

FORESTRY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

COLLECTION OF MAHATHIR'S SPEECHES

COMPILED BY

**FORESTRY DEPARTMENT PENINSULAR MALAYSIA
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MINISTER OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate the Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia for its excellent effort in compiling the speeches of the Right Honourable Prime Minister of Malaysia on two very important issues regarding forestry and the environment.

The increasing attention by the world community on environment and sustainable development is apparent through the various initiatives adopted either regionally or globally. The most significant of these was the United Nations' Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 where numerous decisions and conventions to safe-guard the environment were formally adopted and subsequently ratified by participating nations. Amongst these are Agenda 21, the Non-Legally Binding Authoritative Statements of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests, Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Malaysia is indeed committed to undertake follow-up actions to fully implement the various decisions and conventions agreed upon during UNCED. Malaysia's commitment to sustainable development can be seen from the speeches of the Right Honourable Prime Minister.

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"... we need also to ensure that our valuable natural resources are not wasted. Our land must remain productive and fertile, our atmosphere clear and clean, our water unpolluted, our forest resources capable of regeneration, able to yield the needs of our national development. The beauty of our land must not be desecrated - for its own sake and for our economic advancement."

In this connection the Government has since adopted numerous policies and strategies, most notably the National Policy on Biological Diversity in 1998 which forms the basis on which the National Conservation Strategy is promulgated. The Government had also amended and strengthened the provisions of the National Forestry Policy 1978 in 1992 and the National Forestry Act 1984 in 1993, in line with the larger objectives to balance environmental and developmental objectives of the country.

Forests, being an intrinsic component of the environment, play a pivotal role in realising our ultimate objective of sustainable development. The sustainable management, development and utilisation of the invaluable forest resources would ensure that their goods and services could be provided in perpetuity.

Nevertheless, concerted efforts are needed to ensure the sustainable management and development of forest resources. Thus, the initiative undertaken by the Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia in publishing a collection of selected speeches of the Right Honourable Prime Minister on issues pertaining to forestry and the environment is indeed a commendable deed. Through the speeches, the Right Honourable Prime Minister had clearly outlined the direction and strategies that the Government is adopting in achieving sustainable forest management, ensuring environmental stability and finally realising the overall goal of sustainable development.

I sincerely hope that this publication would benefit the public as well as all members of the Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia in enhancing their coherent efforts towards the full attainment of sustainable forest management.



(DATO' SERI DR. LIM KENG YAIK)

Minister of Primary Industries

Malaysia

PREFACE

Sustainable forest management is, by any standard, not an easy task to accomplish. It necessitates an integrated approach to govern all its important roles in providing invaluable goods and services for the benefit and continued development of human kind. Malaysia has long recognised this and has taken the necessary steps since the turn of the last century. Systematic forest management and development systems were introduced and enhanced periodically based on improved data and changing needs.

Forest and forestry have gained greater prominence in the international arena especially since the last two decades. This has been hastened by the globalisation process. Countries, not only need to be accountable to their people, but also to the world community on specific issues including that of forest and forestry. Linking to this is a clear and well-defined direction, as well as the demand for improved management skills and technical know-how of forest managers in delivering the goal of sustainable forest management and development.

In this regard, the Right Honourable Prime Minister had, in many occasions, called for the world community to accord concerted efforts and adopt a total and holistic approach to sustainable forest management and sound environmental protection. The concern and the consistent position of the Right Honourable Prime Minister is evident from his speeches delivered at the numerous national, regional and international fora and meetings.

In recognition of the concern and the important contributions made by the Right Honourable Prime Minister, the Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia has taken steps to publish a collection of his selected speeches on two crucial issues regarding forestry and the environment. The publication of the selected speeches is indeed a compilation of the thoughts and aspirations of

the Prime Minister towards sound forest management and environmental protection in the overall context of sustainable development for a better tomorrow.

The publication also serves as a guide and a source of inspiration for all members of the Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia, and those who are involved in forest management and development activities, to better manage the invaluable green resources entrusted towards sustainability. Thus, I hope that all parties involved would take benefit from this publication so that a more concerted effort would be undertaken in our quest for sustainable forest management and development.

