

SPEECH BY THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
AT THE OPENING OF
THE AFRO-ASIAN SEMINAR
AT DEWAN TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN,
KUALA LUMPUR
ON 24TH OCTOBER, 1966.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address the Opening of the Special Seminar on Development this morning and to add my own words of welcome to those already so sincerely and spontaneously given by the Prime Minister¹ this morning. We, in Malaysia, are happy and proud to have so many of our friends and brothers from other Afro-Asian countries gathered here in our capital city of Kuala Lumpur. I hope and trust that they will enjoy their stay in our country and that at the completion of this Seminar they will be welcomed to stay here for as long as they like.

We in Malaysia are happy and proud that this first Seminar on Development is held in our country in Kuala Lumpur. I have long felt the need for a forum such as this at which developing nations of the world could gather together to exchange ideas and experiences frankly and honestly on problems in development, on planning and techniques of implementation. All of us, the developing countries in Africa and Asia, have focussed our attention on development in the fore-front of our national goal within our own national boundaries. However, I feel that the time has come for us to realise that our development efforts and our progress are not merely exclusive of each other but are inter-dependent. In the field of economic development, we have our common goal, but at the same time we have common problems and by exchanging ideas and views, by exchanging our experiences, we can assist each other in solving our problems and in this way all of us will be able to achieve our national aim in the field of development, at a faster and greater rate.

Most of the countries in Asia are newly emerging Nations and a greater number of them have gained political freedom in the last 10 or 20 years. All of us in this region agree and recognise that political independence is not the end of our national goal, it is only the beginning of our task of shaping the destiny of our Nation ourselves and of giving our people a better and higher standard of living, of meeting their expectations of having a rightful place among free nations of the world, with a decent standard of living compatible with a modern and civilised society. There is an urgency for all of us to develop and progress to keep pace with the passage of modern time. Therefore, there is this common characteristic of all emerging nations in Asia and Africa and I felt that this common characteristic and common ground could bind emerging nations more closely together so that they could work together and co-operate for their mutual benefit.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as far as Malaysia is concerned, this Seminar is both timely and necessary - timely because we have just completed at the end of 1965, our Second Development Plan which was really our first National Plan since we achieved independence and we have just started on our First Malaysia Plan; necessary because the techniques of development implementation which we created and adopted have been put to test during the last five years. I can say with modesty that our techniques have produced results in development achievements far beyond our own expectations. However, it is necessary for us, having gone through this process of social and economic changes, to set ourselves on the task of re-examining our machinery of development and our techniques of implementation which have been responsible for bringing about these changes to ensure that this machinery and techniques would be even more efficient and will produce even better results.

I have always stated that my basic thinking on development is that it is a mosaic, a combination of various parts. One cannot separate the various aspects of nation-building and development because each is so inter-related with the other. It is my view that you cannot separate development from politics or from day to day administration, neither can you separate development planning from implementation and neither can you separate implementation from evaluation. You all know the question often asked by children: 'Which came first', the chicken or the egg? Scientists have not been

able to answer this question. There is a similar question to be asked with regard to National Development: which comes first, political stability or economic stability? I myself would answer this question by saying that both come first and they come together. They come together because without political stability you cannot have economic development and without economic development you cannot have political stability. The two are synonymous and inseparable.

Therefore, Ladies and Gentlemen, the first basic for economic development is the type of political leadership which will not waste national emotion on non-essential rabble-rousing or continuous beating of the corpse of colonialism and imperialism, but on political leadership that can channel national emotions into action and national energies into the development results.

Ladies and Gentlemen, although we live in this modern world of automation and we read from time to time in newspapers of scientific progress that has made so many things in our daily lives automatic, there is one hard fact that we must remember, and that is, the development of any newly independent country is not automatic; neither is the implementation of a Development Plan automatic. Our last Five Year Development would not have achieved the success it did if we did not mobilise the resources of our country and the whole of our machinery of Government to development. It would not have achieved the results that it had produced if we did not instil in the minds of our officers and leaders at all levels the urgency of implementing the development projects, the desirability of working as a team, thus producing the results that the people desired. This is the mosaic of development; there must be sensible leadership, sensible planning and implementation and sound political stability. Unless we have all these, no free nation would put their trust in us, invest in our enterprise, give both technical and financial aid to our Development Programme. Conversely, sound development planning, dynamic development implementation and tangible development results on the ground with the continuous increase in the standard of living are the greatest antidotes to Communist subversion, and attempted domination by aggressors from outside. It may be said that the greatest safeguard of our country's sovereignty is not only Defence but, even more so, Development.

