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UCAPAN Y.A.B. TIMBALAN PERDANA MENTERI  
MERANGKAP MENTERI PELAJARAN DATO SERI  
DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD MERESMIKAN  
PEMBUKAAN PUSAT WILAYAH BAGI PELAJARAN  
SAINS DAN HISAB (RECSAM) DI GLUGOR  
PULAU PINANG PADA 31HB. OKTOBER, 1977  
PUKUL 10.00 PAGI

Puan Pengerusi Lembaga Pengurus RECSAM,  
Yang Berhormat-Yang Berhormat,  
Tuan Yang Terutama Duta-Duta Besar dan  
Perwakilan-Perwakilan Negara-Negara Asing.  
Dhif-dhif Yang Terhormat,  
Tuan-tuan dan Puan-puan,

Terlebih dahulu saya mengucapkan terima kasih kepada Lembaga Pengurus RECSAM yang telah sudi menjemput saya pagi ini untuk meresmikan pembukaan Pusat Wilayah Bagi Pelajaran Sains dan Hisab yang dianjurkan oleh Pertubuhan Menteri-Menteri Pelajaran Asia Tenggara yang lebih terkenal sebagai SEAMEO di rantau ini. Malaysia, khususnya, merasa bangga oleh kerana SEAMEO telah memilih Malaysia menjadi tuan rumah bagi Pusat Wilayah ini. SEAMEO telah ditubuhkan dalam tahun 1965 dengan tujuan mengadakan kerjasama serantau di antara Negara-negara Anggota, khususnya dalam bidang pelajaran, sains dan kebudayaan. Negara-negara Anggota telah menyertai program-program yang telah disusun oleh RECSAM dan saya difahamkan bahawa Negara-negara Anggota berpuas hati dengan rancangan-rancangan yang telah diaturkan itu. Ini membuktikan bahawa RECSAM mempunyai kebolehan dan 'expertise' untuk merancang kursus-kursus yang mendatangkan faedah kepada semua Negara-negara Anggota tanpa membazirkan wang yang telah diperuntukkan kepadanya. Kemudahan-kemudahan baru yang terdapat di RECSAM seperti makmal-makmal sains serta perpustakaan yang telah disiapkan sudah tentu akan dapat menampung kekurangan-kekurangan yang telah dihadapi oleh RECSAM pada masa yang lepas.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to congratulate Madam Chairman and Members of the RECSAM Governing Board, and the Centre Director and his staff on the occasion of the official opening of RECSAM this morning.

To-day's ceremony highlights a significant event in the history of education cooperation in South-East Asia as it marks the culmination of over ten years of joint and concerted efforts of member states, associate members, donor governments, international and national agencies and foundations in developing RECSAM into a prestigious regional institute specialising in science and mathematics curriculum development. The impressive building, which has just been completed, is a fitting tribute to the pioneers, designers and implementers of the project.

Malaysia and the other member states of the South-East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO) have <sup>o</sup> firm conviction, right from its inception in 1965, that the most practical and effective approach for socio-economic development is through co-operation among developing countries that are located within the same region. This will facilitate the pooling of our limited resources to provide programmes and projects in which our experts and our institutional resources play significant and practical roles <sup>the training of</sup> in key personnel. This approach develops resilience as well as self-reliance in our own countries which will ensure success of any developmental programme. This regional co-operation in training our peoples by our own experts has been gradually evolved not only in RECSAM but also in the other five Regional Centres/Project of the Organisation in the last decade, namely BIOTROP, INNOTECH, RELC, SEARCA and TROPMED.

With resources which are limited it is imperative that an educational institution, like RECSAM, to determine correct priorities and strategies for implementation. Meaningful planning must be based upon sound research. Programmes should not be justified merely by the labels, "high academic quality" or "prestigious". Rather, programmes should be assessed by criteria which indicate relevance to educational objectives and social utility. Although precise measures for such criteria may be difficult to formulate, attempts to better understand.

