

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TO
HEADS OF FEDERAL AND STATE DEPART-
MENTS ON THE SECOND FIVE-YEAR PLAN, IN
KUALA LUMPUR ON 14TH FEBRUARY, 1961

Gentlemen,

I am extremely pleased and grateful that all of you have been able to come here this morning. Some of you have come some distance in order to be present, and also, I understand some of you arrived a few days earlier because the notification of the postponement of this meeting did not reach you in time.

I apologise for the sudden change of date of this meeting, from the 10th February to today, but I am afraid that it was necessary, at short notice, because of my being fully occupied in Parliament and because of the visit of President Garcia from the Philippines.

As all of you already know, the National Second Five-Year Plan was approved last week in Parliament and the reason that I have called you today is to make it quite clear to each and everyone of you that we have not a moment to lose in the implementation of this plan, and, that if we are to achieve the maximum percentage of success in its completion, then, the greatest effort of co-operation, co-ordination, and solid hard work, will be required by every single Government Officer concerned, from the highest level to the lowest.

I do not propose to describe, or to discuss, the details of the Plan with you this morning. You yourselves must study it in detail and the fact you must not only study it, but also fully understand it; furthermore you must make sure that every single officer in your Ministries and Departments really knows the contents of the Plan and that everyone is in no doubt whatsoever, as to what is the aim of Government, which must be achieved within the next five years.

I cannot over-stress, or over-emphasise, the importance of this, because the implementation of our Five-Year Plan can be compared to someone shooting with a rifle at a definite target. You

know that even the best rifle-shot in the world has got very little chance of hitting a target with full-marks unless he can see clearly and fully understand the target at which he is aiming.

So it is with our Plan—our National target. The foundation of success in achieving our target is to make absolutely certain, now, that all of us understand, clearly, our National aim.

Let us now go back, very briefly, to the First Five-Year Plan. It has been said that we fell short of our target—we did. But, do not let that dishearten us. During the period of the First Five-Year Plan we had in fact two National Plans to complete; the other, and at the time more important plan, that removing the menace of Communist Terrorism from our Country. So, therefore, with thanks to all of you, we succeeded not only in ending the Emergency but also, at the same time, in achieving a fairly high percentage of success in our First Five-Year Plan.

Also I would particularly like to thank you, now, for the tremendous effort, enthusiasm, energy and support which you have given since the launching of our National Rural Development Programme at the beginning of 1960.

As all of you know, I myself, have travelled around the country to Districts and to States, many times since the launching of our National Rural Development Policy and I deeply appreciate the new spirit, the new sense of urgency and co-operation which has been shown at all levels, in all Departments in the implementation of our National Policy.

I myself can honestly say that I feel in my own heart, and I have seen with my own eyes, that there is a new atmosphere, a new National awakening, or we might even call it "new look" within the structure of Government Service at all levels. For this, I am most grateful to you all, and I feel certain that if we can preserve this new spirit, even intensify it, during the period of our work in implementing the Five-Year Plan, we will have laid a sound foundation for success.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Prime Minister, my Ministerial Colleagues, and myself, to thank you most sincerely for the sincerity of support and the excellent effort that all of you have given towards our task of nation-building in our Rural Development Programme. I know that you will not fail

in continuing this effort, and that you will, each one of you, do all that is within your power to keep this fire of enthusiasm burning brightly.

Please ensure, that when you return to your various States, Ministries and Departments, that this message of thanks is conveyed by you right down the chain of your command to every officer concerned.

Now let us look to the future; let us get our facts absolutely clear.

The facts are:

- (i) We now have a Second Five-Year Development Plan, which is a big and a bold plan, the implementation of which will be a challenge to the country, a challenge to the Government, a challenge to all of us. But it is a practical plan and the Government is convinced that it can be implemented if everyone of us make it the tenet of its faith to implement this Plan.
- (ii) The Government is therefore determined that every effort will be made to implement this Plan to the maximum possible.
- (iii) Time is short; we must make full use of every single day available.
- (iv) There will be difficulties, both foreseen and unforeseen—only a fool would deny this. But, difficulties can be overcome.
- (v) Delay is the main enemy of development delays must be overcome.
- (vi) Our technical capacity may still be understrength; this must not deter us.
- (vii) The real potential for progress in the development of any Nation lies in the hearts and hands of the people. To mobilise, to the full, this National potential of effort by the people themselves, Government must first shoulder squarely, its own responsibilities and produce results on

the ground; then, the people will respond in their own efforts, with greater confidence. Let us take these facts separately.

