

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE SIGNING
OF THE ASEAN-EEC COOPERATION AGREEMENT AT
THE DEWAN TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN, KUALA LUMPUR
ON 7TH MARCH, 1980

On behalf of the Government and people of Malaysia, I extend to you a very warm welcome to Kuala Lumpur. This is the first time that we have a joint gathering of Ministers of the European Communities and in an ASEAN country to put the seal to the ASEAN-EEC Cooperation Agreement. We are proud that Kuala Lumpur is the venue for the signing of this Agreement.

This is also the first time that ASEAN is formalising its relationship with another regional organisation in an agreement which covers cooperation on a wide spectrum of economic activities. It is the culmination of our efforts to consolidate and *place our commercial and economic relations on a more equitable footing* to the mutual benefit of our two regions, I congratulate you and all those concerned who have worked hard to bring it about.

The signing of this Agreement is a significant land mark in ASEAN's relations with third countries. The Agreement demonstrates the importance which the ASEAN countries attach to cooperation with the European Communities. It was eight years ago, in 1971, when we first embarked on a joint and collective dialogue with the EEC. A major achievement towards a firmer relations between us was the establishment of the ASEAN-EEC Joint Study Group in 1974. This resulted in the intensification of our cooperation in economic, industrial, agricultural and development activities. The first ASEAN-EEC Ministerial Meeting was held in Brussels in 1978 and it was at that meeting that we decided to formalize our relations in a Cooperation Agreement.

It has always been our view that we can achieve meaningful economic cooperation. Through cooperation we have been able to work out solutions to our common problems and at the same time promote understanding and beneficial contacts between the peoples of our two regions. Our desire for intensified cooperation with the EEC, and for that matter, with other third countries, stems from the founding objectives of ASEAN which are well

known to you. We believe that through the joint efforts by the countries in the region, we will achieve quicker and greater progress in the economic development of our countries. This economic development will provide the conditions conducive to the building of a strong, peaceful and stable Southeast Asia.

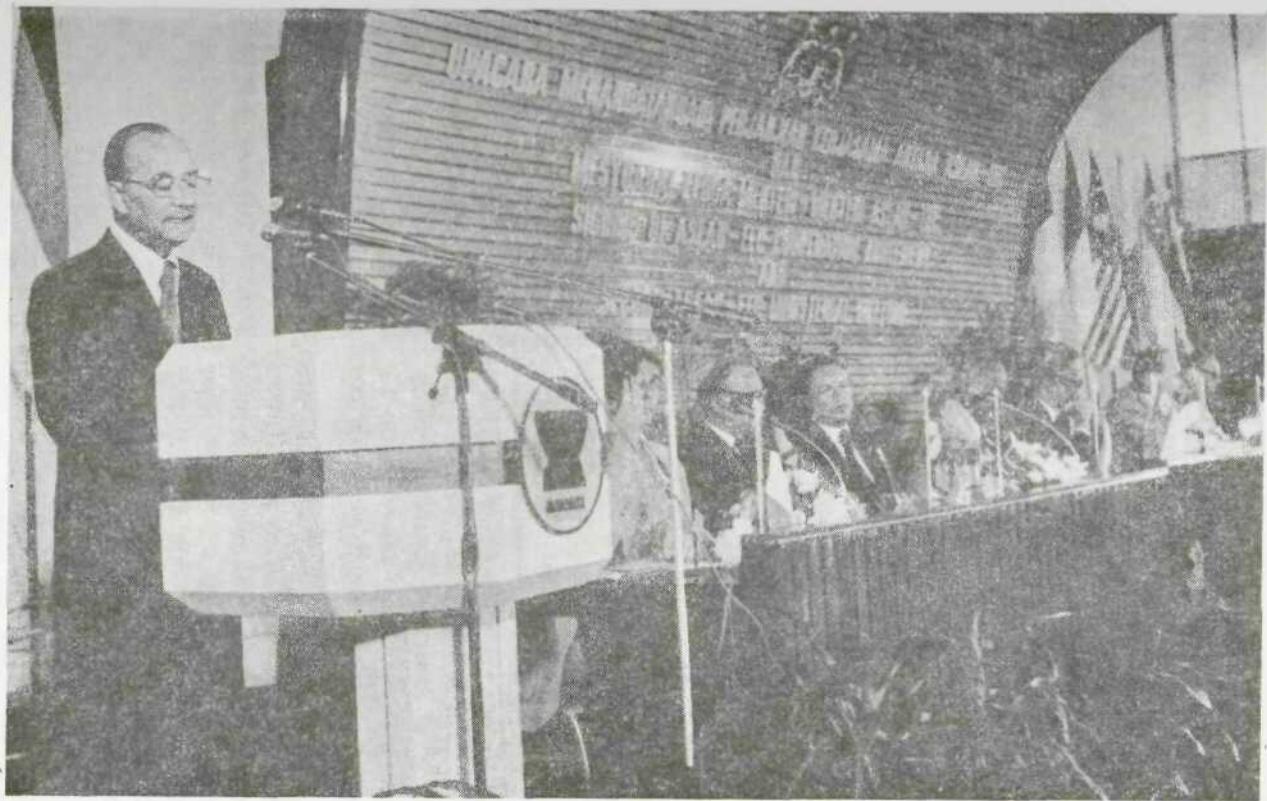
Our concept of regionalism was given an added impetus at the Second ASEAN Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Governments in Kuala Lumpur in 1977. At that Meeting, we agreed to intensify our cooperative efforts in all fields in order to strengthen our resilience and viability. We have made substantial progress in this direction with the launching of the ASEAN industrial projects and the institution of preferential trading arrangements.