I would like to extend my special thanks to all members of the Department involved, especially Mr. Shaharuddin bin Mohamad Ismail and Mr. Lim Kee Leng, for their excellent efforts in making this publication a reality.



(DATO' ZUL MUKHSAR BIN DATO' MD. SHAARI)

Director-General of Forestry
Peninsular Malaysia



Dato Seri Dr Mahathir Bin Mohamad speaking at the opening of the 14th Commonwealth Forestry Conference in Kuala Lumpur, 13th September, 1993.

THE 39TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

It is with special pleasure that I greet you, a distinguished son of Zambia and of Africa, as President of the General Assembly and offer you my warmest felicitations on your unanimous election. Yours is a heavy responsibility Mr. President, as you guide our work during a very difficult period for the United Nations, and I want to begin by assuring you of the fullest co-operation of the Malaysian Delegation in all your efforts because Malaysia's support for the United Nations is unstinting and unabashed.

It is this support, Mr. President, which brings me here twice to address this Assembly although I have been Prime Minister of my country for only three years. For far too long the United Nations has been abused, denigrated and ignored. For far too long now we have been hearing about the so-called tyranny and irresponsibility of the majority, about waste and "paper" Resolutions and double standards. We all know that the United Nations is not without fault. But in the face of ignorance and bigotry, of myths and falsehoods, we must continue to proclaim our faith in what the U.N. at its best stands for -- a world which is secure for all, just for all, prosperous for all and humane for all.

These were the ideals of international co-operation and justice proclaimed by the Founding Fathers of this institution -- not a world in which only the rich and the powerful make the important decisions; not a world in which small nations fight proxy wars on behalf of big nations, not a world where might is right, not a world half-rich and half-poor, half well-endowed and half-deprived. What has happened now to those ideals? We, who believe in them, want also to believe that the Founder Members of this Organisation meant what they said when they proclaimed the Charter. It is understandable that the excitements and the expectations of the dawn of 1945 will

inevitably be tarnished in the cold light of experience over the last 39 years. But the sad truth is more than that.

For the first fifteen or twenty years of this Organisation we did not hear anything about the disproportionate voting strength of small states -- and automatic majority -- and there was often an automatic majority. Instead we heard about the virtues of a more democratic international life as exemplified in the United Nations. What has happened to those sentiments? Were we naive to believe that those countries which loudly proclaimed such ideals in the early decades of this Organisation did indeed believe in them? What then are we to make of the constant barrage of perverse criticism, of threats and denigration which have now become the fashion in certain quarters? Is it because the United Nations cannot any longer be manipulated and manoeuvred?

Malaysia, for one, would like to believe otherwise. And yet we see the big powers continuing more and more to ignore and to belittle the United Nations. They have established a network of relationship outside the United Nations system to resolve world problems. They have formed their own economic clubs to which from time to time the developing countries are permitted to make their supplication. But the clubs -- like all exclusive clubs -- essentially look after the interest of its members. In the mean-time, in the economic as in the political field, the United Nations continue to be ignored. Indeed we witness something even more negative: namely the threat to withdraw from certain U.N. agencies. Unhappy about the direction and the leadership of these agencies, these threats are sometimes made under the guise of management or budgetary concerns.

To that I wish to respond: we, the small and the poor, also pay. What we contribute may not be much but in terms of our own budgets they are substantial -- indeed sometimes even more substantial than the contributions of the big nations. We do not like to see anyone squandering our money any more than the rich do. But

what we would like to see is not savings through the destruction of the agencies but a thorough overhaul of the system to ensure that it is cost-effective and serves the agreed objectives. Undermining the agencies is definitely not the way to tackle the problem. And so, let us all say: enough of this short-sightedness. Enough of cynicism. Enough of distortions and falsehoods. As we stand on the eve of the 40th. Anniversary of the United Nations, let us first of all pledge ourselves once more to the United Nations and, in that spirit, to a practical and realistic appraisal of where we can go on from here.

Looking back at the past four decades, I believe that from time to time we have succeeded in acting in the true spirit of the Charter. No one can deny that the United Nations have had its successes, and it still does much valuable work often in unspectacular ways. All these have been due to the consciousness that there exists an international community and that our national interest can in fact be safeguarded in the larger context of international interest. It is this consciousness that we must constantly cultivate.

