

SPEECH BY DATIN SERI DR. SITI HASMAH BINTI HAJI MOHD. ALI
THE PUTRA WORLD TRADE CENTRE, KUALA LUMPUR
"POLICY MEETING ON NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD DECLARATION
ON SURVIVAL PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN"
18 JULY 1991

Omar, Minister of National Unity and Community Development, Malaysia; Dato Sheriff Kassim, Director General of Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department, Convenor of this Meeting; Dr. Richard Jolly, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF, New York; Dr. Verstuyft, WHO Representative Malaysia; Excellencies; Ladies and gentlemen.

I am honoured to be present this morning among a distinguished and concerned group and I would like to thank the Convenor of this meeting, Dato Sheriff Kassim, for inviting me to take this chair as an Honorary Chairman. We are privileged to have with us today Dr. Richard Jolly, Deputy Executive Director UNICEF New York, and his colleagues Mr. Steve memoto, Deputy Regional Director, UNICEF Bangkok, Mr Rodney Hatfield, UNICEF Jakarta and Ms. Linda Kelly Bifani, UNICEF Bangkok. We also have with us Dr. Verstuyft, WHO Representative, Malaysia.

2. Dr. Richard Jolly as you probably know, is an eminent development economist having been the Director of the Institute of Developmental Studies at the University of Sussex before he joined UNICEF. He has held this position in UNICEF for the last 9 years and has been directly involved with UNICEF's campaign and strategy for child survival and development and programmes in support of women. He is also known for his concern and contribution in ensuring attention being given to children and women in economic adjustment policies, as in the study "Adjustment with a Human Face". I am sure that with his vast experience, Dr. Jolly and his team would facilitate our discussions.

3. Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my pleasant duty to introduce to you the moderator for our meeting, Dr. Noordin Sopiee, the Director General of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies. He is a seasoned moderator of national and international forums and is strongly committed to the establishment of a fully caring Malaysian society. More importantly, he is a father of 3 children and I am confident that Dr. Noordin will steer us in the direction for us to achieve our objectives today.

4. As a background to this meeting, the World Summit for children held in New York in September last year, resulted in a World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children. A universal Plan of Action for the implementation of this declaration has also been drafted as a guide for countries. The declaration commits countries to prepare a National Plan of Action for implementation which is to be ready before the end of 1991.

5. The objective of our meeting today is to discuss the major issues contained in the declaration as embodied in the 10 point programme in the light of the priorities of our country; to examine the strategies and activities suggested in the universal plan as a basis of formulation of our own strategies and activities; and to review the universal goals and targets to enable us to set our own goals and targets as a measure of our performance efforts towards survival, protection and development of our children.

6. The result of this meeting would be the basis for the preparation of our National Plan of Action. The task before us now, and here-after is a difficult one. But I believe that this is the most noble and tangible gift we can leave for our children so that they may enjoy the beauty of childhood and grow up in a safe, healthy and clean environment for their optimal growth and development. With a committed group of individuals and parents present, and with your continued support, we should be able to achieve this vision for our children.

7. The preparation of our National Plan of Action is timely as the government has recently launched two important development plans - the 6th Malaysia Plan and the 2nd Outline Perspective Plan. These should be our guiding principles to be considered in the formulation of this plan for the Survival, Protection and Development of Children. I do hope that we will work towards an integrated and comprehensive plan. In this context, I am pleased to see agencies, besides those traditionally involved with children, present today. Issues beyond survival and protection of children should be discussed and given emphasis - issues of the environment, art and culture enrichment for our children, recreation and child care facilities and so on. We all look forward to the results of this morning's deliberations; especially in its follow-up towards the formulation and implementation of a comprehensive Plan of Action for our Children. It is my pleasure now to call on Dr. Noordin Sopiee to moderate this meeting.

Thank you.