

SPEECH BY: DATO' SERI DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD
(PRIME MINISTER)

EVENT: AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 12TH. PAN PACIFIC CONGRESS
OF VALUERS, APPRAISERS AND REAL ESTATE COUNSELLORS

VENUE: HILTON HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR

DATE: 22 AUG 1983

TIME:

Mr. R. Dass,
Chairman Co-Odinator of the 12th. Pan
Pacifik Congress;
Honoured Guest;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

I wish to thank the Institution of Surveyors Malaysia,
the organisers and host of the Pan Pacific Congress of
Valuers, Appraisers and Real Estate Counsellors, for
inviting me to say a few words to-day. I take this
opportunity to extend a warm welcome to all the delegates,
and to wish the foreign participants a very happy stay in
Malaysia.

Challenges Ahead' -- is indeed one of great importance to
the world in general, particularly at this point in time
when the increase in population demands more living space
and greater food production. Recent United Nations
estimates indicate that in the last quarter of this century,
the world population is expected to grow from 4,000 million
to 6,500 million; the world's urban population will surge
from 1,500 million to 3,200 million. Of particular concern
to us is the population in Asia which will reach 3,600
million.

3. This scenario of population growth will no doubt throw
up mammoth-sized problems which in turn will demand all the
ingenuity and skills of governments all over the world to
tackle. Merely to accomodate this huge additional
population within the constraints of limited resources
available to them is in itself a formidable task.

4. Malaysia is fortunate that with its size and resources,
it has the capacity to accommodate a bigger population.
However, it must always bear in mind that size and resources
in themselves do not guarantee the capacity to support a
large population. The most important factor is the
productivity of the people. It is here that the diligence,
drive and ingenuity of the people are most needed. Without
these the resources will remain unexploited and will
contribute nothing to the improvement in the quality of life
for the inhabitants. With diligence, drive and ingenuity,

even barren and limited land can support vast populations.

5. It is clear that for a fast growing population, the judicious use of available land will be of prime concern to most nations. Land remains the most valuable resource available to man. Failure to utilise this resource economically will retard the improvement of the quality of life. Indeed the quality might even retrogress. Already we see vast areas turning into deserts as man and animals destroy the vegetation. Questions must therefore be asked regarding land utilisation, if we are to survive and promote reasonable standards of living.

6. Answers to the questions -- "Will the world be able to
_____ feed the people?" and "Will it be able to provide them with
_____ a better quality of life?" will hinge not only upon economic, social and political considerations, but also, and to a large extent, on the manner that land is viewed by the people and administered by Government.

7. As an example let us take Kuala Lumpur. It is a well-known fact that the Kelang Valley in which Kuala Lumpur is situated is still rich in tin. Indeed it was tin that created Kuala Lumpur. The question is, do we mine the tin first and then build, in which case there will be no growth for Kuala Lumpur for a long while or do we build Kuala Lumpur and forget the tin? The mistake was made by the founders and subsequent settlers. By the time the people became sophisticated enough to worry about land and resources, Kuala Lumpur had already been established as the Federal Capital with a very substantial population and all the complex systems of a big city. It would certainly cost the nation much more to move the capital than the value of tin recoverable. And so a natural resource has to be foregone, when such resource could well enrich the nation if land use had been better planned.

9. Another example is the cutting down of the ancient tropical forests all over Malaysia. It is very easy for conservationists living in countries that had waxed rich on the rapacious exploitations of the worlds resources in the past to condemn the systematic elimination of these forests. But for Malaysia which is faced with all kinds of restrictions to the export of manufactured goods, there is no choice but to exploit natural wealth like timber. In any case the land has to be cleared in order to grow rubber or palm-oil or to mine tin. These are the only things that we can sell. The world will not pay us to preserve the forests. And so a choice has to be made -- deforest and develop economically or remain poor so that the rich can glorify in the beauty of the Malaysian rain-forest with their majestic trees.

