

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, IN
DECLARING OPEN THE NEW HEADQUARTERS OF
THE TECHNICAL ASSOCIATION OF MALAYA,
PETALING JAYA, ON 28TH AUGUST, 1965

Mr. President, and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be here with you this morning. Oddly enough, the last thing I did in my office before I gave thought to the few words I am to say to you was in fact to read some parts of the draft of our First Malaysia Five Year Development Plan, which will be launched next year.

It may be a coincidence that in the sequence of work at my office desk, these two subjects, your Technical Association, and the draft National Development Plan, actually met, both on my table and in my mind at the same time.

This lucky coincidence may also be a token of good luck, a sign of future prosperity for the future, because there is no doubt that there is a very close relationship between your Association and the future development of our country.

I remember, way back in 1960, when we launched the present Five Year Plan, the doubts that existed in many minds that we could not possibly hope to achieve such an ambitious development programme, because, said the doubters, our new Nation did not have, although we had the funds for development, sufficient technical capacity to implement the many thousands of projects which were envisaged in the Plan.

The Plan, they said, was certain to fail. Time and results have proved that those who doubted us were wrong, and Ladies and Gentlemen, I am glad, and proud, to say that throughout the length and breadth of our country, wherever you go, you will see, mile after mile as you travel, new schools, new water-works, new road-works, new electricity supplies, new buildings of all sizes, shapes and uses and many hundreds of other projects completed by the technical and professional skill of many Malaysians.

All these projects, planned and designed for the benefit of our people, are in fact a tribute, a tremendous tribute to the technical capacity of our country, a capacity which has been growing from strength since we gained Independence in 1957.

And I should like to take this opportunity this morning of thanking all of you here, both Members of Technical Association and also all the other Engineers, Architects, Town Planners, Surveyors, and the many other professionally and technically trained Malaysians to whom, because of their skill, hard work and dedication, our country owes a debt of gratitude because, without them development in this country would be dead.

But, Ladies and Gentlemen, development in this country is very much alive. It is a throbbing thriving aspect in the progress of our new Nation.

Thousands of people from many countries throughout the World have visited our shores, in the last few years, to see for themselves the amazing progress we have made in the field of development since Independence.

And I say with modesty that our fame as a Nation of developers has spread throughout the Free World and, if "Imitation is the highest form of flattery", then we have been flattered because many other developing countries had sent teams to Kuala Lumpur to imitate, learn, and copy our methods of development.

In fact I will be prepared to lay a bet with you that if, in addition to having beauty competitions, such as Miss Universe and Miss World, there was a "Miss Development" competition, and by that I do not mean a competition of "busts and breasts"; I mean a competition in which all developing countries in the World are judged as to which had made the greatest progress in the last few years in the field of development, I am sure that our country would return from it with a crown of glory and by rights that glory should be shared equally by all the hardworking technical and professional officers who have served our country so well.

Now, you technical men, before you sit back on your laurels, after the praise I have given you, think for a moment the reason that I am praising you. I praise you not to boost up your pride; I praise you in order to prepare you for the future;

In 1966, we will launch the First Malaysian Development Plan. This is an ambitious Plan designed to fulfil the further needs necessary for the greater progress of our country.

If it is to succeed, if our hopes are to be fulfilled, then the burden of this fulfilment will lie fairly and squarely on the shoulders of our

technical services, both in the public and private sector, on your shoulders;

Therefore I say, "lie not back on you laurels" ponder not on the praise I have given you, but determine today, that during the next five years to come, you will redouble your efforts and put up an even better show than you did over the last five years.

As you know our country is facing external aggression from without, combined with the threat of internal subversion from within.

Therefore in order to defend our sovereignty, in order to guarantee our Independence, much more money than before has now got to be diverted towards the maintenance of our Armed Forces and our Police Forces, and yet, and in spite of this threat, the Alliance Government are determined that the pace of development of our Nation will not slacken.

That, briefly, is the position in words but what is the position in action; what is the action required to fulfil this double aim of Defence and Development.

This means that in order to keep up the tempo of development we have got to get maximum value out of every single dollar and every single cent that is allocated for our development programme.

This means that we need the "highest standard of sincere cooperation from every single Engineer, Architect, Surveyor and other professional men to ensure that there is not one drop of financial wastage in any single project.

This may also mean, professionally to some of you, that in dedication to our National aims you have got to sink a little bit of your professional pride.

If we build hundreds of schools, clinics and other buildings they must be constructed sufficiently well to be functional but they must not be designed and build so lavishly that valuable money is wasted on fancy designs and unnecessary extras.

It also means that there must be the closest supervision of construction on the spot to ensure that government funds, the taxpayers' money, goes into the bricks and mortar, the walls and buildings.

I am not suggesting that over the last Five Year Plan there has been excessive, lavish designing or excessive wastage of funds but I

do think there is a tendency to try to imitate the designs and construction carried out in Western countries, where conditions are different from that in Malaysia.

I do not want to step on the toes of Architects or other professional men but, take for example, if a house is built in Switzerland, the walls and roofs have got to be strong enough to withstand 6 to 8 feet of snow and survive the storms of many winters.

We here in Malaysia have therefore, without lowering our standards, have got to adjust them in keeping with our needs because, as I see it, we have got to do some re-thinking on the implementation of our First Malaysia Development Plan and see if we cannot build the majority of our development buildings out of local products, out of local timber, so that from the same amount of money we can get perhaps double the quantity; admittedly these structures will not be as pleasing to the eye as brick and concrete buildings but, in this phase of our development, we do not want beauty so much as utility; we do not want luxury; what we need is to fulfil our necessities.

A great task lies ahead of us and from day to day as we develop we need more and more technically and professionally trained Malaysians.

And I am glad to see that in your plans for the future is a Secretariat and a publication of a booklet on "Careers of Technical Employment".

I congratulate you on this excellent idea. I think you could go further than this by your Association, working closely in hand with the Ministry of Education and arranging lectures and exhibitions to students in our secondary schools to sow the seeds of ambition on the hearts of our youths so that they may be motivated and inspired to take up a technical career and thus fill the ranks of the main stay of a mature Malaysia — more and more Malaysian trained in modern technical professional skills!

Considering the great number of secondary school students who live in Petaling Jaya it might be a good idea to use this fine new building on occasions to have an "open technical evening" so that students who wish to enquire about taking up a professional technical career could come here and consult and seek advice from Members of your Association who belong to these various professions.

Lastly, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to praise the President,

and your Association, on the fine idea of planning for the future of establishing a "Central Research Library of Technical Literature".

Normally when I praise anything like this; within two or three days I get a letter with my own words thrown back at me, saying that because I have sponsored it, I should therefore also sponsor the allocation of Government funds!

I think in this case many of the international educational foundations, and many of our friendly Members of the Commonwealth and other, who give us technical aid under the Colombo Plan, will probably consider very favourably a request for assistance to equip this library, which has a vital part to play in the future of technical advancement in our country.

And now it is time for me to do what I really came today to do and that is to declare open this fine new building! I do so now with pleasure.



Tun Abdul Razak bin Hussein ketika merasmikan ibu pejabat baru Persatuan Teknik Malaya di Petaling Jaya pada 28 Ogos, 1965.