excitement flows with full force within us, unrestricted by the cares and worries of this world.

Unfortunately, most of us do not realise this until we are too old—and it is too late. In fact, a famous writer, when he became an old man wrote these words about youth, which have been recorded in literature of the world:

"The time of our youth is such a wonderful thing; what a crime that it should be wasted on us when we are children."

I would suggest, ladies and gentlemen, that the basic task of your Association is to drive home, deep into the young hearts and young minds of the members of your Clubs, the realisation of the fact that the days of their youth is the most valuable possession they will ever have in this world.

It is our duty, therefore, to advise, guide, influence and inspire the youth of our country so that they are given the greatest encouragement to live their young lives to the full, not only for their own advantage, but also for the benefit of the nation.

I am very glad indeed to hear of the desire, among your Club members, to take an active part in our National Rural Development Programme and I can assure you the Government will give you all support possible in this voluntary venture in the development of our country.

As most of you may already know, our National Rural Development Policy was designed giving full recognition to the universal principle that no nation anywhere in the world can hope to develop, or progress, to any extent, except by the full-hearted co-operation and energetic efforts of each and every one of its citizens; and the degree of progress achieved by a nation, is in truth, really a reflection and direct result of the progress made by each individual citizen in his daily tasks of raising and improving his own standard of living.

However, in applying the above principle to the National Rural Development Programme, the Government, before calling on the people of the rural areas to play their part, shouldered its own responsibilities first, responsibilities such as planning at district, State and National level, the implementation of projects which are Government tasks in their entirety, and the re-organisation, streamlining and gearing of the Government machine towards greater efficiency for the benefit of the rural people.

The Rural Development Programme has, therefore, been planned in several phases. The launching of each phase is timed to take place at different periods throughout the Five-Year Plan, and each phase, when launched, will run in parallel, and concurrent with, other phases already underway.

The first phase is devoted to a concentration of effort on Government action in the laying of the foundation framework for development in the rural areas. This framework consists of such Government projects as road-making, improved health, education, veterinary, agriculture and other services; a faster system of land alienation; the development of rural and cottage industries; an increase in the number of schemes established by the Federal Land Development Authority; and other similar Government activities.

Pressure of action on phase one continues at a high tempo, and will continue thus, throughout the period of the Five-Year Plan. The Government has taken all possible measures to maintain and

sustain the greatest effort on the part of its officers to fulfil and implement the plans and projects included in the "Red Book" Rural Development Plan; and in order that Government may keep its finger on the pulse of progress, a National Development Operations Room has been designed, and will shortly be set up, in which the development plans of each Department, District and State will be kept charted on maps, and where progress will be plotted from month to month. By spotlighting the progress of all aspects of the National Rural Development Plan, it will be possible, at the same time, to detect, diagnose and remedy any delays in development, when and where they occur.

While action on phase one continues, phase two will, in the near future, be launched. In outline, this phase consists of a "call to action" by the people to play their part and to give of their best in this great task of nation-building; this Phase is designed to make sure that the rural people have a clear understanding as to how they themselves can obtain a better way of life by their own efforts in building on the firm foundation framework laid by the Government in phase one.

The main emphasis in phase two will be laid on taking all steps possible to encourage the rural people to develop their land to the fullest extent and stress will be laid on the realisation that their own particular plot of land is in fact a small part of Malaya, the progress of which is on trust to them and entirely in their own hands; and that therefore, their duty to the nation as a whole, is to fulfil this trust to the best of their ability.

Another aspect of phase two will be the revival and rejuvenation of our national tradition of co-operative kampung effort which has held its place in our rural communities since the days of Hang Tuah; it is the practice of what is now known in new words, in other countries, as Community Development; a time-honoured practice which has been the mainstay of our rural life in Malaya for many years.. Every encouragement will be given to the implementation of minor projects by the people themselves in the spirit of Gotong Royong, provided, of course, that such projects do not detract from the time, energy and effort which should be rightly devoted to the development of their own land.

