

**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE
OPENING OF THE SECOND ASEAN INTER-
PARLIAMENTARY MEETING AT PARLIAMENT
HOUSE, KUALA LUMPUR ON 21ST AUGUST,
1975**

Tan Sri Nik Ahmad Kamil, Speaker Dewan Rakyat Malaysia,
Distinguished Delegates, Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentle-
men.

First of all, let me say how happy and proud we in Malaysia feel to have the privilege of hosting this important and historic meeting of ASEAN Parliamentarians.

On behalf of the Government and people of Malaysia, it gives me pleasure to extend our warm and cordial welcome to all delegates and their ladies. I would like to assure our guests that our services and facilities are at your disposal and we will do what we can to make your stay in Kuala Lumpur both pleasant and interesting.

I am told that the preliminary meetings held in Jakarta and in Tugu earlier this year have resolved most of the problems relating to the formation of this new ASEAN organisation and we can therefore confidently look forward to the launching of the ASEAN Parliamentary Organisation here in Kuala Lumpur. It is therefore both an honour and a privilege for me to be here with you all on this memorable occasion and to declare open your conference.

Distinguished Delegates,

Having been involved so intimately with all aspects of ASEAN activities ever since its formation in 1967, I personally feel extremely happy that ASEAN Parliamentarians have succeeded in getting together to form this ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation. As members of your respective Parliaments, you represent collectively the voice of the ASEAN nations.

This is already ASEAN's eight year. In order truly to fulfil its historic tasks and responsibilities, ASEAN must inspire the vision of its peoples. It must permeate the fabric of their lives and enable them to see their shared destiny ahead in the broad perspective of the history of Southeast Asia.

When opening the recent ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Kuala Lumpur, I stated that the popular non-governmental response to the ASEAN concept of regional co-operation deserves our encouragement and our support because it forms part of the fabric of ASEAN co-operation in the economic, social and cultural fields as this would enhance and enforce Governmental activities of ASEAN.

I wish once again to reiterate here that Malaysia strongly supports the notion of the involvement of non-governmental organisations in forging ever growing links of understanding and co-operation in Southeast Asia. More people-to-people contact should be encouraged. The impulse of their ideas and their aspirations will stimulate the growth of ASEAN. In this way also, we will be able to forge a greater sense of friendship and solidarity among our peoples which is ultimately the only sure and secure foundation for the growth and success of ASEAN.

Up to now, a number of non-governmental ASEAN organisations have been formed, such as the ASEAN Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the ASEAN Confederation of Journalists and the Federation of ASEAN Shippers' Councils. The formation of this organisation, the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation, is indeed very timely and welcome. It gives a new dimension to the notion of non-governmental organisations in the ASEAN family and will, I hope, set the tone and the pace for the formation of others in appropriate fields.

The formation of such organisations cannot, of course, be forced. It must represent a spontaneous response to a felt need and a felt consensus, as so eloquently testified by the very formation of this ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation. To do otherwise would be to create artificial entities, which, in the very nature of things, cannot survive.

That is why I particularly welcome the formation of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation which can stimulate greater public awareness and interest in ASEAN, what it stands for, what it has achieved and what it seeks to achieve. Your organisation will accelerate further the people-to-people contact which I mentioned just now. It will serve as a link between the people on one hand, and the Government, on the other; which is important in consolidating ASEAN goals and objectives.

Distinguished Delegates,

The formation of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation also marks a new era of co-operation among the legislators and representatives of the people of our region. It will give them a greater awareness of the common problems affecting the peace, prosperity and well-being of the peoples of the region. It will also enable them to be more conscious of other problems faced by each of the ASEAN countries, which may differ from country to country, and therefore to be more sympathetic to these differing needs and difficulties.

Through the forum of the Inter-Parliamentary Organisation, there would be an exchange of ideas not only on how we could best solve our common problems more effectively but also on how we may help each other to overcome the problems that we may face separately.

The Organisation could therefore become a consultative and advisory body, to serve both the people and the Government. I have no doubt that our Organisation would be an important forum which would study and discuss the problems I have referred to and which would make important recommendations to the governments concerned so that appropriate and concerted action can be taken in the framework and spirit of ASEAN regional co-operation.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since its inception in 1967, ASEAN has gathered momentum and has made steady progress. Having overcome various initial difficulties, we are moving forward—a little slowly perhaps, but

also surely and definitely—towards the objective which we have set out ourselves to achieve. However, much remains to be done in order to fulfil the hopes and expectations of our peoples. This is where your Inter-Parliamentary Organisation can play an invaluable role in providing the reservoir of support and understanding as well as the stimulus of fresh ideas and insight which can propel ASEAN with greater speed and greater dynamism in the direction we all desire.

In the framework of regional co-operation, I wish to mention here that ASEAN's deliberations on international issues, in particular those affecting the region, have shown that there exists much in common in the thinking among ASEAN leaders. Particularly in our response to various problems, it is gratifying to note that the spirit of consensus or "musyawarah" has always been the guiding principle in all our Meetings and deliberations.

Over and over again, not only in our deliberations among ourselves but also in the positions we have adopted at international forum, we have shown that there is much we hold together in common and, where some differences exists, that we are able by our spirit of compromise and understanding to compose and reconcile our differences, in the larger interests of ASEAN and the region.