The fact is that the further development of the United Nations depends, first and foremost on the attitude of the major powers. It is they, more than anyone else, who are in a position to decide the future of this Organisation. This is because the major powers cannot be ignored. The resolutions of the United Nations can be ignored -- as they have been. The weak developing countries can be ignored -- as they have constantly been. The question then is: do the major powers want the United Nations to become what it can become -- a centre for resolving conflicting interests and a catalyst for peaceful change -- or will they abandon it because they can no longer manipulate it?

But, of course, the responsibility is not theirs alone. The smaller nations are disillusioned at the ineffectiveness of the United Nations, which has been paralysed on so many issues because the major powers have prevented effective action. But Malaysia has always believed that just as the major powers must avoid alienating the smaller countries by their obstructive policies, so also the smaller

countries must prevent the alienation of the major powers from this Organisation through the wholesale imposition of decisions by majority vote. Speaking as a representative of a small developing country, I am very conscious of the fact that a United Nations resolution which is obtained by majority voting along group, political or ideological lines will not in itself solve any problem. There is often a need for greater realism and restraint. More efforts can be made through the process of negotiation and consultation to arrive at solutions of principle, which are both realistic and practical.

But the principles must remain at the core of any solution. The United Nations, if it is to mean anything at all, must stand firm on principles, and there will be need for adjustments and compromise on the means, the processes, and the modalities. But there can be no compromise on principles. We, the smaller nations, cannot be blamed if we insist on that. It is hypocrisy to accuse us of being emotional or unrealistic, irresponsible or irrelevant only because those principles are now inconvenient to the major powers.

May I turn now to another subject of equal importance to contemporary international and human relations. I refer to the misunderstanding which is so prevalent in the Western World, fed by deliberate distortions by interested parties about what is happening in the Islamic World.

The fact is that there is a resurgence of faith in the Islamic World as well as among other religions. Do not allow yourselves to be manipulated to fear this resurgence or, even, by the word "fundamentalist" which has triggered so many ancient suspicions and prejudices. Yes, we are the Islamic "fundamentalists" because we believe in the fundamentals of Islam -- in peace, tolerance and justice -- and, yes, there are extremists just as there are extremists everywhere in every religion and in every phase of history. Surely no one can deny that there have been historically aberrations in all religions and it is plain prejudice or deliberate distortion to allow these aberrations to determine our perception and our judgement. Let

us ask ourselves: Would it be fair to judge Christianity by the excesses of the Spanish Inquisition or by the obscenity of apartheid or Nazism? Would it be fair to judge Judaism by the perversities that political Zionism represents?

The answer is self-evident. The current revolution in Islam deserves to be judged fairly and objectively. I do not deny that violence and injustice and much which is against universal good values, have been perpetrated in the name of Islam. But the concentration on these aspects which, I repeat, are typical aberrations in any historical movement, to the exclusion of all others which are true and good, does harm to the world. It leads to misunderstanding, fuels suspicions and reinforces prejudices to the detriment of us all.

And yet there are some who for their own racist reasons, are only too prone to highlight and gloat over every excess, real or imagined, which they can focus upon. If all the money, time and energy spent on distorting what is going on in the Islamic world is spent instead on a careful and objective understanding of one of the most important developments in the contemporary world, how much better we would all be! The great liberation movements after the Second World War could only be understood when people knew that Gandhi was not 'a half-naked fakir', or Kenyatta a representative of the forces of evil and darkness, or Nasser an upstart, irresponsible trouble-maker. Similarly what is happening in the Islamic world today must be understood as a movement which seeks to consolidate political freedom, economic justice and cultural identity; a catalogue of values which everyone, if he is to be true to any notion of decency and civility, must surely support.

