Penyampai : TAN SRI DATO SERI AHMAD SARJI BIN ABDUL HAMID
Tajuk : UPACARA PEMBUKAAN RASMI NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INSTRUMENTATION DI ATAS TEMA TOWARDS QUALITY EXCELLENCE THROUGH INSTRUMENTATION.
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Terlebih dahulu saya ingin mengucapkan setinggi-tinggi terima kasih di atas penghargaan yang telah diberi kepada saya untuk merasmikan National Conference On Instrumentation di atas tema Towards Quality Excellence Through Instrumentation. Saya difahamkan persidangan di atas tajuk ini merupakan julung kali ianya diadakan di negara ini. Saya mengucapkan tahniah kepada SIRIM dan Malaysian Strategic Consultancy Sdn. Bhd. di atas usaha menjayakan persidangan ini. As Malaysia moves into the industrial phase as part of its goal to be a fully developed country, there is a need for greater awareness especially among the businessmen, manufacturers and investors on the importance of technology, and today at this conference, we are focussing on instrumentation. Good and proper instrumentation is crucial to the manufacturing sector to ensure high quality products and services. Due to the intense global competition from manufacturers of other countries, the management and technological practices of today's manufacturers must be world class. Otherwise, they risk going out of business.

In general, the industry today is facing several major challenges, probably the biggest being the overwhelming demands from customers all over the world for better quality product, services and delivery performance. I must congratulate the organisers for organizing this important conference because since 1992 the European Community (EC) countries have become a single market with uniform requirements for the importation of manufactured goods.

These requirements are based on ISO Standards 9000, Quality Management System and they have been adopted as EN 29000 by the EC. One of the important technical requirements in the EN 2900 series of standards is the testing, calibration and measurement of all manufacturing processes and products.

These activities will involve a first class precision manufacturing and quality control instruments in order to achieve the standards being set. I am glad that in conjuntion with this conference, an exhibition on the latest advanced technology in instruments is also being held.

There is a growing awareness world wide on the importance of good instrumentation not only for manufacturing but also on the urgent need for technology on enhancing fault diagnosis of production machine. In today's business world, competition has dramatically stiffened and quality is the keyword of the day. In order to produce high quality products and also their prompt delivery, manufacturers must realise that it is no longer possible to survive with just a minimum investment. Also, the secret to better quality product is precision, which only advanced instrument will be able to provide such exactness. There is a great need for this precision as customers no longer accept products of marginal quality. In this respect, it is imperative to ensure that the people in the industries are exposed to the latest development in the fields of instrumentation and control technology. A conference of this nature will serve this purpose well, specifically, it provides an opportunity for us to keep abreast of the recent developments of new technology in the instrumentation and control and at the same time create an awareness of the importance of instrumentation in this fast changing world.

In today's competitive environment, Information Technology (IT) has also emerged as an important and crucial tool in the manufacturing sector. When used properly, IT can be cost effective tools in planning and control, design, production, data processing, administration and management as well as warehousing, just to mention a few IT usage in product design which is not a new phenomenon. Tools such as Computer Aided Design (CAD) and Computer Aided Manufacturing (CAM) have been used by business to bring forth quality products to costumers. The point to remember here is that IT is very much hardware and therefore, instrumentation based! In the industrialised nations, usage of IT at manufacturing plants is as common as having specialist doctors at modern hospitals - i.e. it is practically a must.

However, IT usage in the local manufacturing sector has not been as pervasive as in countries like Japan and the United States. There are few here and there, with the foreign multinationals leading the way.

Despite the fact that IT has helped many manufacturers to increase productivity, quality and efficiency, local manufacturers still seem to be relatively slow in jumping onto the band wagon. Perhaps, some may argue that the costs of labour are still at a level which manufacturers can bear. Besides, most of the local manufacturing companies are in the small - and medium sized enterprises category, and they can still manage to do things manually. And many believe it would be too costly for them to computerise.

We cannot hope to remain competitive simply by investing in highly sophisticated instrument, plant machinery and computer system without developing the most important assets of any organisation, i.e. the people.

Human Resource Development has and will remain important.

Competitiveness, productivity, innovativeness and capability in management of new technologies in the organisation will be determined by the quality of its human resources. A productive and efficient labour force must be developed with strong ethical and moral values and a commitment to excellence. The current industrialization situation will require the existing work force in the organisation to be equipped with specialized and up-to-date skills since production techniques will become increasingly automated and complex. It should be emphasized that industrial training should aim at developing innovative skills and technical competency of the labour force. There is a strong link between investment in human capital and productivity growth.

A firm with a high level of education and training tend to absorb new technology quickly, and so grow more rapidly.