We are now at a crucial stage of our economic development in the 80's. The participation by countries of the EEC in our development efforts is therefore very important and timely. We welcome the involvement of the member countries of the EEC in fostering closer and fruitful links between our two regions. Your contribution will strengthen ASEAN's regional efforts in bringing about economic prosperity and social advancement for the peoples of our region.

In return, ASEAN has much to offer to the EEC. Our region is endowed with an abundance of natural resources. We are presently the major supplier of a number of key commodities to the EEC, such as tin, rubber, palm oil, coconut oil, copra, pepper and timber. ASEAN also offers a potential market of more than 240 million people for EEC products.

The countries of ASEAN are in the process of industrialisation. The EEC main strength is its technology. We have the raw materials. It would be to our mutual advantage to combine our respective strength to achieve greater economic advancement. A system should be evolved whereby we should share industries between our regions. This partnership will make a greater contribution to the socio-economic development of our two regions.

The signing of this Agreement will signify the beginning of a new era in ASEAN-EEC Cooperation in the 80's and beyond. We can now look forward to a new stage of our cooperation to establish commercial and economic ties on a more equitable



YAB Dato Hussein Onn, ketika berucap di upacara Menandatangani Perjanjian Kerjasama ASEAN-EEC di Dewan Tunku Abdul Rahman, Kuala Lumpur pada 7hb Mac, 1980.

footing, based on comparative advantage and mutual benefit. The Agreement, the first of its kind, will be a model in inter-regional cooperation.

For ASEAN in particular, the signing of this Agreement testifies to the acceptance of ASEAN as a viable economic, cultural and social organisation. It is also a recognition of ASEAN as a force which can play a role in promoting peace, stability and prosperity in Southeast Asia.

ASEAN has achieved a remarkable degree of cohesion and unity of purpose. We have been able to respond positively to developments in the region and the world. ASEAN has demonstrated that its cohesion constitutes a positive factor in creating conditions conducive to the establishment of durable peace and stability in Southeast Asia. It was in this context that the ASEAN countries collectively signed the Kuala Lumpur Declaration of November 1971, which seeks to establish Southeast Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality.

We are aware that the climate of peace and stability in ASEAN is influenced by the political developments and tensions inside and outside the region. The continuing conflict in Kampuchea is a matter of grave and immediate concern to us. The present situation in Afghanistan poses a threat to international peace and security. We are witnessing both in Kampuchea and Afghanistan, a direct armed intervention by outside powers in the internal affairs of two independent states. It is a blatant violation of the principles of the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement. It is a dangerous precedent which makes small independent countries extremely vulnerable to the interference, manipulation and the military might of outside powers.

