

JAYCEES' ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE
GENTING HIGHLANDS

25 MAY 1984

(Speech to be delivered by the Honourable, Datuk Dr. James Ongkili, Minister in The Prime Minister's Department):

I would like to congratulate Jaycees Kuala Lumpur and Jaycees Malaysia for accepting the responsibility of hosting this Jaycees' Asia-Pacific Regional Conference. To the foreign participants of this Conference, I would like to welcome you all to Malaysia and I hope you will enjoy your stay in this country.

2. This gathering of active and public-spirited young people from Asia and the Pacific region shows the vast potential that this region holds for the future in terms of human resources. This gathering also reflects the spirit of cooperation, friendship and solidarity that exist among the countries and peoples in this area. I am indeed pleased to see that there is a close rapport and understanding as manifested by this Conference today, and it is our duty to ensure that this bond of friendship be further strengthened.

3. Young people represents an important and dynamic group. As in the case of Malaysia and many other Asia-Pacific countries, the young generation forms a large segment of the population. In other words, youth constitutes a large segment and has an important role to play in improving societal and national well-being. A healthy and dedicated young people would be able to contribute positively towards these goals. Conversely, indisciplined and uncommitted youth would be a liability and a threat to national resilience. The young would have to be instilled with the desire to play a responsible role in society, to preserve cherished traditions, to assist in the development of the nations and to be prepared to make sacrifices if called for in the interest of their societies. This burden is a heavy one and it calls for true dedication, loyalty and commitment.

4. We are today living in a world which while offering hope and optimism, is clouded by uncertainty, insecurity, and instability as a result of events and developments around us. We are not only living in a world where interdependence is needed more than ever before, but we are also living at a time when the world is, metaphorically speaking, shrinking, the result of modern communication and greater interaction among the peoples. The developments in one country would inevitably affect its neighbours,

the region and even the world in general. We can never live in isolation. We can no longer ignore what is happening to us or what is happening to our neighbours.

5. If we are living in a world where we have to depend on one another for our progress, for our development and indeed for our survival, it is a matter of urgency that we should place greater emphasis on promoting better understanding and closer contact among ourselves. While it is true that there are numerous efforts taken in this direction, and this Conference today is a good example, nevertheless much more needs to be done if we are to ensure that the world will remain a safe place for us and for future generations. I believe this Conference would also be deliberating on such matters.

6. I have been requested by the organisers of this Conference to share some of my thoughts with you on the theme of 'Leadership by Example'. We in Malaysia place great importance on this. As a developing country where waste cannot be afforded, effective leadership at every level becomes an important ingredient for our success.

7. We realise that strong, dedicated and responsible leadership is the only way to motivate and guide the people. Of course, leaders being human are not perfect. But they should at least try to be perfect. Then their inadvertent mistakes may be overlooked. However, it is also important to understand that those who follow should not pick on the bad examples as a reason for rejecting the good examples shown by leaders. If this is done then 'leadership by example' will be impossible.

8. It is with this recognition that we in Malaysia are making a serious effort to inculcate the value of 'leadership by example'. It is hoped that our approach will prompt the birth of a more responsive and responsible leadership, consistent with the emphasis on a clean, effective and trustworthy Government. Whoever we are -whether we are politicians, administrators, entrepreneurs, teachers, etc, we must try to practise the qualities of good leadership. Only if we practise what we want others to practise would we be respected and followed.

9. Leadership is not an inherent trait. It can be cultivated and nurtured over a period of time. Although a few may have these leadership qualities in them, but for most others, they need to be trained and developed as good leaders. 'Leadership by example' means a process of instilling and nurturing the required leadership qualities through practice by those in positions of authority or those aspiring to such positions. Good behaviour, morality and deeds will have to be shown by the superiors to guide and

inspire subordinates and others. Undesirable behaviour and values must be discouraged before they become pervasive and entrenched. Such behaviour and qualities would include idleness, extremism, intolerance and passive thinking which are disruptive and unproductive.

10. To lead by setting good examples is an effective way to ensure that good practices are practised by all. It is pointless for leaders or superiors urging others to do good, if they themselves do not practise what they preach. It is a heavy responsibility to set good examples, but to those who are sincere and energetic, and who wish to see his or her country developing progressively and peacefully, this responsibility or challenge will be shouldered with grit and determination.

11. Each and everyone of us are leaders in our own right, while at the same time, we are also followers. As every Jaycees member would appreciate, each of us have our leaders and at the same time we have subordinates. In the years ahead, some of us will be holding more responsible positions. Hence, besides expecting our 'bosses' to set good examples, we have to do the same. All in all, everyone in an institution or organisation has to be conscious of good deeds, high morality and respectability. Even the lowest official has a responsibility to show exemplary behaviour.

12. I have made the call for leadership by example mainly to civil servants and political leaders in this country thus far. But I would like to emphasise here that anything good and exemplary has no limit or boundary, and it is hoped that these good behaviours would be practised by all Malaysians.

13. You as members of Jaycees are often in the fore-front of your communities. You have through your various programmes provided outstanding leadership qualities. Therefore, what I have mentioned earlier is not really new to you because you yourself have been cultivating and practising these values. It is my hope that members of Jaycees desirous in serving the community and society would continually strive to further upgrade the standard and quality of leadership in our respective nations for the common good.

14. Once again I would like to express my gratitude to the Kuala Lumpur and Malaysian Jaycees for giving me this opportunity to address this Conference. I wish all participants a fruitful deliberation, and that when you leave for home, you would bring fond memories of your stay here. With this note, I am happy to declare this Jaycees' Asia-Pacific Regional Conference open.

Thank You.