

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AT THE
STATE DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS CONFERENCE ON
13TH DECEMBER, 1965

Firstly, let me congratulate you as State Development Officers for the hard work, energy and enthusiasm which all of you have given in making our last Five Year Plan a success.

I would like to thank you all for your contribution to the progress and prosperity of our country.

I know that the chairs of this Development Operations Room are comfortable, but it does not mean to say, that I, having praised and congratulated you that you can sit back complacent and comfortable in these chairs.

I do not know how many of you understand how an internal combustion engine works but I am sure all of you know that the sparking plugs in a motor-car have go a "gap" across which the electric spark must cross in order to ignite the petrol to make the car go.

If that gap is too wide, the electric spark cannot cross it and, as a result, you get no combustion in the car and therefore you get no speed and no motion!

In order to implement our First Malaysia Plan, we need both motion and speed, in the next five years, to make the development of Malaysia as successful as it has been in the past five years, and one of the first essentials is to close, as with a sparking plug, the gap between State and Federal government in our concerted action on development.

The main object of this Conference of State Development Officers is to recharge your development batteries, to brace you ready for the New Year, when we start action in implementing our new Plan and to obtain these vital sparks necessary to ignite our Plan and to produce that combustion essential to motivate motion towards further Malaysian development.

I want this Conference to be a regular monthly meeting, so that all State Development Officers, including Sabah and Sarawak, can come to Kuala Lumpur with their problems and have them solved, and, at the same time, to be briefed on Federal development policy so that all of you are completely in touch with the intention and aims of the

Federal Government, and thus be in a better position to work in your State to close any gaps to the point at which that spark jumps freely and gives the kick to the two administrative arms essential to the acceleration of development in our nation.

We in Malaysia have acquired the art and technique of translating a Plan from paper into action resulting in dynamic development; and our new Plan, not only calls for an investment of funds but, even more important, calls for an investment of human effort.

You as State Development Officers, are in fact the spearhead of this effort in so far as positive action on the part of Government is concerned in producing tangible results on the ground in the public sector of our Plan.

Leadership is not the monopoly of Ministers and if our new Plan is to succeed on the keynote of productivity then there must be more leadership right down the line throughout our land at all levels. Leadership from our legislators, the Members of Parliament, leadership from all Government Officers and leadership on the land at kampung and village level.

Governments can make laws but the one law which will make Malaysia prosperous and great — the one law which will make our Plan a success, is a law which no Parliament can pass on paper — it is the Universal Law of Cause and Effect.

Applying the Law of Cause and Effect to our new Plan means that we will only get out of the Plan progress and prosperity in the same measure and in direct ratio to the amount of human effort we expend to execute our Plan.

In this modern day and age of automation, automatic telephones and many other automatic machines, there is still one thing in the world which is not automatic and that is National Development.

We cannot expect Malaysia to develop further by merely sitting back hoping and wishing for a better way of life, a higher standard of living and greater prosperity.

No. All of us, all people in Malaysia, must be persistent in the pursuit of prosperity. And there is only one prescription which will make our Plan work and that is more and more hard work towards greater productivity.

It is your job as State Development Officer, a job in which you are both expected to be loyal to the State and loyal to the Federal Government, to ensure that there is the closest coordination on development matters not only between State and Federal but also between each and every Government Department in the State whether it be a Federal Department or a State Department, because without a high standard of cooperation and coordination in all aspects of the Government machine we cannot hope for complete success in our development Plan.

But, on the other hand, as we have proved in the last five years, with cooperation, coordination and dedicated effort, we in Malaysia are capable of pushing our country forward towards further development progress, we are capable of implementing a Plan even beyond the expectations which we have at the planning stage.

The first essential for coordination is for everyone, at all levels throughout the machinery of Government, to clearly understand the clear-cut aims of our National Development and the policy behind each aspect of Government so that they can understand where they and their work fit into the overall whole.

It is my intention next year to send out, from time to time, to the States, Federal Heads of Departments such as Health, Education, Agriculture, and others to talk to a gathering of all Officers in the State concerned with development, clearly defining the workings and policy of his Department, to ensure that right down the line of the Government machine, each and every Officer fully understands, not only his own task in relationship to the complex structure of a modern Government in a modern country such as Malaysia.

I have often said before, that half the frustrations of Government servants and half the inefficiency of the administration of any Government, lies in the fact that many Government officers themselves do not know how Government works. Their knowledge is sometimes limited to the narrow confines of their own jobs.