It is not my purpose in these remarks to place the current Islamic resurgence in its historical context. There is a long and turbulent history of relations between Islam and the West, during which many prejudices became ingrained. What is more tragic is that these are now being revived and fanned and exploited by the Zionists to serve political ends. The great peoples of the Book -- Jews,

Christians and Muslims -- have much in common with each other, have contributed much to human civilisation and have, surely, much more to contribute. Why is it, then, that we should allow one of the most significant movements of our times -- the resurgence of Islam -- to be wilfully misrepresented and misunderstood? Who stands to gain from such misunderstanding? Why cannot we instead turn to each other and learn from one another, from our respective historical experiences, from our dreams and hopes and fears. Let us find charity in our hearts, let Christians and Jews and agnostics alike find charity in their hearts -- to recognise what is going on in the Islamic world for what it really is, a search for spiritual succour in a world that is confused and troubled. Let us be rid of hatred, of the anti-Islam propaganda of bitterness and prejudice that the Zionists continue to spew.

I appeal therefore for understanding between Jews, Christians and Muslims. Many Muslims today are disillusioned and shocked over what they regard as contemporary aberrations in the Judeo-Christian traditions -- and this has resulted in a resurgence of Islamic orthodoxy and extremism. The Zionist-inspired Western reaction to this Islamic resurgence as well as its aberrations, of intolerance and self-righteousness has further increased the separation and antagonism between the West and the Islamic World.

It is time that we -- all of us -- put a stop to this. The contemporary aberrations in the Judeo-Christian tradition and likewise the contemporary aberrations within the Islamic tradition in a few instances must not be allowed to obscure their fundamental virtues. Let us study each other's true teachings. Let us be true to those teachings. God willing, the great understanding that this will generate will help Jews and Christians and Muslims alike to contribute to, first of all, peace in the Middle East, and to greater understanding in the world. It will at the very least stop the machinations of those with selfish and narrow racist ends who are seeking to exploit ignorance and suspicion and prejudice. It will be a development of historic significance.

I would like to turn now to economic issues, and here my theme is consistency and fairness.

For a long time, the banner of free trade was held high and the colonies of the metropolitan powers were vigorously taught the virtues of free trade. At that time, and for years after our independence, we could not export anything except primary commodities, and our markets -- true to the lessons we had been taught -- were open to imports of manufactured goods from the industrialised countries. However, now that we ourselves have learned the trick of manufacturing and of exporting an insignificant number of goods, what has happened to that proud banner of free trade? It flies limply or at half-mast in the industrialised countries. We see quotas and other restrictions, so-called voluntary restraints and other threats and pressures. We even see our industrialisation policies which seek to attract foreign investments by such devices as export incentives, preferential financing and so on being challenged. We also see, to our surprise, labour unions in industrialised countries which in the days of empire had not been in the least concerned about the lot of our workers -- who were then certainly exploited -- have suddenly become champions of our workers, urging them to demand for higher wages and improved working conditions, even though our workers have already gained better treatment since independence. We wonder why this unusual concern? Is it coincidental that the result of the concern is less competitiveness of our products?

You will forgive us, therefore, if in the face of all this, we are a little cynical about the principles of free trade which you have been preaching and about the interest of your labour unions in the welfare of our workers. So I say: do not just preach free trade, practise it. Do not be so presumptuous as to think that you know better than our labour leaders on how to look after the interest of our workers. We can compete with you freely and fairly in certain areas. These are usually low technology goods which in any event you, who are much higher up on the industrial scale, can best leave to us so that in turn

we can import those higher-technology goods which you produce. In this way we can all mutually fuel international trade which is an essential engine of growth and the only real solution to our poverty problem.

I want to turn to another area in which the comfortable and the rich in the industrialised countries still have the colonial mentality of wanting to lead us by the hand. During colonial times, much of our forests was cleared for timber and for planting rubber, palm-oil, tea, sugar, coffee and so on. Little concern was then expressed about the environment. Now as we seek to open up our lands for modern farming, for the generation of power and for industrialisation, a whole host of environmentalists from the industrialised countries have descended upon us to agitate our people about preserving the natural beauty of our tropical forests and so on. Certainly, we want to preserve our forests. Certainly we want to maintain our clean atmosphere. But make no mistake: it will not be at the expense of the living conditions of our people. We will not accept a situation where our rural people live in poverty and misery so that the rich, when they come by, can say "what unspoilt beauty", then tip the "happy" native children 10 cents for posing in front of a thatched hut, and then go their comfortable way. Preserving the environment requires money which we will not have unless we develop. We fully intend to develop and it is we, and we alone, who will make the judgement about environmental standards and about the preservation of our natural beauty which we, surely, more than anyone else have an interest in preserving. Help the poor countries to develop economically and the environment will be taken care of. Being poor in a beautiful environment does not mitigate poverty.