The forum of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation which you are now establishing will enhance the development of common positions and attitudes as well as facilitate the reconciliation of such differences as may exist. Through your forum too, the people of the ASEAN countries will feel the satisfaction that they are participating positively in the activities of ASEAN.

The Parliament of a nation symbolises the hopes and aspirations of the people, which it is the duty of legislators to fulfil. In the same way, I look forward to the day when the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation would be looked upon as the guardian of the hopes and aspirations of the peoples of ASEAN.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

There can be no doubt that we in South East Asia are entering a new era, fraught with new and unprecedented perils as well as fresh with exciting opportunities. On our unity and on our solidarity lies our hopes for the future. Our objectives is to establish

a peaceful, cohesive, prosperous and progressive Southeast Asia. This is our aim and this is a cause on which we must all be fully conscious of our collective responsibility to serve.

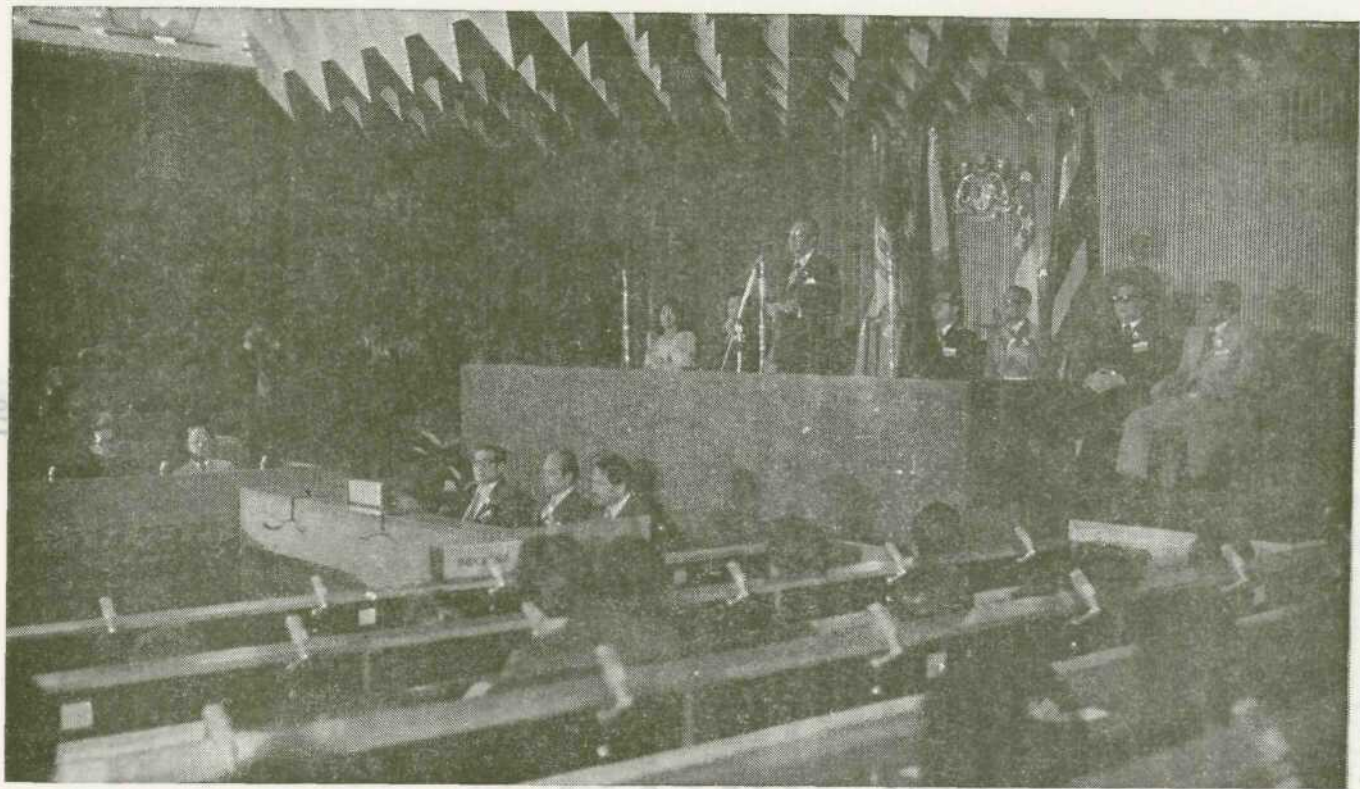
Ladies and Gentlemen,

When we are serving a cause so noble and so much bigger than ourselves, we cannot expect immediate success. However, if success comes our way, we shall be happy. But if our efforts are occasionally frustrated by difficulties and inertia, we must be content with the knowledge that we are serving the interests of future generations. Nor are our aims limited by the span of a lifetime. When the success of our efforts will be judged by happier future generations and the righteousness of our cause will be proclaimed by the march of history, surely we can take comfort of the fact that we shall have done our duty—we shall have done our best.

The establishment of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation will surely pass into history as an important and significant event in our march forward towards the achievement of ASEAN goals of a united, peaceful and happy Southeast Asia.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It now gives me great pleasure to declare this Meeting open and to wish you every success in your deliberations.



Y.A.B. Tun Abdul Razak bin Hussein sedang berucap merasmikan Pembukaan Persidangan Kedua Parlimen ASEAN di Bangunan Parlimen Kuala Lumpur pada 21hb Ogos, 1975