If a Government officer himself does not know how Government works how then can we expect the public to know, and yet Government officers are paid to serve the public and it is therefore essential that we take more intensified steps to ensure that all our officers know the complete workings of Government, so that they will be in a position to put life into the implementation of our Development Plan and at the same time help the public and prevent frustration, and stop what I call "bureaucratic ping-pong" where a member of the public

seeking something goes to one office, then told it is the wrong office, then to another office and so on!

The Development of any country is not merely the development of the public sector and what Government does in the form of building schools, roads, hospitals and other things.

Development, in this modern world, also includes the private sector.

Private sector development means investment on the part of Malaysians and investment on the part of external investors who have faith in our country, and are prepared to bring in funds to set up factories and industries; because, we are living in a world international market and the policy of my Government is not to isolate Malaysia from this world of free trade and free enterprise.

Therefore it is important that every effort be given to put both the public and private sector of development in correct perspective.

If someone wants to invest many millions of dollars in our country, by allowing this investment we are not giving up one inch of our independence but we are contributing towards the development, diversification and industrialisation of our country.

If we increase our trade with the outside world, increase our exports, increase our foreign exchange, and our export trade output, we are helping, at the same time, to increase the standard of living of our people.

Therefore it is important that the Government's image, both towards our own Malaysian public and to the public from overseas, is an image worthwhile, and that image, our national identity, may start, in the case of overseas investors, at the Airport.

The way they are treated by immigration and customs, the way they are treated by the civil servant in each and every government office they go to.

Conversely, in the rural and urban areas our own fellow Malaysians who may wish to set up their own businesses or open up their own land have, in the first instance, to overcome the first stumbling block in their applications, their contact, with the Government officer doing a routine job, he can be helpful, he can be cooperative but in some cases he may be obstructive because he does not see the whole picture of development and may not try to help those participants in the pri-

vate sector who wish to contribute in money and energy towards the future development of our country.

Out-dated bureaucratic obstruction is a relic of Colonialism. We are no more colonial.

We are an independent sovereign nation and yet sometimes, lurking in the attitudes of the Government Service throughout the country there are still traces of colonial bureaucracy and colonial attitudes.

Let us shed these attitudes with the birth of our new Plan, and it is your job, each one of you as State Development Officers, to help change the attitude of District Officers, of Settlement Officers, of all other officers right down the line of our administrative machinery, to put life, energy, enthusiasm, and dedication into their nation and approach for the development of Malaysia.

In the next few years, I, as Minister of Development, will spend as much time as I can to go around the country to ensure that our Development Plan is being properly implemented.

But it is my aim to maintain and sustain a system of development implementation that will run automatically by itself whether or not I have time to travel myself.

We have moved a long way towards achieving this aim in the present system and machinery of development implementation, of Development Committees at National, State and District level with each Committee supported by an Operations Room, of which we have no less than 114 at present in the country.

I am determined that in the implementation of our new Plan to make these Operations Rooms continue to work efficiently and to ensure that the Members of these Development Committees continue to cooperate and coordinate in overcoming difficulties and delays in development.

A great help towards the achievement of this is the correct attitude, understanding and ability on your part as State Development Officers to understand your real function.

Your function, first and foremost, is a function of a "breaker of bottlenecks".

You must get out and around to every district looking for frustrations, looking for departmental disagreements, looking for delays,

and when you have found them, you must diagnose them and then:

- (a) try on your own behalf to solve them;
- (b) if you cannot solve them yourself then report to the officers of my Ministry and ask them to solve them; and
- (c) when all else has failed then they will be brought to me and I will try and solve them.

So often, over the last five years in travelling around the country on development, I have found that there have been delays, there have been disagreements between Departments, and there has been a tendency to sit waiting for me to arrive to sort them out in briefings at State and District level.

What I want to see in the next few years is even a closer coordination between Departments, a closer coordination between State and Federal Governments, a closer relationship between all officers concerned with development and an even higher standard of dedication to development on the part of every single officer who is paid from public funds.

I am aiming at a completely self-propelled system of development administration.

Our Plan for the development of our people, patiently prepared, meticulously made, is based upon the wishes and aspirations of the various races which comprise Malaysia; the Plan can, and will, succeed!

To succeed, it must depend on the undivided efforts of our people, diverse in origin but united in intention, guided by you, and all other Government servants, with no thought of personal gain, no thought of personal advancement or personal advantage, but with one dominating thought — the development of our country towards a more progressive, productive and prosperous nation - Malaysia!