While on the subject of environment, I want to draw attention to yet another imposition on certain poor countries. I refer to pollution at sea, specifically pollution in the straits which are regarded as international shipping routes.

More specifically still, I want to refer to Malaysia's experience in the Straits of Malacca. In the days when ships were not so numerous or so huge, their passage through the narrow straits posed little problem to the littoral states. But now hundreds of these behemoths filled with all kinds of goods including dangerous chemicals and petroleum clogged the straits. Every now and then they collide with each other, spilling their contents into the sea. While tankers no longer clean their holds in the narrow waters, other ships still do. There is still a considerable amount of rubbish that is being discarded into the sea. The nett result is a filthy straits with patches of oil, pieces of paper, plastic and other rubbish. Eventually all these land on our shores, making them equally filthy.

In the face of these developments, the equipment and boats which Malaysia maintains to clean oil spillage at considerable cost to ourselves are no longer enough. Now we have to actively consider sweeping the sea of the wastes and rubbish thrown or flushed out of ships. I believe that in the circumstances we are right to ask that the maritime nations and the shipping firms, which obviously benefit from using the straits, should help to maintain the facilities for keeping the waters clean. I have no specific formula in mind but I am convinced that the international agencies concerned must examine and make necessary provisions for keeping the waters clean. The developing countries which face these straits should not be further burdened with having to equip and maintain costly facilities for dealing with oil spills and the extensive damage to fishing, sometime for years. Nor should their polluted beach resorts from which they earn a few tourist dollars be cleaned entirely at their own expense. The ships generally belong to the rich and they must defray the cost at least partially.

I have in these remarks focussed on a number of broad issues affecting the United Nations, the Islamic world and the developing countries. However, I shall be failing in my duty in this general statement if I do not also touch upon certain other issues which are pertinent as Malaysia looks at current developments in the world.

Before doing so, however, may I take this opportunity, first of all, to express the appreciation of my Delegation to the outgoing President who has carried out his tasks so admirably during the 38th Session of the General Assembly.

I would also wish to express from this forum, on behalf of the Government and the people of Malaysia, our warmest welcome and felicitations to the Delegation of Brunei Darussalam as it takes its seat in the United Nations -- an event which has given us very special pleasure. Brunei Darussalam is an adjoining neighbour of Malaysia and a fellow member of ASEAN. Since 7th January this year, when Brunei Darussalam formally joined ASEAN as a full member, we have worked closely and amicably with her and we know that she will have many important and serious contributions to the work of this organisation. Malaysia looks forward to a future of close and fruitful collaboration with Brunei Darussalam.

As we survey developments around the globe, we cannot but be filled by a sense of foreboding at the downward spiral of international understanding, of outrage at so much blatant injustice and even, alas, of cynicism at the wide gap between professions of principles and their practice.

Take the case of Palestine, which has been referred to for too long as an Arab-Israeli conflict. This is a deliberate misnomer, because the conflict is in essence and in reality an Israeli-Palestine conflict, the root of which is the adamant denial by Israel of Palestinian nationhood. To all those who insist on direct talks between the parties concerned, I ask: who are the parties but the Israelis and the Palestinians? To all those who talk of democracy, freedom, self-determination and all the other lofty principles of justice and human rights, I ask: in the name of what can the people of Palestine be denied their right to their own independent homeland? Is it in the name of Israel's security, which can be assured, in any event, in many other ways? Can this be seriously argued by countries who at

the same time are vociferous in condemning the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea? No. The fact is that the Palestinians are being denied their freedom because Israel wants it so and she has the support of a powerful ally to enforce her will. Let us avoid debating-points. Let us avoid dredging minutiae of history. This is the basic issue. Despite the clear will of the international community and the undeniable rights of the Palestinians, Israel adamantly and violently opposes Palestinian freedom. If another state had done this, it would be rightly condemned -- as Israel is by some -- and rightly repudiated -- as Israel is not -- because of her powerful ally. And yet Israel and her friends attempt to portray her as the victim, the injured innocent!.

