

UCAPAN PERDANA MENTERI DI MAJLIS  
MAKAN MALAM PERSATUAN AKITEK  
MALAYSIA, DI HOTEL HILTON, KUALA  
LUMPUR PADA 28<sup>HB</sup> OGOS, 1975

Saudara Hisham Al-Bakri, Presiden Persatuan Akitek Malaysia,  
Dif-dif terhormat, Tuan-tuan dan Puan-puan.

Terlebih dahulu suka-lah saya dan juga bagi pihak isteri saya mengucapkan berbilang terima kasih atas jemputan menghadiri majlis yang permai ini iaitu Majlis Makan Malam Tahunan Persatuan Akitek Malaysia.

Saya gembira kerana setahun sekali dalam majlis ini dapat bermesra dengan para akitek dari seluruh negara serta bertukar-tukar fikiran setakat yang menyentuh kepentingan professional tuan-tuan dalam hubungannya dengan Kerajaan.

Begitu juga di kalangan anggota-anggota PAM sendiri tentu-lah banyak perkara-perkara penting yang patut dihuraikan. Saya sebutkan perkara ini kerana saudara-saudara sekalian sebagai satu golongan professional yang penting sudah tentu mempunyai peranan yang besar dalam bidang pembangunan negara khususnya dalam perusahaan pembinaan serta membantu usaha Kerajaan menyediakan perumahan yang secukupnya untuk rakyat.

Saudara-saudara sekalian,

On behalf of my wife and myself, I would like to thank you all for the kind invitation extended to us to attend your Association's Annual Dinner tonight. For me personally, this provides an excellent opportunity to exchange views on matters relating to your profession and especially the context of maintaining the tempo of development in the face of spiralling costs of materials.

I am also happy to be with you here tonight because your profession and mine—Architects and Politicians—have one thing in common and that is we both are builders in the wider sense of the word. You are busy planning and designing houses and

other buildings for the progress and development of our country. I am busy formulating policies to build a nation, to weld together our people of various races so that we would have a united and happy country.

However, it is an interesting argument as to which of the two professions is the older—Architect or Politician. The Architect says his is the older profession because God created the world out of chaos. The Politician says politics is the older profession because Politicians created chaos.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you are all aware, the Government has long advocated a policy of property-owning democracy. To this end, both the Government and the private sectors have embarked on large scale housing projects all over the country but these would not be able to meet the requirements for a long time to come. It is more unfortunate for the low income group of our population as they would not have any hope of owning a house since prices of most of these houses are beyond their means.

I have mentioned this recently at the Housing Developers Association Dinner and had stressed the need to find ways and means of bringing the costs down to a reasonable level. One of these means is to make more use of timber for building houses. Timber houses with modern treatment can last as long as brick houses and what is more, they are suited to our climate. We produce a lot of timber and most extensive use of timber and its by products will certainly help to boost the market which is now at somewhat low ebb.

We are still unfortunately facing a serious economic situation. The world economic recession is hitting us at its hardest at the moment. Our exports have gone down by some 23% as compared to last year. The Government both Federal and State are taking measures to exercise economies and reduce non-essential expenditure. As I have stated on previous occasions, and I like to reiterate here that in facing the present crisis, the Government expects everyone to show loyalty to the country and assist the Government in its endeavour to ride over the situation.

The progress of the country is the sum total efforts of each and everyone of its citizens. There must, therefore, be increased productivity in all sectors of the economy, including the Government sector. We will, of course, continue with our development efforts in order to generate growth of the economy but non-economic expenditure must be reduced to the minimum possible.

There is no real indication that the situation will ease off next year but most experts expect that things will pick up a bit in 1976 but real improvement will come later. Therefore, under the circumstances we have to be cautious and Government must endeavour to live within its means.

I am told that the housing industry is picking up again. I do hope that Architects should endeavour in their planning, design and specifications to reduce costs especially for Government projects such as hospitals and clinics, schools and other public buildings.

It is true that in some of our buildings we like to see a bit of beauty but we should endeavour to balance it with utility and the most important element now that must be taken into consideration is the cost. I still find that there is considerable waste in the design and specification of Government buildings.

There is still remnants of the colonial heritage in the specification of buildings in accordance with Western standards. There is no necessity for us to follow Western standards. We should have our own standards, compatible with our progress as well as the ecological and climatic conditions in our country.

I do hope that your Association would bear this in mind and would help the Government particularly in planning for low-cost housing. Low-cost housing must be in the real sense low-cost; otherwise, the lower income group could not afford to pay for them.

Owing to the higher cost of these low-cost houses, I have now directed Government agencies and have also asked the State Governments that perhaps one way to get around this is to provide land and the infrastructure to the low-income group and ask them to build the houses themselves with perhaps Government

supplying them with timber for fabricated houses. By this way, I am sure we can really reduce the cost of these low-cost houses to make them within the means of the low-income group. It is the policy of this Government to provide homes and shelter for everyone and I think the less fortunate members of our community must have our prior attention.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to note that Persatuan Akitik Malaysia has established a Building Centre which provides a central display and information where people connected with the building industry can meet and discuss their common problems. I would like to compliment PAM for this magnificent effort and I can assure you all that the Government will certainly assist PAM to expand this Centre and also the proposal to seek a permanent site in place of the present one. I am sure with the establishment of this permanent centre, more would be done for the benefit of your Association as well as the society in general.

As you are all aware, the building industry is a very complex one and also one of the most challenging in the country. It is therefore essential that there should be proper co-ordination of its activities in order to achieve the best results. The proposal to set up the Building Industry Council, therefore, in my view, is one that deserves consideration.

Saudara-saudara sekalian,

Saya tidaklah hendak bercakap lebih panjang pada malam ini. Apa yang saya sebutkan tadi ialah untuk kebaikan kita bersama dan diharap dengan cara yang demikian dapatlah kita membuktikan bahawa Malaysia juga mempunyai tradisi dan nilai terhadap binaannya. Pada masa ini kita masih sedang mencari satu bentuk atau corak yang mempunyai watak dan mencerminkan keperibadian kita untuk diwariskan kepada negara dan rakyat kita masa akan datang.

Akhir kata, sekali lagi saya ucapkan banyak terima kasih atas jemputan saudara-saudara dan saya berdoa agar tujuan dan matlamat Persatuan ini akan mencapai kejayaan yang sepenuhnya.