10. Land as a natural resource can be subjected to planned exploitation, but such planning cannot be too idealistic.

Other factors must be taken into consideration. And the cost must be borne by the world if the world feels so strongly about the exploitation of land. In the case of Malaysia, if the world wants it to preserve its forests, than the world should buy it manufactured goods at least.

11. Having said all that, let me assure you that we are not unmindful of the need to control land use. We do plan and we do conserve. Vast tracts of jungle have been designated as reserves. All land exploitations are subject to planning. We are aware that unrestricted development can lead to disasters like floods, etc. We have, therefore, within our limited means taken the necessary planning precautions. But of course there is no way we can completely avoid mishaps.

12. Land in Malaysia is not in the Central (Federal) Government's list. Land administration is vested with the 13 States that make up Malaysia. To a certain extent this hampers administration and uniformity of policies. It is for this reason that a National Land Code was formulated and a National Land Council established. The Prime Minister or his Deputy presides over the National Land Council. Over the years a degree of uniformity of policies has been established. Nevertheless, as the states have limited sources of revenue, conservationist policies do not get quite the same priority as the Central Government wishes. Fortunately for Malaysia most of the forests which have been cleared are replanted with rubber or palm-oil. Consequently, the greenness of Malaysia has been maintained.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

13. Today, more than ever before, professionals are playing a vital role in shaping and designing our living style, that is, our life itself. Unfortunately, the development of the various professions cannot be separated from individualistic and commercially selfish interests. Consequently, professionals have to work to the tune of seemingly conflicting demands. The integrity and credibility of the professionals depends on their capacity to maintain good ethics while satisfying their own needs. In actual fact there is no conflict, for good ethics will, in the final analysis, yield the best returns for the individual professional as well as the profession in general.

14. Coming now to the valuation profession in this country, I am aware of its important role both in the Government and the private sector. The Government, in order to ensure an orderly growth of the profession has provided legal protection for most of the professions. The Valuers and Appraisers Act, 1981 is an example of such protection and is administered by a Board which has members from both the Government and the Institute of Surveyors Malaysia.

15. The Government also ensured that the University Teknologi Malaysia and the MARA Institute of Technology run

degree and diploma level courses in Valuation and Property Management, so that the needs of both Government and private sector for trained manpower are met. The Government is also at present building a Valuation Training and Research Institute at Bangi, so that in-service training can be provided not only for Valuation Department staff, but also for staff in land offices and local authorities. We hope that in the spirit of greater cooperation between the public and private sectors as reflected in our Malaysia Incorporated concept, the facilities of this Centre would also be extended to the private sector. It is abundantly clear that the Government has looked after the valuation profession just as it has done for other professions in this country.

16. In this context, it is only proper that I remind all valuers that the Government has initiated the Act and the Board, not solely to protect the interests of the profession. It is also to see that the profession serves the public efficiently, and that it will maintain high professional standards with regard to the services it provides. Consequently, I would like to urge the professional institutions in this country to take greater interest in ensuring that public complaints against their members are looked into more seriously.

17. We must be sensitive to the fact that the professions have always been held under suspicion because by their very nature they are closed-shop trade unions. The desire to use the authority conferred on the professional bodies, and the exclusive privileges of the professionals merely to protect and enhance the position of the profession, is quite irresistible. Consequently, the rights of the public to be protected from unscrupulous members are often ingored. The stature and integrity of a profession will be tarnished unless the public is protected from the black sheep. As a professional myself, although non-practicing, I feel it is my duty to re-emphasise this. No society can prosper without good ethics and the honest practice of the ethical code.

18. Finally, may I once again welcome all foreign delegates to Malaysia, and hope that you will have the opportunity to move outside the walls of this Hotel and see a little more of our country. To all, I wish you every success in your deliberations.

19. With these words, it gives me great pleasure to declare the 12th Pan Pacific Congress of Valuers, Appraisers and Real Estate Counsellors open.

Thank You