Also, the rural people will be called upon to contribute to development by learning better agriculture methods, better health methods and other knowledge necessary for them to apply, and

practice, in order to raise their standard of living. With regard to this, it has been the policy of the Alliance Government to expand and enlarge the Extension Services in the various Departments and to achieve this trained Government officers to tour the rural areas lecturing and demonstrating to the people. It is the intention of the Government to create a more effective form of Extension Services by giving opportunities to the rural people to come forward and acquire such training themselves, so that they may, on return to their kampongs put their knowledge to the greatest use.

Further included, as part of phase two will be the National Adult Education Drive—to eliminate illiteracy, to increase fluency in the National Language, and to instil in the hearts and minds of the people a sense of consciousness of their duties and responsibilities as citizens of an independent country. The literature used for teaching in Adult Education Classes will be so compiled as to incorporate useful and valuable knowledge essential to the maintenance of such essentials as better health, better crops and better living.

It is the Government's avowed intention that no obstacle will be allowed to obstruct the path of progress in this national aim of rural development; an aim, in the fulfilment of which, disunity, petty prejudice and personal gain have no place; an aim which can only be achieved if raised to the realm of a national pledge in which the Government and the people go forward together, with the fullest mutual co-operation, towards the goal of progress, prosperity and happiness; a goal which, when achieved, will be proof to the future generations of Malaysians, that their forefathers, in this era of endeavour, did not fail them.

Ladies and gentlemen, that is an outline of our National Rural Development Programme and you will see from it that there is plenty of opportunity for the energy and enthusiasm of youth to take its share.

I congratulate your Association in anticipating the starter's gun in "the race of rural development", by producing your own "Blue Book" which gives guidance to the role that can be played by your Youth Clubs in this great national effort.

¹ **Panduan kepada Persatuan mengenai Perancangan Pembangunan Luar Bandar.**

I would, however, like to suggest that the best type of Rural Development Project which can be undertaken by your Clubs, in the rural areas, is the construction of such things as minor, essential, kampung footpaths, playing fields, etc.; undertaken in the spirit of Gotong Royong by the Club Members themselves.

In order to carry out such projects the best method is for the Clubs in each District to consult, work closely with, and under the guidance of, the District Rural Development Committee of which, as your President well knows, the District Officer is Chairman. There is also no reason why District Rural Development Committees should not approve the expenditure of small allocations of funds for such projects.

However, I suggest that your Clubs remember the lesson which can be learned from what was perhaps the first youth club in our national history—that Club of young adventurers of which Hang Tuah was leader.

The lesson is this: that the adventures of Hang Tuah and his young friends were recorded in history, because, in each adventure which they undertook, they applied the qualities of tenacity and determination, never allowing their energy and enthusiasm to die, until they achieved results.

If they had not done so, we would not, today, be able to read, in our national literature, the stories of their youthful projects, because, history does not record half-started or half-finished projects; history records results!

So, therefore, it is absolutely essential that the members of every Youth Club, playing their part in our National Rural Development Programme, undertake one, and only one project, at a time, and then, with determination, perseverance, and hard work, continue their efforts, under no circumstances abandoning hope until success and real results are achieved.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, let me take you back to the 31st of August, 1957, the day on which, after many years of foreign rule the destiny of Malaya was handed over to become a sacred trust in the hands of its own people.

The "Merdeka Days" of the future will not only mark the anniversary of the historical handing-over of this great trust, but will also, as the years pass by, mark the gradual handing over of our national destiny to younger generations of Malaysians.

So, therefore, the Youth of the Malaya of today are in fact the trustees of the Malaya of tomorrow.

Your Association have a tremendous task and a great challenge before it in its contribution towards ensuring that the young people of our Nation are given the best opportunity possible, in preparation and in readiness, so that they will be equipped in mind and in spirit, when the time comes, to shoulder that great trust which is their heritage.

I wish you all the very best of luck in this great endeavour and have great pleasure in declaring your Conference open.



Tun Abdul Razak sedang cuba memandu jentolak (bulldozer) ketika beliau melawat di Bengkel Jabatan Kerja Raya Persekutuan, Kuala Lumpur pada 14hb April, 1961. (Gambar Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia).