

**UCAPAN PERDANA MENTERI MALAYSIA DI UPACARA
PEMBUKAAN KONGRES PERGIGIAN ASIA PASIFIK
KE 9 DI HOTEL HILTON, KUALA LUMPUR, PADA
24 APRIL, 1979.**

Dr. Lim Chee Shin, Presiden Persatuan Pergigian Malaysia, Yang Berhormat Menteri-Menteri dan Timbalan-Timbalan Menteri, Dr. Rolf Braun, Presiden Persekutuan Pergigian Antarabangsa, Dr. Primo Gon-sales, Presiden Persekutuan Pergigian Asia Pasifik, Tuan-tuan Yang Terutama, Pesuruhjaya-Pesuruhjaya Tinggi dan Duta-Duta Besar, Difi-dif Kehormat sekalian.

Kita berasa bangga kerana Kuala Lumpur telah diberi penghormatan untuk menjadi tuan rumah bagi menjayakan Kongres Persekutuan Pergigian Asia Pasifik Ke-9. Izinkan saya mengucapkan tahniah kepada Persatuan Pergigian Malaysia yang telah melaksanakan tugasnya bagi mengatur persidangan antarabangsa ini dengan jayanya. Walaupun persatuan ini tidak mempunyai begitu ramai ahlinya, tetapi ia telah dapat menyusun aturcara yang menarik dengan adanya acara seperti pameran mengenai perdagangan pergigian. Sudah tentulah untuk mengendalikan acara yang sebegini rupa akan mengambil masa dan tenaga yang banyak. Kita harap semangat yang ditunjukkan oleh persatuan ini akan diperhebatkan lagi bagi menjamin mutu perkhidmatan pergigian yang tinggi di Malaysia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for Malaysia that the dental profession has chosen Kuala Lumpur to host the 9th Congress of the Asian Pacific Dental Federation. I am further privileged to welcome distinguished international participants to our country. We sincerely hope that in the course of their stay in Kuala Lumpur, our guests will find the time from their busy schedules to visit and see the many and varied places of interest in Malaysia. I have no doubt that part from the formal deliberations that is afforded by forums such as this, you will be able to exchange views more informally outside the conference hall and during the social functions that have been arranged for you. I am sure that this will further enrich your knowledge and experience which will be invaluable in our common aim to further improve the quality of dental health care in the Asia Pacific region.

This event presents me with a very useful opportunity to meet and get to know so many dentists from different parts of the world. I would therefore like to impress upon you our concern for good dental health care, particularly amongst our children. It is, therefore, appropriate that this congress gives a special emphasis to the health of children, be it dental health or otherwise, in this International Year of the Child. I need not stress the importance of ensuring that our children enjoy good health as they are the adults of tomorrow.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the course of the congress you will no doubt be discussing the latest techniques and procedures that are being used by your profession. More importantly, a gathering of professionals such as this will offer an excellent opportunity for discussions on the ways and means to intra-regional cooperation. As a body of men who are specialised in their subject, professionals can provide the catalytic effect of stimulating changes in their environments. They are equipped to help their societies in building a strong foundation for growth and development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Many of the countries represented at this conference are developing countries. As developing countries, we are faced with a number of constraints and problems peculiar to our economic situation.

One of the main constraints in providing dental health service is the urgent and competing demand on our financial resources. Most of our countries are spending a sizeable portion of our budget on social services.

Under the circumstances we cannot therefore emulate the more economically advanced countries in providing expensive and sophisticated dental clinics. We will have to be satisfied with the more basic equipment and facilities, so that the benefits of dental services may be enjoyed by as many as possible of our people.

In formulating a programme for dental health we have therefore to evolve methods and techniques which are as inexpensive as possible while at the same time fulfilling the need for adequate dental care. This would give the added advantage of more people enjoying the benefits given the limited funds available to expend on dental care

programmes. As professionals in this particular field you are in the position to make invaluable contribution to this effort.

Unlike the more advanced countries, the majority of the population of the developing countries, particularly in the rural areas, do not have the purchasing power to utilise the services of private dentists. In order to avoid a situation where the well-to-do particularly the urban population are receiving dental care while the poorer people are not adequately served, government has stepped in to do all it can within its resources. To provide adequate dental care to all its citizens would be beyond the financial and manpower resources of the government. We therefore need to look for new approaches.

For efficient utilisation of our scarce financial resources and to maximise the benefit of dental programme to our people, preventive measures would certainly form a basic strategy. I am happy that you have chosen "Prevention-the Current Trend in Dentistry" as the theme of this meeting.

I am told that fluoridation of water supply is now accepted as a major breakthrough in the efforts to reduce the incidence of dental decay. This innovation has certainly contributed towards the improvement of the dental health programme, particularly in the urban areas.

However, as you are all aware there are vast areas in the developing countries which are not provided with piped water supply. We need, therefore, to think out other means of prevention which would be readily available to the people living in such areas.

There is another area in which co-operation among people in your profession would have profound impact on the dental health of the developing countries. In the effort to evolve a programme for improving dental health, we need to consider the impact of our cultural background on the dental decay process. Our food habits are different from those in the economically advanced countries, and as such we face problems which are peculiar to the region arising from our own distinct cultural traits. The pooling of experience on this issue is needed to tackle the problems pertaining to our region.

While discussing new techniques and advancement in the field of dentistry, you also have the responsibility to look into areas which I have already mentioned. This would further improve the general dental health of not only the people who can afford to pay for expensive

dental care but also the population of the country as a whole. You should not only concentrate on the commercial aspect of your profession but should also contribute to the national development as well.

I hope that in your deliberations, you will open up new dimensions that will enable us to review and assess our present system of dental health care.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It now gives me great pleasure to officially open the 9th Congress of the Asian Pacific Dental Federation.

Thank you.