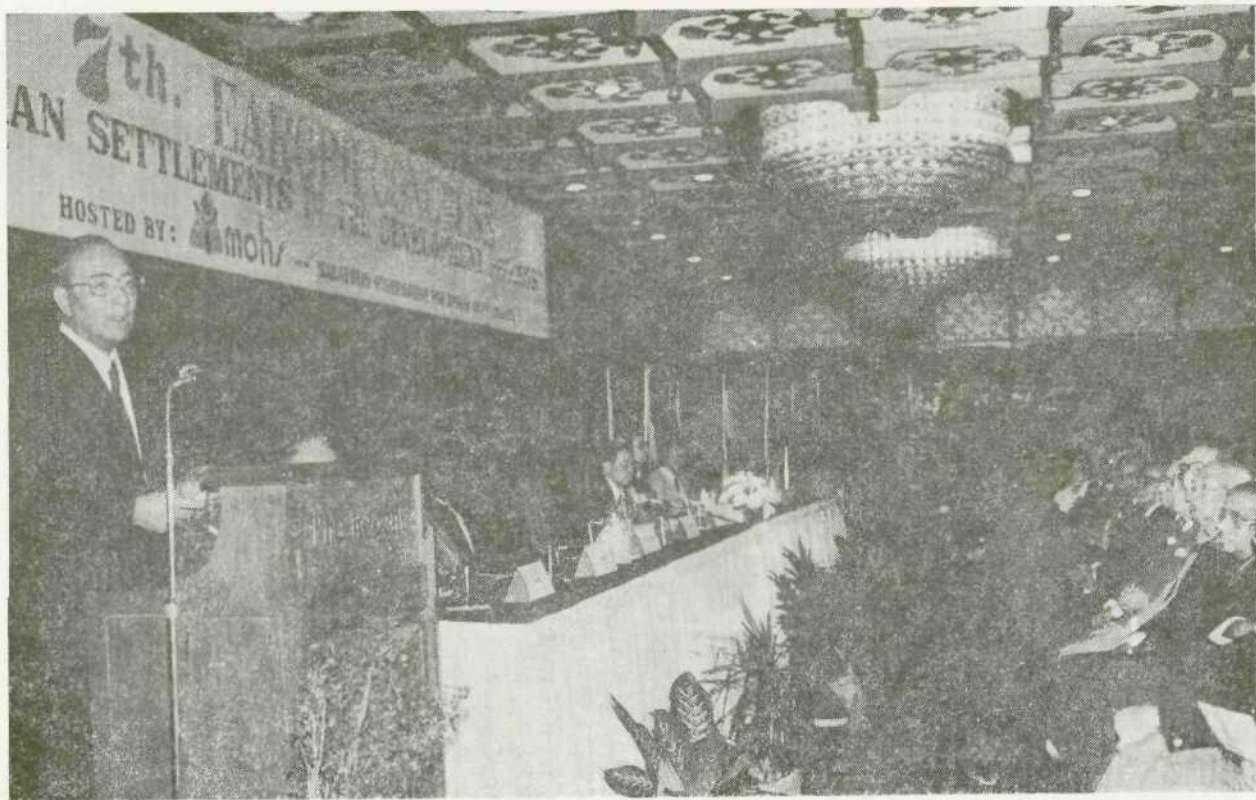
The situation in Indochina has precipitated a tragic exodus of people. On humanitarian ground, we in ASEAN have given them temporary shelter and relief. The influx of such a large number of refugees has created serious problems for us. We are grateful to the international community for their concern and assistance. However, we appeal to them particularly the United Nations to act more vigorously to solve the problem.

These developments inside and outside the region serve to emphasize more than ever the need for all countries in Southeast Asia to pursue and support the principles and objectives of the

Kuala Lumpur Declaration to establish a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in Southeast Asia. We are committed to the realisation of these objectives. An consistent with the principles embodied in the concept, ASEAN will resist any suggestion to turn itself into a military alliance.

It is our resolve that through economic development, we shall strengthen our respective national resilience. In this regard we greatly appreciate the support and encouragement given by the EEC.

It is hoped that the cooperation between our two organisations will be enlarged and intensified in the future. The ASEAN-EEC Cooperation Agreement is an expression of our hope and faith for the future. This morning, we are taking a big step forward towards the fulfilment of that hope. Thank you.



YAB Dato Hussein Onn, ketika merasmikan Kongres Earoph Ketujuh di Kuala Lumpur Regent pada 9hb Mac, 1980.