

SPEECH BY Y.A.B. TUN RAZAK
ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE
PAMERAN SEPULUH TAHUN MERDEKA
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AT SEKOLAH KEBANGSAAN HISAMUDDIN
KUALA LUMPUR

Ten years ago, today, I myself, and all of you here this morning, celebrated the independence of our beloved country. We were 10 years younger then. We are now 10 years older and so are our children 10 years older today.

In the 10 years that have passed, a lot of changes have taken place. Have these changes been for the better? Can we look back with pride on the changes that occurred during this period? Have we built a society and a nation which our children would be proud of? Have we given them the best that we could give? Have we given them a better world to look forward to? Have we improved the lot and the well-being of the man in the street? Have we fulfilled the aspirations that we hoped for on the day when we proclaimed our country a free, democratic and independent nation?

Yes! definitely so! We have achieved these aspirations and objectives, and indeed, we have done much more. The Alliance Government has in this short period of time proved itself worthy of the mandate given to it by the people when they voted this Government into power. We aimed at building a unified Malaysian nation, stable in economy, enlightened in policy, and worthy as a member of the family of free nations.

At home, we have moulded a nation: a Malaysian nation, from diverse peoples and cultures. We have built a strong and viable economy; we have provided new job opportunities, and we have secured a better standard of living for all our people. Externally, Malaysia has also built up a firm reputation for integrity and fairness in the conduct of international relations. We have forged strong regional, economic and social grouping for the common good and prosperity of nations in this part of the world.

Let us pause for a moment here and examine by what yardstick we can measure our progress in the past 10 years. We could turn to the internationally accepted criteria such as our gross national product which we are proud to state has increased at 6.8% annually. Our per capita income has increased at a rate of 2.7% annually and our per capita consumption has increased. And so has our trade with countries abroad increased. Our infant mortality rate has dropped from 75 to 50 per thousand showing that we have made this country a healthy place to live in.

Now these statistics may be meaningless to a man in the street, so let me put it in simple terms. Our trade with countries abroad has increased. Our food production has also increased. We are now less dependent on foreign imports. We are producing more and more consumer and durable goods. We have diversified

our economy by strengthening our agricultural sector and providing a suitable climate for the expansion of our industrial sector.

We have opened vast areas of land for the landless. We have provided shelter for those without homes. Our communications have transformed the countryside with new roads and projects. We have broken down the barriers of the rural folks. We have provided social amenities for our people not only in the towns but more so in the rural areas. We have brought electricity, water, the telephone, the radio and innumerable other facilities to the rural settlers, farmers and fishermen who make up the back-bone of our people.

These achievements only represent the more tangible and obvious economic gains. At the same time, we have not neglected the development of the intellect and skill of our people. We have not only looked after the needs of our stomach, so to speak, but also have cared for the mind.

In uniting the various races which make up our nation, we have adopted educational policies that would make our children loyal and dedicated citizens. Our aim is to educate our children not only to be good parents but also to be productive workers and active participants in our society. To achieve this we have provided them free primary education. We have set up a sound, practical as well as academic secondary education system on a national basis. We have expanded our facilities and opportunities for higher learning. We have brought education to the masses through adult and further education classes. Our literacy rate has increased and compares favourably with other progressive developing nations. We have developed our own national language of which we are very proud.

We have drawn from the richness of our multi-racial cultural heritage and have built a Malaysian culture with an identity of its own. We no longer speak of Chinese or Indian or Malay culture; we now speak of a Malaysian culture! We are fervent in our belief that our people are born free, free to pursue their religious beliefs, and free to live a life of their own choice. We are zealous of this freedom and we will defend it with our lives.

To perpetuate and to maintain our way of life we have successfully defended our country from external aggression. We have defeated alien threats when we eliminated militant communism. Our people reaffirmed their belief in a free and democratic form of government when they stood shoulder to shoulder against such threats.

As a member of the United Nations, Malaysia has contributed effectively towards the promotion and maintenance of world peace and security, as illustrated by the role we played in the Congo and Cyprus. During our 10 years as a member of the Security Council, we have contributed actively towards finding peaceful solutions in international disputes. The outstanding example in this respect was our contribution to the peaceful settlement of the crisis in the Dominican Republic.

Malaysia is most sympathetic to the needs and aspirations of the people in the non-independent territories. We therefore have actively participated in all efforts of the UN to bring about the early de-colonisation of the remaining territories under colonial rule.

In this part of the world we have together with the Philippines and Thailand

formed an Association of South-East Asian states. The birth of A S A marked a new era-an era of the awakening of the countries in South Asia in their realisation of the great need to work in closer co-operation in economic, social and technical matters. This spirit of co-operation which prevailed in A S A has now paved the way for a bigger regional grouping known as A S E A N i.e. Association of South East Asian Nations. Through bilateral trade agreement we have not only boosted our export drive but also established closer understanding and goodwill.

We look back to these 10 years with pride because we have achieved these things through **peaceful, positive planning** on all economic fronts and a dynamic approach on all development efforts. Our achievements are the more remarkable because we have achieved all these through realistic and pragmatic policies, in a truly democratic manner, without shattering our national fabric. Our success story is an open book. The development implementation techniques which we have perfected in the last 10 years have enabled us to reduce income disparity between the rural and urban areas.

This exhibition is an attempt to give a cross-sectional view of what have been achieved in the development of our country during the last decade. What we will see is only a fraction of what has actually been done on the ground in terms of planning, organisation, funds, effort, man-power and benefits accrued.

This exhibition is also intended to be a **reminder** that we are forever marching forward on the **path of progress**. But let us not dwell too long in what is past. Let us consolidate and build on what we already have.

The future still holds many challenges. This is a young country and to develop even further we need to improve the planning particularly in the use of man-power which we have in abundance. To improve and sustain the progress and prosperity that we have achieved would require a great deal of human talent and technical competence of the highest order. We need to increase and improve our productivity in all sectors. We can achieve this if there is an alliance - an **alliance** of ideas and an **alliance of efforts** between the people and Government. Let us go forward together, steadfast and unswerving in our resolve to bring even greater progress to our people.

In any endeavour to develop a nation to achieve progress and prosperity, the role of the people is as important as that of the government. In times of happiness such as this, the 10th Anniversary of our Independence, let us share our achievements with our people. Today, we have with us here 3 FLDA settlers, who represent the many Malaysians who have contributed to the success stories of our time. Let them, as Malaysians who have also made good our Independence, perform this ceremony so that this function today can be remembered for a long time.

I now have great pleasure in asking them to declare this Exhibition open.