

**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE
OPENING CEREMONY OF THE SECOND CON-
FERENCE OF THE ASEAN CHAMBERS OF
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY AT DEWAN
TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN, JALAN AMPANG,
KUALA LUMPUR ON 19TH JULY, 1975**

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is indeed a privilege for me once again to join a gathering of representatives from the ASEAN Nations as it was only two months ago that I had the honour to address the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Malaysia, I would similarly like to extend a warm welcome to all of you, delegates and observers, to this Second Conference of ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry and hope you will have a pleasant stay in Kuala Lumpur.

At the recent Ministerial Meeting, I mentioned the importance of consultation and co-operation among ASEAN Member States as a source of strength to us all in the face of difficult times ahead. I am glad to note this growing habit of consultation and co-operation amongst the private sectors of ASEAN countries, particularly in the light of common problems which we face and our common goal towards the realisation of regional economic co-operation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The establishment of the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry three years ago was indeed timely and it was certainly a step in the right direction. This organisation which brings together the various Chambers of Commerce in the ASEAN region can play an important role as a channel through which the views of the private sector can be conveyed effectively to the respective Governments.

Whilst the various ASEAN Governmental Committees are given the task to draw broad policies and create the necessary conditions within the framework of economic co-operation, greater efforts must necessarily come from the private sector through the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Any move to promote regional economic co-operation may not be fruitful without the co-operation as this would also benefit them in one way or another.

I have no doubt that the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry could make positive and meaningful contribution towards ASEAN economic co-operation. The recent Meeting of ASEAN Ministers had adopted the guidelines for the implementation of the Industrial Complementation Scheme which is a significant milestone in ASEAN's progress.

The principle behind this Scheme is to take advantage of the larger combined markets of ASEAN for components and products, so that industries which cannot be viable set up in any one ASEAN country can be viable and efficient if established on a regional basis. I understand that some of you are involved in the discussions on the possible industries for this Scheme and I hope that with the adoption of the ASEAN guidelines you will be considering the implementation of projects within this Scheme.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Even today trade amongst ASEAN member countries is regrettably low, amounting to less than 20% of ASEAN world trade. This situation certainly needs to be corrected if we desire to be less dependent on the outside world and if we wish to build a strong and prosperous ASEAN community.

I am gratified to note that steps have been taken by ASEAN member countries towards the establishment of a preferential trade arrangement on selected products. With the liberalization of trade amongst ASEAN countries, I hope the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry would guide its members to take full advantage of the opportunities available in the ASEAN markets. Besides that, the Conference should look into the problem of

increasing intra-regional trade so as to attain ASEAN objectives of accelerating economic growth as set out in the Bangkok Declaration of 1967.

At the same time, much efforts have been undertaken by the ASEAN Governments towards obtaining easy access and better terms of entry into the markets of the developed countries. In this connection, I would like to mention the joint ASEAN approaches towards the EEC, Japan and the Multi-lateral Trade Negotiations (MTN) in Geneva. Improvements have been made by the EEC in her Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) to accord preferential treatment to major products which are of export interest to ASEAN. It is imperative that ASEAN exporters fully understand the complexities of all these scheme so as to enable us to benefit fully from our external trade.

In this respect, the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry has a very important role to play, especially in disseminating necessary information on current development in the EEC and elsewhere and exhort exporters to adopt an aggressive approach in their export drive towards these developed markets.

In this connection, you might be aware that the EEC Commission will be conducting a seminar on the EEC Generalised System of Preferences on September 5th-6th 1975, in accordance with its policy of encouraging preference-receiving countries to make more effective use of the EEC Generalised System of Preferences. This Seminar will be open to officials from the public and private sectors of ASEAN countries and I look forward to effective participation from the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is clear that the successful implementation of ASEAN economic projects depends, to a large extent, on effective participation by the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the private sector. Along with the ASEAN Governments' initiated projects, the Chamber should also draw out and implement their own projects, thus supplementing the efforts of the Governments in accelerating economic growth.

In the wake of the various number of ASEAN initiated activities, it is important that there should be a feedback from the private sector to the respective Governments. The ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry could, therefore, act as a body where such views, thinking and responses can be directed back to ASEAN Governments for appropriate action.

I would like to reiterate that, as far as possible, we as a Government can provide conducive conditions for your participation but the success of ASEAN endeavours remains largely in your hands. The coming years are full of opportunities and challenges and I am sure the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry will match the challenges.

On this note, it gives me great pleasure to declare the Second Conference of the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry open.



Y.A.B. Tun Haji Abdul Razak bin Hussein sedang berucap di Pembukaan 'Persidangan Kedua Dewan Perniagaan dan Perindustrian ASEAN di Dewan Tunku Abdul Rahman, Kuala Lumpur pada 19hb Julai, 1975