Ladies and Gentlemen, of the three-fold process of National

Development Planning, implementation and evaluation, I would say that implementation is perhaps the most difficult of the three and requires extremely clear definition of action if Development Plans are, in fact, to be translated from paper to projects producing tangible results, both on the ground and in raising the standard of living of our people.

The technique of National Economic Development Planning is now well advanced throughout the world and it is fairly easy for any developing nation to have a plan prepared, but the technique of implementation and putting some push and punch into the translation of that plan from paper into factual results is a technique for which there is little international knowledge available at the present time from which developing countries can learn and apply. That is why, this Seminar which we have here today is of such great importance as it provides all of us, you and us, the opportunity of discussing and considering techniques of development which we could adopt for the benefit of, our respective countries.

As there is no international knowledge available on technique, we in Malaysia evolved our own technique of development Plan implementation — a technique, which, I am pleased to say with humility, has been copied by many countries in both Asia and Africa. We will, of course, be happy to hear views and criticisms on the technique which we have evolved and also we will be happy to learn techniques which some other countries have evolved so that by this exchange of views, we could all improve on the techniques of development implementation which we can adopt for our future Development Plans.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the first consideration in evolving a technique of implementing a Five-Year Plan is the time factor. In five years there are 1,825 days, but, if you deduct all non-working days such as Sundays, half Saturdays, public and religious holidays, and all those days given up to average leave, sickness, bad weather, flooding, breakdowns, etc., then a Five-Year Plan does not give one a full five years in which to implement development, one really has only 1,000 full working days. I am reminded of the Chinese proverb which says "An inch of time cannot be bought with an inch of gold". Time is the most valuable and important commodity in the implementation of the Five-Year Plan, equally as important as

funds. If there is a short-fall in development spending in any one year of the Development Plan, funds can be revoted through Parliament the following year, but no Government in the world can revoke a shortfall of waste of time; once time is lost, it is lost for ever. It was necessary, therefore, to evolve a system of Development implementation that would make the maximum use of time and talent available.

Secondly, it is necessary for us to establish a machinery of Government that would not only make the maximum use of time and talents available, but will be free from deterrent factors which tend to delay development. Let us first go back and analyse the change which had taken place as a country moved from dependence to independent status. Any Government run under a colonial system tends to be merely custodian and carry out nothing but basic minimum administration with no sense of urgency and no dedication to development and progress for the sake of the Nation. In Malaysia, because the Civil Service after Independence was the same Civil Service which had served during the days of colonial dependence, the first thing which had to be done in evolving a technique of development implementation was to bring about a change of attitude in the hearts and minds of every Government employee; to instil a sense of urgency, a sense of dedication to development, a spirit of initiative and feeling of belonging not to an impersonal, bloodless, lifeless administrative Government machine, but rather a feeling of belonging to a vital, lively and loyal group of human beings, dedicated not merely to their monthly pay packets, but rather to the Development and service of their country.

The first necessary step, therefore, to implement development was to bring about a change of attitude throughout the whole of Government service and, I am glad to say that in Malaysia in the course of the last five years a new spirit and a new life has permeated throughout the entire Government structure, and the last vestiges of our colonial heritage are fast disappearing. Of course, the process of changes continues and there is still room for further improvement.

The other main deterrent factors which tend to delay development are what I call the "Deadly Sins of Bureaucracy", such as inter-departmental jealousy in the execution of Government functions;

conflicting departmental policies; lack of co-ordination between departments in carrying our National policies; lack of day-to-day cooperation between Government officers on the ground mainly due to lack of understanding of each other's task and responsibilities. Many a time each department thinks¹ that his own function is the most important without appreciating the importance of others. Lack of appropriate planning and lack of a Master Plan at all levels for the purpose of achieving maximum result. And lastly, lack of sufficient directive control at the top to ensure Government at all levels functions as an efficient machine manned by a purposeful, single-minded team and driven towardsd one goal, i.e. of National Development.

These factors or "Deadly Sins" tended in the past to decrease the efficiency of Government and hampered development. Therefore in carrying out our National Development, the first essential is to set up a machinery of Government which will eradicate such defects.

As I said earlier, the preparation of a Master Plan in the form of a Five-Year Development Plan is a fairly straightforward task, particularly when it is made by such distinguished Economists, and its preparation further backstopped with the help and advice of the World Bank. At this point I would like to say publicly how much we in Malaysia appreciate the help and assistance which this International Organisation gives us from time to time, the tremendous interest which the World Bank has taken in Malaysian Development.