Sometimes it is also said that the Palestinians or more specifically the P.L.O., must first of all recognise Israel before -- and let us bear this in mind -- not before Palestinian independence can be accepted, but before the P.L.O. can be allowed to take part in any discussion on Palestine's future: an explicit recognition of Israel by the P.L.O in return for which the P.L.O. will be allowed an undefined seat in undefined negotiations about an undefined future for Palestine. This is insisted upon: never mind about the Fez Resolution of the Arab Heads of State, never mind about the Resolution of the U.N. Conference on Palestine, whose provisions about the security of all States in the Middle East are clear for all who wish to see. And yet, by the same token, have these supporters of Israel asked Israel for an explicit recognition of the P.L.O and for Palestinian freedom? The answer is -- no. Or even for an implicit recognition? Again, no. And, what is more, Israel has not only neither explicitly nor even implicitly recognised the P.L.O and Palestinian independence, she has quite explicitly and categorically rejected any possibility of dealing with the P.L.O. or of any prospect of Palestinian independence. In these circumstances, those who still point the finger of responsibility at the P.L.O. cannot expect us to take them seriously. They have no doubt their own reasons for what they do but they cannot expect us to believe that it is remotely connected with any principle of democracy, justice or human right.

As to Southern Africa, Mr. President, how can we adequately express our outrage at the manner in which the treated? At the risk of being misunderstood I venture to suggest that if white people are treated by a black Government or any Government for that matter, in the way that the black people in South Africa are being treated the entire world would rise up and take decisive action. And yet what do we see? Certain countries press into service all manner of arguments under sophisticated labels such as constructive engagement. They appeal for patience, they draw attention to practical realities, and, in the case of Namibia, they even advance the almost incredible and totally irrelevant concept of "linkage" -- arguments which they themselves would not tolerate for one moment if the victims of this monstrosity that apartheid and the racist regime represents were whites. I urge these Governments to leap beyond oblique intellectualizing, beyond calculations of economics or power politics to understand that what is at stake is a moral issue: how can you support a Government whose philosophy is immoral and whose methods are brutal and cruel? How can you justify denying to the black people of South Africa a life of freedom and decency in their own land? History will judge you, and do not be outraged, that in the mean-time, we are judging you too.

Looking elsewhere in the world, Mr. President, it is ironic to see in Afghanistan the contrast between professions of lofty principles and actual practice. In the name of good-neighbourliness and fraternal relations, a vicious and bloody war is being inflicted on the people of Afghanistan. This violation, like any other violation of the independence and territorial integrity of a sovereign nation, must be resisted. Malaysia has therefore supported and will continue to support, in whatever practical way we can, the struggle of the valiant Afghan people for their freedom and honour. That is why we have given facilities in Kuala Lumpur for the Majaheed freedom fighters to have an office. That is why we continue to support the diplomatic efforts of the Secretary-General to seek a political solution to this problem. Faced with the might of stronger neighbours, small weak

states need to know that the United Nations will not allow them to be trodden over by the boots of invading armies. Everything else must depend on this fundamental right to freedom and sovereignty.

Nearer to us in Malaysia, we see the same cynical manipulation of words such as self-determination and fraternal assistance and human rights in order to justify what cannot be justified, namely the Vietnamese invasion and continuing occupation of Kampuchea. The ASEAN countries which had offered a hand of friendship and cooperation to Vietnam at the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, have opposed and will continue to oppose this blatant violation of Kampuchea's independence and territorial integrity. The situation is ironic because Vietnam which once earned the high admiration of many for standing up in defiance and, finally, in triumph against overwhelming odds to uphold the right of the Vietnamese people to their freedom in their own homeland is committing now exactly what it had accused its adversaries of attempting to do: namely the imposition of its will by armed might against a smaller and weaker country. This tragic irony is compounded by the fact that Vietnam's ASEAN neighbours have categorically shown that they are fully ready to meet Vietnam's legitimate security interest. A further irony is that the ASEAN countries in 1971 had agreed to the concept of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in Southeast Asia and it is Vietnam's continued occupation of Kampuchea which is the obstacle to the realisation of a conflict-free neutral area untroubled by the rivalries of the major powers, which Vietnam also claims to be its objectives.

The choice between conflict and co-operation is Vietnam's. From the contacts and meetings, both public and private, that she has had with individual ASEAN countries, Vietnam knows that ASEAN is flexible and sincere in our wish to bring the present conflict to an end, but we cannot and will not compromise on the right of the Kampuchean people to choose their own form of Government free from any external coercion. We will stay the course. The position we have taken is not only in conformity with United Nations principles

and relevant resolutions but it offers a fair and honourable exit for Vietnam. It is now up to Vietnam to decide.

I would like to turn now to the subject of Antarctica, to which, I feel compelled to refer as Malaysia was one of the co-sponsors of this item at the last General Assembly.

As we await the Secretary-General's study and the subsequent debate on this subject later during this session, I want to emphasise most of all that Malaysia approaches the forthcoming discussions with an open mind and with the hope that, by listening carefully to each other's concerns and views, we shall all be able to move forward together on this issue.

I also want to stress that Malaysia had raised this subject in a constructive spirit -- to build not to destroy. We do not dispute the good that the present Antarctica Treaty System has done. But what we are seeking to build is a broader basis and a firmer foundation for international co-operation in Antarctica which would be acceptable to, and in the interest of, the international community as a whole and which would thus ensure the long-term stability and effectiveness of the system. We have an open mind as to how that can best be brought about. Of course we have some ideas of our own: in the particular circumstances of Antarctica -- a large land-mass occupying some 1/10th of the globe's land surface, situated in a strategic part of the world, with a fragile ecosystem and possessing rich marine and, possibly, mineral resources, a part of the world, moreover, with no settled inhabitants and where, indisputably, there is no recognition of the claims to sovereignty except between the seven claimants -- we believe that there is at least a strong case for Antarctica to be in one way or another the common heritage of Mankind.

But we are aware that there are practical and legal realities, as well as a great deal of national sensitivities, which cannot simply be swept aside. The United Nations has only begun to consider this question of Antarctica and all of us will therefore need to proceed

cautiously and carefully. Hence, whatever Malaysia's views may be, we will approach the forthcoming discussions with an open mind and a sensitivity to the concerns, views and interests of other Member-States. We earnestly urge a similar approach by all concerned. It is in that spirit that we have proposed the establishment of a Special Committee on Antarctica. It can be expected that the discussions on Antarctica which will take place later during this session will not be conclusive. Such a Committee should build upon the discussion at the General Assembly and examine the subject in greater depth so as to arrive at a consensus on the objectives of a regime in Antarctica and the machinery to achieve such an objective.

One matter that needs constant serious attention is the drug problem. As we are aware the drug problem is international or global in character and knows no national boundaries. Thus no country can handle this problem single-handed. It requires a serious and concerted effort at the international level by all countries and international agencies concerned.

The present cooperation at the international level has not achieved much. There are many reasons for this, of which the lack of commitment and coordination among the various countries is a major factor. This lack of cooperation is due in part to the conflict of interest which may be commercial and economic in nature. It is also observed that some countries are reluctant to implement the UN decisions relating to the prevention and control of narcotic drugs due to various factors including the lack of political will. This could also be because many countries do not consider their drug problems as serious, partly because of their outlook and partly because their problems are small.

It should be noted that the drug problem not only brings with it criminal implications, but if left unchecked can weaken and eventually destroy the social and cultural fabrics of our societies. It also has security ramifications that can threaten the very survival of a nation. It is for this reason that Malaysia has legislated harsh laws to

curb the drug menace. Other countries may take exceptions to these laws but the best way they can help stop the harsh sentences on drug traffickers is by cooperating in the prevention of drug production and trafficking. We appeal to the world community to truly internationalise the prevention of drug trafficking.