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the impact of a particular academic programme should still be made. There are other specific characteristics which should be present in any academic planning process, such as assessment of fundamental values and assumptions, operational objectives and data collection and analysis. One of the operational objectives is to ensure the development of critical evaluative mechanisms which measure the significance and weaknesses of existing programmes and weigh the priority needs for programmatic changes. Conceived in this manner, any academic plan can serve as a primary operational instrument which guides an institution's qualitative and quantitative development. The planning process is of little use if the plan is seen as an end rather than as a means. I, therefore, hope that RECSAM will develop its programme activities which can meet, within available resources, the changing needs and aspirations of SEAMEO member countries in the coming years.

The remarkable achievements of RECSAM as mentioned by Madam Chairman of the Board and the Centre Director, even long before this new block of building was constructed, showed that the concept of regional co-operation in the fields of science, education and culture among South-East Asian Countries has been transformed into a living reality. It is gratifying to note that the impressive results achieved by RECSAM have been substantiated recently by an external evaluation team. The extent of collaboration and sacrifice displayed in the first decade of its development, formed an inspiring record not only in terms of co-operation among member states but also between them and donor governments and agencies outside the region. I am also pleased to note the remarkable progress made by the other Regional Centres/Project in the various professional fields, namely tropical medicine and public health, tropical biology, educational innovation and technology, English language teaching and learning, and agriculture.

Malaysia is privileged to be the host country for RECSAM and her support of the Centre arises out of her firm belief that science, as an integral part of education, should be utilised as one of the tools to solve the economic imbalance in society as well as to accelerate national development. Since it forms an effective part of the SEAMEO network of centres for socio-economic development, the Government of Malaysia has been making increasing contributions in support of the Centre's programmes and physical development. For the first five years of the Centre's development ending in June 1972,

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Malaysia made available to RECSAM the facilities of the Teachers College situated in the same campus to carry out its activities. Fifty per cent of the capital and the operational costs of RECSAM for the period July 1970 to June 1975 was borne by Malaysia while the United States Government under-wrote the other half. Apart from assuming responsibility for the full operational costs of the Centre since July 1975, Malaysia has been contributing towards the costs of regional scholarships tenable annually at RECSAM for South-East Asian course participants through the SEAMEO Educational Development Fund for a period of five years. In addition, a grant of \$1.6 million has been made towards the cost of the new complex which will be inaugurated to-day.

To-day's inauguration of the Centre marks the end of its basic developmental phase. The new campus is innovative and functional. These qualities are also the unique features of the RECSAM's training programmes. Although much has been achieved, RECSAM should not rest on its laurels as much more remains to be done in order to sustain the initial success achieved in the field of science and mathematics education.

The decade of the 80's is just around the corner. There are already signs of problems arising from the progress in agricultural and industrial development in our countries. In order to exploit our natural resources, huge forest areas have been logged without replanting programmes. Pollution of our environment has also taken place especially in big cities and factory areas. Science education has a vital role to play in preparing our youths not only to utilise our resources but also to conserve and protect our natural resources and environment for a better quality of life. This is where, I think, RECSAM can make a significant contribution to the region in the years ahead.

Before I conclude, I, on behalf of the Government of Malaysia, wish to express our profound appreciation to the United States Government for its substantial contribution towards the costs of the RECSAM complex. I also wish to extend Malaysia's gratitude to other donors and international agencies for their valuable assistance and support. I would also like to reiterate Malaysia's commitment to RECSAM within available resources in strengthening regional co-operation in South-East Asia. RECSAM has

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to be continuously pragmatic in its approach and flexible enough to meet the changing needs and aspirations of SEAMEO member states. The task ahead is not easy for the Centre but the co-operation from traditional and new donors coupled with the initiative, imagination and dynamism of the RECSAM Governing Board and the Centre Director and his staff, will ensure eventual success in its programmes as it has in the past decade. I hope RECSAM will continue to grow as a viable regional institution in this part of the world.

Sekarang saya dengan sukacitanya merasmikan pembukaan Pusat Wilayah Bagi Pelajaran Sains dan Hisab.