

Penyampai : Y.BHG. TAN SRI SAMSUDIN OSMAN  
Tajuk : THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF MTCP COURSES 2/2002  
Lokasi : INTAN, BUKIT KIARA  
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YBhg. Dato' Dr Zulkurnain bin Awang Director of INTAN Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum and a very good afternoon to all of you.

1. I am honoured to be here with you to officiate the opening of five international courses conducted by INTAN under the auspices of the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme and one in collaboration with JICA under its third Country Training Project.

2. Let me take this opportunity to welcome all foreign participants to Malaysia. I understand that there are 88 of you from 42 countries, and I am very pleased that you have arrived safely here. I hope you are adjusting well to the weather here. We do get lots of rain. The food may be a bit spicy for some of you but we have a great variety to choose from.

3. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) for its continuing support to the MTCP programme. This year, ESCAP has made available the services of its Regional Advisor on Environment and Sustainable Development as a resource person on global environmental issues in the Integrated Environmental Planning and Management course.

4. I would like to express my appreciation to JICA for collaborating with INTAN in the running of the Urban and Environmental Management Course for Urban Planners and Managers for the Asia and Pacific regions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. We are indeed honoured to be able to make a small contribution to international understanding and cooperation through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme. The programme was born out of a realisation that it is only through mutual support and mutual reliance amongst developing countries that we will be able to compete and progress in this world.

6. Malaysia is fully committed to sharing its experiences with developing countries and the fact that the MTCP programme has been in existence for the past 21 years reflects this commitment. There are now 131 countries participating in our MTCP. Twenty-one Malaysian government agencies are involved in this programme, the Secretariat of which is under the Economic Planning Unit of the Prime Minister's Department. Over the years, INTAN alone has received more than 2,100 participants from the MTCP participating countries while the Programme as a whole has hosted more than 6,000 participants.

7. We have also benefited greatly from this programme. Apart from having many friends all over the world, it has enriched our own experience and understanding about other systems and cultures. Indeed your presence here today and for the next four to five weeks would certainly add to INTAN's experience and learning.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. In building a resilient nation, the tasks of strengthening unity and nurturing a more tolerant and caring society rank high on Malaysia's development agenda. Besides building an economy that is competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient, Malaysia aims to be a united nation, with a confident society infused by strong moral and ethical values, living in a society that is democratic, liberal, tolerant and caring, equitable, as well as progressive and prosperous.

9. This forms the major thrust among those challenges identified in our Vision 2020 document. We believe strongly that for any country to progress, there must be a clear vision, which is shared by its entire people. Malaysia is fortunate in this respect because of the presence of a visionary leadership. Vision 2020 was introduced to give Malaysia a clear purpose and direction so that our people are bound together in a coordinated effort to achieve our long-term objective of making Malaysia a developed country by the year 2020.

10. We are in the midst of implementing the Eighth Malaysia Plan (2001-2005) which gives greater emphasis on programmes to enhance the competitiveness of the economy and strengthen economic resilience. This requires concerted efforts to improve total factor productivity (TFP). Towards this end, priority is being accorded to increasing the supply of quality manpower, enhancing R & D and accelerating the development of growth sectors. The eradication of poverty irrespective of race and the restructuring of society and balanced development however, remain as the key strategies.

11. We are now rapidly moving into the information age and feel the urgent need to stay abreast with the current IT trends and development. Malaysia welcomes the advent of the information age and looks forward with optimism towards the potential of a new world where ideas, information, people, goods and services transcends borders cost effectively and liberally.

12. In 1995, the Malaysian Government launched the Multimedia Super Corridor or MSC, designed to create the ideal IT and multimedia environment for world-class companies to use as a regional hub. It serves to catalyse a highly competitive cluster of Malaysian multimedia and IT companies that will gradually grow into world-class entities. To spearhead the development of the MSC, seven Flagships projects had been identified. These Flagships are the Electronic Government, Multipurpose Card, Telemedicine, R & D Cluster, World Wide Manufacturing Webs and Borderless Marketing. For the public service, the Electronic Government or e-Government flagship offers the most challenging initiative. This initiative aims to harness information technology and multimedia towards greater productivity and service excellence. Under the e-government, five pilot projects, namely the e- services, e-procurement, Generic Office Environment (GOE), Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) and Project Monitoring System (PMS), are presently at various stages of implementation. The successful implementation of these projects would improve the efficiency of government through a faster delivery of services.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

13. For Malaysia, the agriculture sector is the third engine of growth after the manufacturing and services sectors. In many developing countries, government development programmes tend to give greater emphasis to the industrial and manufacturing sectors to the neglect of the agriculture sector. This often leads to serious economic repercussions such as food shortages and high import bill for food.