The first fact; the Government is determined to implement this Plan.

- (a) If we believe that our Plan is impossible to achieve, our lack of spirit and despondency will make it so; but if we sincerely believe that it is possible, and if we persistently persevere, we will overcome every difficulty and achieve success.
- (b) Modern science has not yet developed sufficiently for us to be able to condense the "spirit" of a directive or a speech into liquid form, which could be injected into the bloodstream of Government Officers. Speeches have their effect, but their effect is not lasting; written directives have their effect, but in the course of time, their contents and their meaning tend to become forgotten.
- (c) Therefore, your responsibility, as Heads of Departments, is, by your Leadership, to ensure that this spirit of determination to implement our National Plan is continuously kept alive, and becomes a permanent attitude of mind on the part of all your Officers at all levels.
- (d) You were selected and chosen as Heads of Departments in the belief that your ability to hold your appointment lay in your ability of Leadership.
- (e) The part to be played by your Departments in the implementation of the National Plan will be a very severe test of your ability in Leadership.
- (f) May I remind you that one of the greatest qualities of leadership is to be able to delegate. This means that you should acquire the art of not getting yourself too involved in detailed routine work; this you must hand over to your deputies or assistants so that you yourselves, as Heads of your Departments, are free to lead; free to get out and around to make sure that progress is in fact being achieved; and that your officers wherever they may be, are made to feel, by your personal encouragement, that the job they are doing is well worth while; and that they have your support in their task.

The Second fact; that time is short

- (a) We talk about a Five-Year Plan. I do not want to confuse you with higher mathematics but I would like you to think for a moment on the following lines:
- (i) In five years there are 1,825 days. But let us deduct all non-working days such as Sundays, Saturdays, Fridays in some States, public holidays and those days given up to average casual leave, sickness, etc.
 - (ii) An approximate total of non-working days in the five-year period comes to approximately 700 days, or the equivalent of 40% of the full time in the Five Year Period.
 - (iii) This means, in fact, that when we talk about Five Years, we have only just over 1,000 effective working days or, in other words, only 60% of the time we think we have.
- (b) Therefore, I should like all of you to continuously bear in mind that time is short.
- (c) There is a Chinese proverb which says "An inch of time cannot be bought with an inch of gold". This is very true. Time is the most valuable and important commodity in the implementation of our Five-Year Plan; much more important than money. Remember that time once lost cannot be revoted.
- (d) I repeat, time is short. Every effort must be made to bring this fact home to the minds of all officers responsible for carrying out our Five-Year Development Programme.
- (e) This can best be done by the continual monthly checking and cross-checking of progress on projects to ensure that delays are diagnosed immediately and then remedied immediately.

The third fact; that there will be difficulties in the implementation of our Plan.

- (a) Let us remember that the greater the difficulty the more glory there is in overcoming it; remember also that in rough seas the skilful pilots of ships gain their reputations, not on a calm sea, but from storms and tempests.

- (b) So, therefore, let us resolve to acquire the correct attitude of mind from the very start, and regard our difficulties, both foreseen and unforeseen, not as obstacles which cannot be overcome but as a challenge to us, which will inspire us to greater efforts, greater resolution, and greater determination to overcome them.
- (c) In other words, let difficulties, when we meet them, be regarded merely as if they are signboards in the path of progress; signboards indicating that we have to double our efforts to achieve success in the implementation of our aim—our Plan.

The fourth fact; that delay is the main enemy of development; delays must be overcome.

- (a) Research into the reasons for delays in our Development Programme in the past, brings to light many factors which we must, from now on, bear constantly in mind if we are to achieve results in the future.
- (b) The most important of these factors I have grouped into seven categories, which, if any of you ignore, you may be guilty of committing what I call the Seven Deadly Sins of Development.
- (c) To make these factors easy to remember I shall list them under the seven letters of the word

R, E, S, U, L, T, S.

(R)ESULTS — R stands for Resist changing policy and staff once planning has been finalised.

- (i) It was Abraham Lincoln who said, "It is no time to change horses when you are crossing the stream". This advice applies to the implementation of our Plan.
- (ii) In the past, it has happened on many occasions, that once project planning has been completed and ready to start, someone, somewhere, has had a bright new idea and suggested a better way of doing things. This has resulted in a change of policy and resultant delay in the progress of projects on the ground.
- (iii) We have no time for changes of policy which adversely affect the progress of development on the ground.

