

THE 12TH MEETING OF THE COMMONWEALTH SCIENCE COUNCIL (CSC)  
THE FEDERAL HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR

24 AUGUST 1982

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to Malaysia in conjunction with the 12th Biennial Meeting of the Commonwealth Science Council. Malaysia feels honoured to host this meeting in the firm belief that the advancement of science and technology is a sine qua non for further progress of the less-developed countries (LDCs) as much as it is for the advanced countries.

2. Malaysia fully appreciates the role of science and technology in development. We believe that modern science and technology is not only necessary for the modernisation of our industrial sector, but also of our agricultural sector. Further, we believe that science and technology should be used not merely for the material development of our nation, but also for the enhancement of the quality of life, and the achievement of peace and harmony both within the country and also in the relation between nations.

3. Malaysia is undergoing a fairly rapid rate of development and modernisation. While we need the cooperation of the advanced countries to boost our economic growth, we also place considerable emphasis on self-reliance. The harnessing of scientific and technological knowledge is vital to that self-reliance. We are not about to invent the wheel again but the application of discoveries and inventions originating elsewhere is a part of the exercise in self-reliance. Of course we intend to fully utilise all the foreign expertise that may be made available to us.

4. However, the scientific knowledge and technology of the West cannot be simply imported into the country. It must be properly adjusted and adapted in order to fit into the special needs and requirements of the nation. As such, our own research must be directed firstly, to the identification of the scientific and technological knowledge that can be utilised in the country, and secondly, to modify that knowledge and its application in order to fit in with our peculiar situation and needs.

5. These are our major interests in so far as they involve the advancement of science and technology in this country. We think that they should also be the areas of interest of other developing nations. We cannot afford to spend too much of our

time and limited resources on the basic scientific and technological research as do the rich and advanced nations. We only hope that these countries will share relevant discoveries with us. Only with such readiness to share and help can there be a more meaningful and satisfying relationship between the developing and the developed countries. Clearly the developed countries of the Commonwealth can play a more meaningful role to lessen the problems and difficulties of the developing countries within the Commonwealth.

6. The potential of the Commonwealth Science Council in bringing about a more equitable sharing of scientific and technological resources is enormous. As a catalyst, the Commonwealth Science Council can enhance collaboration among member countries of the Commonwealth in increasing the capabilities of individual nations to use science and technology for their economic and social advancement. It is only then that the Council can justify its existence.

7. As you are aware, one of the targets of many developing countries is industrialisation. This is also the case with Malaysia. In the quest for industrialisation, research is constantly needed, even if the level of research is elementary. Indeed research and development, whether rudimentary or otherwise, is now a basic requirement of industry. In order that R & D can contribute to productivity, the system and the methods must be learnt through exchanges of expertise between the advanced and the developing countries, as well as among the developing countries themselves. Inter-country and inter-industry cooperation is, therefore, most useful.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. I would like to take this opportunity to make some specific reference to the type of help and assistance that developing nations like Malaysia require in order to progress further. I am mentioning this so that those of you representing the developed countries may examine further how you can help in return for the kind of cooperation and support that we can give to your own efforts in achieving further advancement. scientific and technological personnel. The Commonwealth Science Council can certainly assist . The cost of training in your respective countries should not be so high as to be beyond our reach. Scientific and technological knowledge like all other forms of knowledge, we believe, increases as you share it with others. The more our scientific and technological personnel go to your countries for training, the more will your countries be able to

extend the frontiers of knowledge in the application of new discoveries. As a bonus, our personnel who have got used to your techniques and equipments are going to act as the best salesmen of your research and other products when they return to work in their own countries.

10. Developing countries are so designated because they are relatively poor. If they are going to be able to buy from the developed countries the equipments and products they need, they must be helped to attain the financial capacity to do so. This is where the developed countries should be more liberal not only in importing products from developing countries but also in the transfer of scientific know-how and technology. The chances of developing countries subsequently outstripping the developed in the utilisation of scientific and technological know-how are so slim that it should be totally discounted. Only the most primitive of the discarded industries will find a place in the developing world. If then the products are bought by the developed nations, the developing nations will have the financial capacity to import technology and other needs. lead to conflicts between the two. Human societies have devised many ways of reducing their tendency towards such conflicts. Thus even capitalistic societies provide protection and help for the poor at the expense of the rich.

11. Concept of graduated tax on incomes is a typical example. But the community of nations has not yet accepted the principle that the rich should help the poor. Perhaps it is because poor nations are incapable of threatening the rich, as poor workers are capable through their unions. But, whatever the reason, certainly the social responsibility of nations is not well developed.

12. I would appeal to the scientists who are attending this meeting, to be not only scientists but also people with a of the world should, where appropriate, override the narrow interests of one's own nation. The poor countries need help not handouts, but a helping hand for their development. Scientific and technological knowledge is one instrument that can do this. And so the Commonwealth Science Council should be very positive in this task of spreading the kind of knowledge that builds nations.

13. It is now my pleasure to declare the 12th. Meeting of the Commonwealth Science Council formally open and I wish you every success.