14. We too have a high import bill for food which is now estimated at more than RM 13 billion annually. To overcome this problem and to revitalize the agriculture sector, the Malaysian Government has launched the New Agriculture Policy 3(1998 to 2010) which aims at transforming the agriculture sector into a modern, commercial, productive, competitive and sustainable sector that is capable of maintaining its 8% contribution to the country's GDP and turning Malaysia into a main food exporting country. Programmes have been designed to intensify land use, improve agronomic aspects, farming methods and management and to strengthen the R & D aspects which will include areas such as genetic improvement and pest management using bio-technology.

15. For this purpose, the private sector will be encouraged to undertake medium and large-scale commercial farming, facilitated by the establishment of permanent food production areas and agro-technology parks. The use of modern technology and new farming methods will be intensified to enhance productivity and quality as well as reduce the cost of production.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

16. For the future, we foresee that Malaysia's growth will be dependent on its active participation in the knowledge economy. This is founded upon three assumptions: First, there will be a growing, predominant role of knowledge in driving productivity and sustaining growth. Second, the generation, distribution and utilisation of knowledge will become increasingly important in the creation of new wealth, and third, investment in knowledge is expected to provide increasing returns and to generate new products and services in all sectors of the national and global economies. Efficiency, higher output per man-hour, better, quicker services and accountability are but a few of the ever-increasing demands of today's informed citizen. Much of the old practices, mechanisms and structures within the public service have now been upgraded and strengthened so that policy decisions filter down quickly; implementation is coordinated effectively; performance is monitored on a timely basis and recovery measures can be put in place to overcome problems and meet specific targets. All of this is meant to address key features of the knowledge age: speed, timing and the danger of lost opportunities.

17. Environmental issues are given equal importance in all our major developmental efforts. As a fast growing developing country blessed with abundant natural resources, Malaysia recognizes that the nation's growth has unquestionably been drawn from nature. As it moves towards attaining developed country status, Malaysian's Vision 2020 envisages that the land should remain productive, fertile and rich in diversity, the atmosphere clear and clean, the water unpolluted. Recognising that indiscriminate resource utilization, over-consumption and other unsustainable development practices will erode the bases of success of the nation, and could jeopardize its continued progress, Malaysia has therefore designed a policy of achieving economic success without compromising the richness of its natural resources. Malaysia has formulated laws and policies to achieve sustainable development and provide her people with the basic amenities to lead a healthy and comfortable life while maintaining environmental protection as an integral part of the development process.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

18. The secret to 'our success', as our Prime Minister puts it "has been our ability to look beyond the existing measures, mechanisms, systems, practices and rules, and to embrace the out-of-the-ordinary. We have not been afraid to throw away the old measures and embrace the new, untried and radical though it may be".

19. One of the critical success factors in Malaysia's development is the close cooperation between the public and the private sectors under the Malaysia Incorporated policy. This concept of collaboration is founded on the belief and confidence that economic growth and wealth creation can be greatly enhanced if there exists collaboration between the two sectors that creates synergy. The implementation of the Malaysia Incorporated policy entails the establishment of consultative mechanisms at all levels of Government to allow the exchange of feedbacks toward improving the decision making processes. Such a consultative mechanism is applied in all planning and budgetary processes of the Government.

20. Malaysia is also a living example of a country where many races of different religious and cultures live and work together in harmony. You will have the unique opportunity to learn and understand how the Malaysian society has managed to deal and cope with the religious and cultural differences. I am sure in the process you will invariably become more aware of your own culture.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

21. Before I conclude, I would like to urge all participants to use their time in Malaysia wisely, both in the class and out of it. See for yourselves what is happening in Malaysia, ask questions and I hope you will obtain and take home with you valuable lessons learnt for the benefit of the governments that you represent. I hope that besides acquiring knowledge in the classrooms, participants will also be able to learn and understand better each other's culture and that your time in INTAN will be the beginning of a long and mutually beneficial friendship. To the Malaysian participants, I hope you will display the usual Malaysian hospitality and be good hosts to your new friends from abroad.

22. I would like to thank and congratulate INTAN and its staff for organizing these six courses. I would also like to express my appreciation to the Economic Planning Unit of the Prime Minister's Department, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia and the Training Division of the Public Service Department of Malaysia for their respective roles in ensuring the successful implementation of these training courses.

23. On that note, it gives me great pleasure to declare the five MTCP courses and one JICA course officially open.

Thank you.