- (iv) It is necessary, therefore, that great care be taken, particularly at Federal level, to stand firm on what has been included in our Five-Year Plan (and in each year's Development Estimates); we must only allow a change of policy in cases where such a change is really justified and can be guaranteed not to slow up actual construction progress on projects.
- (v) Also, we must resist the too frequent posting of officers without good reason; otherwise action on our Development Programme will suffer from a lack of continuity; constant changes of personnel can become a very serious factor of delay in Development.

R(E)SULTS — *E stands for Ensure co-ordination of all Departments from the planning stage to the completion of projects.*

- (i) As the world advances from day to day, with an increase in specialised knowledge on all subjects, so does the machinery of a modern Government tend to slow up; because in the application of technical knowledge government officers tend to become more and more specialised in their departmental outlook, and as a result, sometimes they are not able to see the overall picture of Development as a whole.
- (ii) This tendency of technical specialisation can result in a wastage of many hours dealing with projects from each of the various technical view points. It can also result in excessive paper work, where there is a strong conflict in technical views and during the time that such verbal and written conflicts are in progress development on the ground is delayed; sometimes action on a project may come to a stand-still.
- (iii) Nowadays, there is seldom a development project which can be implemented entirely by the action of only one Department. Nearly all projects require the co-ordination, co-operation and combined speed of action on the part of many Departments in order to achieve their implementation. This co-ordination must start at the planning stage and continue through until the project is complete.

- (iv) Much has already been done to remedy the defect of lack of co-ordination by the instructions laid down in the "Red Book" and, I am glad to say that a team spirit exists at all levels, Districts, State and Federal, with all technical officers working together with a focus of purpose towards the main aim of development.
- (v) However, more can still be done in this direction; and one of the best methods of remedying the defects of excessive departmentalism is to make sure that each and every Officer, in all Departments, has a knowledge not only of his own particular job, but also, an overall picture of our National Plan and the functions of other Departments so that he will be able to see the whole of development in perspective.
- (vi) All officers must be made to realise that, no matter how strong are their departmental convictions, the part that they have to play in implementing our Five-Year Plan is similar to that of a musician in an orchestra; if they blow their own "technical trumpet" too loud the music will be out of harmony and out of tune, with the result that progress on development would be delayed.
- (vii) It is therefore necessary for the "Orchestra of Development" to play in harmony; it is essential that all members have a good copy of the music! Therefore, we must make sure that all officers in all Departments are given lectures and talks so that they understand the overall Government policy and plan, and as a result, will be better able to play their part in tune with the tempo of our National Development Programme.

RE(S)ULTS — *S stands for stop paper arguments and departmental disagreement.*

- (i) You have probably heard me say many times that we must cut "red tape". Let me explain, by cutting red tape I do not mean breaking the rules. Such Government rules as General Orders and Financial Regulations are similar to the rules of any game. All of us must adhere to them; otherwise there would be chaos.
- (ii) However, those of us who happen to be in a position, as it were, of "referee" to make sure that Government rules must be kept; and instead of blowing the whistle when the

rule is broken they send a letter. All I ask of these Office "referees" is that they remember that a good referee continually bears in mind the "advantage rule" and makes full use of it where he can, rather than stop the game.

- (iii) By "red tape" I mean excessive delays due to excessive paper work such as minute-writing. And by this I mean unnecessary paper work as opposed to what is necessary paper work. I know what excessive or unnecessary paper work means because I spent four years of my brief life as a Civil Servant passing files every day.
- (iv) In other words those whose duty it is to deal with correspondence and files regarding development must always keep in view that the reason behind everything we do is to produce results quickly on the ground and therefore care must be taken to remember this and care must also be taken that time is not wasted by indulging in the pleasure of inter-departmental argument on files.
- (v) You have all no doubt heard the proverb in Malay:

"Harimau mati, meninggalkan belang,

Manusia mati, meninggalkan nama,

"Pegawai Kerajaan mati, meninggalkan Kemajuan! 'file' "

Let us make sure by our actions that the last line of this proverb is now changed to:

Pegawai Kerajaan mati, meninggalkan Kemajuan!