I have heard it said that we should not use the Bank and some people have the wrong impression that we make use of its technical and professional skills, because we have not sufficient Economists of our own to carry out our economic planning and that we are completely dependent on the World Bank for technical and economic skill. This is not true! We have a first-class Economic Planning Unit of our own which recently prepared the First Malaysian Development Plan and we work closely in conjunction with the World Bank because the World Bank is, in fact, an Association of Nations. It is, so to speak, an Economic Club of which Malaysia is an equal member and pays its yearly subscription, and I am sure you will agree with me that when one joins any kind of Club, and pays one's subscription, it is only correct that one makes use of whatever facilities the Club offers. I pay tribute to the World Bank, which

I reckon to be probably the best Club to belong to in the world, and am grateful for the help it has given, and continues to give us.

However, having got our Plan, the next stage was to develop a technique for implementation and a system which will help to eradicate the deadly sins of bureaucracy which I mentioned earlier, a system by which to obtain the maximum cooperation and coordination, not only between the Departments concerned with development, but also between State Governments in their relationship to the Central Government and vice versa. I, therefore, set up Development Planning Teams at the three main levels of Federal, State and District and I continue from time to time to give directives to these Teams as to how to set about their business of Development Plan implementation.

The directive I give to Government officers concerned with development, is that our people - the public - look upon Government as one comprehensive whole. They are not concerned with which Government Department does what; neither are they concerned as to whether the Development Projects are State or Federal Government responsibility; all that the public want are results, and quick results.

I am glad to say that over the last five years there has been a tremendous improvement in inter-departmental and inter-Governmental cooperation and coordination in development. My favourite dictum to these Development Teams is "It does not matter who you are; it does not matter what you are; it does not matter where you are; it does not matter how senior or junior you are; it is the progress on development Projects that matters and that all of you must sacrifice both your personal and departmental pride to cooperate and coordinate to get quick results on the ground!"

Each of these Development Teams, throughout the country, is backstopped by a Development Operations Room of which we have now no less than 114; and in which projects at District, State and Federal level are charted, located on maps, and progress on the implementation of each project is reported each month.

There is one thing I would like to say about these Operations Room. Many visitors on first impression get the idea that they are

information show rooms. Although they have a lot of information on development in the form of maps and charts, they could more suitably be described as a "development surgery" and, as I told one visitor the other day, the object of these Development Operations Rooms is for me, as Minister of National and Rural Development, to be able to keep my finger on the pulse of Development progress, not so much where the pulse is beating but to find out where the development pulse has stopped beating!

I have directed that apart from the regular routine form of meetings, which Development Teams attend, they must also, at least once a week, have what I call "Morning Prayers" where all departmental officers get together and instead of writing tedious minutes on files to each other, they settle their departmental differences together, in a coordinated way, in front of the maps in their Operations Rooms.

With regard to actual briefings on Development progress, which are given to me regularly by Heads of Departments at both States and Federal level, they have a treble advantage. Firstly, it allows myself and my Cabinet colleagues to be kept fully informed of progress and be in a position to pinpoint and eradicate delays in projects. Secondly, at the same time these "briefings" help continually to ensure that Heads of Departments are on top of their job and because they never know what questions they will be asked during the briefing, they have to get down to some "pre-briefing" hard work in order to fully acquaint themselves with an up-to-date knowledge of the progress of their Development Projects. Thirdly, these briefings help towards a higher standard of coordination because each Head of Department has to listen to the briefing given by his colleague from another Department and, therefore, they all learn about each other's work and can see clearly whether their tasks fit into the 'mosaic' of development implementation.

I could talk for many hours on my favourite subject of Development Implementation, but I hope I have said enough on the subject to give you an idea of the technique which we have adopted in the implementation of our Development Programmes.

I should like now to turn to actual development. Since Malaya achieved Independence in 1957, considerable progress has been made.

in the economic and social field. In less than a decade and with the active public support and cooperation, we have developed and changed the face of the country both in the rural and urban areas. The momentum of development generated by our last Five Year Development Plan has given further impetus for promoting economic growth in the country under the First Malaysia Plan which we have just launched at the beginning of this year. Seen as a whole, our economy, in its performance over the last few years, has proved to be remarkably vigorous and stable. Opportunities are being opened up not only in the mainland of Malaysia but also in Eastern Malaysia in the States of Sabah and Sarawak for better and higher education and employment; lands are being cleared for settlement, agriculture and industrial production have increased; roads, water supplies, power, low-cost houses and other facilities have been constructed on an increasing scale.

