

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AT THE
OPENING OF THE CENTRAL WELFARE CONFERENCE
AT THE SCIENCE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
MALAYA, PANTAI VALLEY, KUALA LUMPUR ON 13TH
AUGUST, 1965

Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Hon'ble Ministers, Ladies & Gentlemen.

I am glad to be here today to address you at this opening of your Conference for various reasons, not least significant of them being the theme of your Conference — Urban Development and Its Implications for Social Welfare. This theme is in complete alignment with the aims of our Government and, if I may say, of all good Government, which is, in the final analysis, to make a better world materially, physically, spiritually and morally for the common man. While we perhaps give emphasis to rural development we are equally concerned with community development as a whole. The Government both central and local is constantly involved in the problems of community change. In providing a framework of law, and in supplying housing, social services, and means of communication etc., it is attempting to provide for the needs of a changing community. But this is not necessarily all that it is doing, it will also be trying to induce changes, to establish a pattern of community development more in accordance with the wishes and hopes of the people. Thus your choice of a theme in Urban Development is a very relevant and appropriate one.

Our country has come a long way in the relatively short years of its independence and its rapid advances and progress cannot but have very far reaching effects on the community. Government is well aware that industrialisation and economic development together with material gains, bring social effects on the very people they are meant to enrich. Our challenge is to recognise these effects for what they are, to maximise the good effects and to minimise the bad ones. Therefore it is well for us to accept, as indeed you must already have done in planning this Conference itself, that in spite of rapid changes, development can and must be directed. Indeed we can say that attempts to control the forces of change so that the effects may serve rather than defeat humanity are the challenge of our time.

We must also subscribe to one of the cardinal principles of democracy and that is that development should be desired by man, should aim at everything in man and also be intended for all people. In other words, it is the human factors in development that is important to us.

I am glad to see that your Conference will discuss ways and means of maximising the participation of citizens in urban development. Outside help without involvement of the people concerned can only be viewed as paternalism. Although we are comparatively young in nationhood, we have acquired sufficient maturity and independence to reject paternalism in any form. Increasingly therefore we seek the participation and cooperation of the people with self help as a goal.

Whatever its size, a community must be marked by a necessary sense of belonging. This belonging, this sense of common purpose, is as important now in this stage of our evolution as it ever will be if we are to forge ahead as a viable, happy, prosperous and independent nation. Those of you who have followed rural development plans and programmes will remember these words contained in the first Red Book that "everything possible will be done to educate, convince and inspire the rural dweller that the productivity, progress and prosperity of the nation is in fact the sum total of individual effort by each and every son of the land and so put the onus of the future advancement of the nation squarely on his shoulders and make him feel that the destiny of Malaysia without doubt is in his own hands".

And so I shall leave you to your deliberations and hope that you will in time build up a reservoir of social experience that can be tapped for guidance and inspiration in future development plans by all concerned with the welfare of our citizens. In the meantime :-

"Gunung tinggi sama didaki
Lautan dalam sama direnang
Marilah kita bersatu hati
Perkara yang susah menjadi senang".