

SPEECH BY
DATO SERI DATIN PADUKA
DR. SITI HASMAH HAJI MOHD. ALI
THE PATRON OF THE CONGRESS, AT THE OFFICIAL
DINNER OF THE 3RD. CONGRESS OF THE ASEAN
FEDERATION OF ENDOCRINE SOCIETIES
AT SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR
ON WEDNESDAY, 4TH. DECEMBER, 1985
AT 8.30 P.M.

Mr. Chairman;

Distinguished Guests;

Fellow Doctors;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to be amongst fellow doctors again. When I was asked to be patron of this 3rd Congress of the ASEAN Federation of Endocrine Societies, I did not realise the occasion will bring me to this auspicious dinner where I would meet some of the most distinguished endocrinologists in the World and from ASEAN. It is indeed an honour to meet all of you. I trust you have had an enjoyable introduction to Malaysia and will have a productive week during this Congress.

2. It is now Malaysia's turn to host the ASEAN Congress of Endocrinology. The first Congress was held in Bali, Indonesia, and the second in Bangkok, Thailand. The ASEAN Federation of Endocrine Societies appears to have gone from strength to strength. The Congress provides an opportunity for fellow ASEAN members to meet and renew acquaintances, exchange notes and information and introduce

new members to the Endocrine fraternity. Medically speaking, we are a young region. There is a lot we can learn from others. There is also a lot more we can learn from each other, given our limitations and constraints. I sincerely hope the ASEAN Federation will continue to grow and symbolize the true spirit of ASEAN.

3. The number of Endocrinologists in the region is still small, compared to Europe and America. Endocrinology is a speciality that is full of academic rewards but very little monetary returns. Perhaps that will explain why in ASEAN, as in other parts of the World, the Professors, and Chairmen of the Medical Departments are largely Endocrinologists. In this context, I am also proud to have met Professor S. Bunnag, a lady doctor who has become an eminent Endocrinologist and Professor and Chairperson of Medicine at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. She symbolises the capabilities of a woman doctor who need not be constrained by her family and social commitments. I gather she and her Thai colleagues had also personally looked after 35 of our medical students during the previous Congress in Bangkok in 1983 and 1984. To you Madam and your Thai colleagues, I say thank you. I am also happy to have met the Professors of Medicine and Endocrinology from England and Australia who had helped to train Malaysia's own Endocrinologists who are now the leaders in the field in our country. To you, Professor Sir John Nabarro, and Professor Henry Burger, we thank you for training them and for being able to be with us tonight. To the invited speakers who have come from outside ASEAN, we thank you for participating in the Congress and helping to enlighten us of new developments in the field.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. With the tremendous development going on in this region, it is worrying to us to discover the high prevalence of diseases such as diabetes, ischaemic heart disease,

thyrotoxicosis and infertility. Could these be due to our rapid modernisation, or is it due to better awareness and detection, now that we have the means to do so? In this context, I am happy to know that the ASEAN Federation of Endocrine Societies had taken the lead in 1983, with Malaysia as the Coordinating country, to do an ASEAN wide epidemiological survey on the prevalence of diabetes and the factors that contribute to its incidence, morbidity and complications. I am informed that the ASEAN experts on Diabetes have worked closely together and met in Genting Highlands, Manila, Bangkok and recently in Melbourne to formulate a common strategy and research programme. I am also happy to note that Australia, through the ASEAN-Australian Economic Cooperation Programme has promised Aus.\$3.2 million dollars for the project in January 1984. My heartiest congratulations to the Diabetes Working Group and AFES in this great endeavour of yours. I realize the Memorandum of Understanding, or M.O.U, has still not been resolved. Perhaps by the next Congress of the ASEAN Federation of Endocrine Societies in two years' time, you can hear the first results of this important study project.

5. Finally I would like to thank the organisers for inviting me and my husband to this auspicious dinner and giving me the opportunity to meet with you. I hope you will have an enjoyable stay in Malaysia and a productive Congress.

Thank you.