Although the prospects for our economic progress appear to be bright, I hasten to add that the path of development is by no means easy. There are many problems ahead - problems which are very complex and difficult and may even prove to be crucial to the success of nation-building. We cannot therefore be complacent over what we have achieved but should strive harder so that our goals for a higher standard of living and a better society for all our people may be attained.

It would be comforting to think that the progress achieved in the field of national economic development in their country would ensure us an automatic steady expansion. Unfortunately this conclusion cannot be drawn nor should the achievement be taken for granted. Our economic base is still very narrowly dependent on a few export commodities which remain extremely vulnerable to price and fluctuation in international markets. The rapid growth of population implies that there are many more new mouths to feed, people to clothe and houses and new job opportunities have to be created for their employment. On the top of these, although confrontation by our neighbour has ended and peace has returned to our shores, our expenditure on Defence and security continues to rise because of the threat to the security of our country by means of internal subversion. Therefore, our internal and external financial position will be subject to strain in the next few years because of the continuing increase of expenditure while revenue is lagging behind.

In the light of these considerations, we have carefully prepared our Development Programmes from both the top and below in a manner giving concrete expression and due account to the wishes and aspirations of the people through a process of consultations at various levels. We have to ensure that there is full participation by the people themselves not only in the planning, but also in the process of implementation. The broad objectives of our Development Programme are not merely to generate economic growth but also to ensure that everyone of our citizens, of whatever racial origin, will have a proper place in our country and have a standard of living compatible with a modern society.

Because of the composition of our population, we have the most difficult problems in our national development, and that is, how to bring together peoples of various races, customs and religious faiths so that they may share common development objectives. However, we are fully convinced that with a political leadership which is fair to all and with understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and cooperation, we can succeed and succeed we must as a nation.

Our goals are to provide enlarged and equal opportunities for all. Our framework is democratic action with the Government giving the lead and a helping hand in the process of modernisation. What kind of transformation do we want to see in the lives of our people? We want them and their sons to have lively, inquiring, individual minds, each man using his own intelligence and energies to improve his lot. We don't want to place them into a rigid mould of centrally planned economic development. We want them to live their own individual lives as part of the process of betterment with human dignity and free from the state of regimentation, fear and suspicion.

In order to achieve these goals, our National Development Programme has been implemented by phases. In the first phase, the Government shouldered responsibilities such as road-building, the provision of schools, health centres and water supplies, electricity and rural credit and material subsidies. By thus giving the people visible evidence that we are earnestly working to improve their standard of living, to provide them with the amenities of life, we create confidence and enlist the support of the farmers and rural dwellers. Our second phase is to encourage the people to carry out their own responsibilities in improving their standard of living. The

main object at this stage of "Operation Progress" is to make the people self-reliant, to promote initiative and enterprise so that they can exert their own efforts in improving their well-being. We must realise, as perhaps you all do, that a country cannot remain strong and prosperous without hard-work, sweat and some sacrifice.

We are determined to translate our national objectives and people's aspirations into realities. We are determined to make our Plan succeed in achieving results and for this reason our Development Programmes must be implemented with public support at the national levels as well as in every town, village and kampong. There is no magic short-cut to success in our National Development but I am confident that with mutual trust and cooperation, goodwill and hard work and determination on the part of all of us, both Government and the people, Malaysia will develop from strength to strength in order to ensure our people a proper and rightful place in our country.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have spoken at length on the techniques of development implementation that we have adopted and have endeavoured to explain to you the difficulties that we faced in carrying out our development work in this country and how we attempted to overcome these difficulties and problems. I have also indicated to you the progress we have achieved in the field of development since we launched our National Development Plan. I hope and trust this discourse will give you a general background to our Development Planning and implementation to enable you to give your assessment as to whether these techniques we have adopted in the light of the circumstances in our country are correct and adequate and will, I hope, enable you to commence discussions and exchanges of views on this important matter of National Development which, as I said, is the main task that faces all of us, the newly emerging Nations of Asia and Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen, once again, I wish your deliberations all the success and wish you all a pleasant and enjoyable stay in our country.

'Y. T. M. Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj.



Timbalan Perdana Menteri Tun Abdul Razak sedang menyambut ketibaan Tuan Aberra Maltat dari Ethiopia ke majlis jamuan makan malam bagimeraikan wakil-wakil Afro-Asiayangmenghadiri seminar Pembangunan Yang Pertama, di Seri Taman, Kuala Lumpur pada 24 Oktober 1966.