- (vi) This can be done by remembering, at all time, that action on files and correspondence must be brief and to the point, and must at all times make a contribution towards progress.

RES(U)LTS — *U stands for Use standard plans and technical capacity correctly.*

- (i) In the past standard plans for certain items of development such as schools and clinics have existed, but they have been difficult to obtain, and there has been insufficient information published throughout Government Departments regarding them. Furthermore, they have not been properly indexed and readily available and as a result have not been made full use of.

- (ii) By the better use of standard plans, much time and extra work, can be saved. All Government Departments at all levels should be given the strictest instructions to use standard plans wherever possible, rather than waste time and the architectural capacity of P.W.D. to re-draft special plans in cases where a standard plan would suffice. Also in the case of small projects, which have to be put out to contract, or done by the kampung people themselves, such standardisation of plans has the added advantage of ensuring that funds are spent correctly and reduces the possibility of corruption.
- (iii) Continuous and persistent action must be taken to ensure that the very best use is made of our existing technical capacity and that development projects do not come to a standstill as "paper" projects.
- (iv) In other words, every effort should be made to allow for such re-organisation of office work and administration, so that Professional/Technical Officers are relieved of unnecessary routine paper work and are left free to get down to work, on the ground.

RESU(L)TS — *L stands for Land to be acquired quickly; sites decided without delay.*

- (i) The new Land Acquisition Ordinance should help to overcome delays in obtaining land for projects. However steps must be taken to ensure that Commissioner of Lands and Mines/Collectors of Land Revenue understand fully how to apply the provisions of this new Ordinance.
- (ii) Selection of sites for projects must be speeded up.

RESUL(T)S — *T stands for Team to tour; a development team to be appointed and tour the country from time to time to deal with delays in development.*

- (i) In order to make the fullest use of the time it is essential to maintain the highest pressure of action and sound planning. To do this it is my intention to appoint a Combined National Development Planning Team which will tour the country from time to time and take stock of progress on development.

- (ii) This Team will analyse the reasons for delay and take action to remedy such delays in the implementation of our National Plan.
- (iii) This Team will, from time to time, report back to me the results of their action with any recommendations they wish to make in order to maintain one hundred per cent pressure on development.
- (iv) I intend to issue a special Directive laying down the composition of this Team and defining its duties.

RESULT(S) — S stands for *Sportlighting progress from month to month in order to diagnose and remedy delays.*

- (i) In order to keep our finger on the pulse of progress it is essential that we maintain a National Development Operations Room in which the development plans of each Department are carefully charted on maps and where progress is plotted from month to month.
- (ii) By spotlighting the progress of all aspects of our National Development Plan, we will be able to diagnose and remedy delays in progress when and where they occur.
- (iii) I hope that all Heads of Departments will take considerable interest in keeping their plans in this development Operations Room, up-to-date, and I intend that each month a special meeting would be called at which each Federal Head of Department will be required to give a short brief on the progress of his departmental plan.

The fifth fact; that our technical capacity may still be under-strength; this must not deter us.

- (i) Every effort has been made to ensure that our technical capacity in all Departments is brought up to strength but it may be some time before this task is completed.
- (ii) However, the point which I want to make clear is that all of us must get down to solid hard work, now, and make the fullest use of our existing resources as they stand today.

The sixth fact; that the real potential for progress lies in the hearts and hands of the people.

- (i) It is the Government's duty, first and foremost, to shoulder its own responsibilities with regard to the planning and implementation of Government projects.
- (ii) Then, having laid the foundation framework, having accepted and fulfilled our responsibilities we can then turn to the people with a clear conscience and call on them to play their part.

Finally, most of you will remember the traditional custom which is performed at the start of the Olympic Games where a lighted flaming torch is carried by relays of runners from Mount Olympus to the Games stadium and that flame is kept burning throughout the whole period of the Games.

My task today is like the first runner in that relay of torch bearers.

I called this meeting to light the flame of the determination and enthusiasm so that you in turn may carry it, in relays, down through all levels of your Departments.

This flame must be kept burning throughout the whole period of the implementation of our Development Plan, and never be allowed to die.

It is your duty now to ensure that the hearts and minds of all your Officers are lighted with this flame of determination and enthusiasm and this flame must never be extinguished until our work is completed and until such time as we ourselves can sit back, in the evening of our lives, with pride and satisfaction that we have built a progressive Malaya in which our children and grandchildren will be proud to live.