I have in these remarks expressed my views openly and frankly. I do so because I take the United Nations seriously and I do not believe that these general debates at each Assembly should be an exercise in platitude or politeness. We must mean what we say, and say what we mean. I have tried to do that, although in doing so I may have raised some uncomfortable feelings. Only frankness, an open mind, a willingness to work hard on the details of issues and to accommodate other views and, above all, a firm commitment to the vision of the Charter -- a world of peace, freedom, justice and human dignity -- will see us through the critical days that are upon us now. It is in that spirit that the Malaysian Government approaches its duties at, and to, the United Nations.

Address By Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia At The 39th. Session Of The United Nations General Assembly, 10th October 1984, New York.

THE TENTH MEETING OF THE ASEAN MINISTERS ON AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY (AMAF)

It is indeed a pleasure and privilege for me to address this distinguished gathering of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry this morning. On behalf of the Government of Malaysia, let me take this opportunity to extend our warm and sincere welcome to Your Excellencies and distinguished delegates to Malaysia. This is the second occasion that Malaysia is playing host to the Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry; the first occasion being, in October 1982. It is my sincere hope that your deliberations will be fruitful and that your stay here will be most pleasant.

ASEAN has emerged as a strong regional grouping committed to maintaining political and economic stability in the region through cooperative endeavours among its member nations. Apart from resolving issues of political consequences to the stability of the region, economic co-operation in the field of agriculture, fisheries and forestry assume special significance within ASEAN. Agriculture is still the mainstay of the majority of the economies of ASEAN member countries. It still provides employment and livelihood to a majority of our populace, and as a common feature, the agricultural sector as a whole is still faced with problems of poverty and malnutrition.

In Malaysia for example, though it is putting greater emphasis on the manufacturing industries, rural and consequently agricultural development is still a subject of high priority. The objective in rural development has been and continues to be the redressal of poverty among the rural population made up of subsistence farmers, smallholders, fishermen and landless agricultural workers.

Urban poverty does exist and it would be grossly unfair and unjust not to recognise it and to ameliorate it. But poverty in the developing countries is largely rural and involves agriculturists. The belief that mere redistribution of land would overcome rural poverty has not been fully proven. Even where land is owned by the tillers of the soil extreme poverty persists. If the developing countries are going to rely on agriculture, and they must if they want to avoid hunger, then they must reexamine their agricultural practices in order that they do not impoverish the farmers who supply them with food.

ASEAN, like many other developing countries, have not neglected agriculture or rural development. We can be justly proud of the notable achievements that have been made in technical as well as economic co-operation in our region. However, much more can be done if we could strengthen our co-operation in the area of agricultural practices and trade. We have a need to learn from each other and to present a more united front when dealing with the developed world, our major market. It is not a cartel that we should propose but it is important to remember that the developed countries are getting closer together and they will soon adopt a single policy or approach in their trade with us.

The contribution of the industrialised countries towards the development of third world countries is well recognised. The developed or industrialised countries have done much in providing technical assistance to the developing countries in order to accelerate rural development. But developing countries need money with which to develop. Although aid, both technical and financial, can help, in the final analysis it is equitable trade which will enable rural poverty to be reduced. As the rural areas are agricultural, trade in agricultural produce means a great deal not only to a developing country but to the farmers themselves.

Presently, the economic activities of the developing countries are adversely affected by the economic policies and trade practices of the industrialised countries. Among these are manipulation of food surpluses in the rich industrial countries, control over commodity trading and prices and protectionist policies which have direct and adverse consequences on the economies of the developing countries.

In recent years, food surpluses in the rich industrialised countries have increased tremendously because massive farm subsidies tend to encourage farmers to produce more and more. That their local market cannot absorb what they produce seems of little concern to them. They are even less concerned with the disruption they cause in the international market where their surplus is sold at below cost. Unable to compete in this environment, the farmers of developing countries are doomed to poverty. Technically they are less efficient but it is the distortions caused by massive subsidies in developed countries which is killing them, frequently literally.

If indeed the developing countries are to progress in the true sense of the word, then the apparent contradiction, of on the one hand helping developing countries to increase their outputs whilst on the other hand denying them market outlets, must be overcome. ASEAN as a grouping of developing countries still dependent on agriculture must work closely together in the GATT rounds of talks in order to persuade the developed North to adhere to the understanding on standstill and roll-back of subsidies for farmers. It is worthwhile to note that developing countries like Malaysia not only deny subsidies for agricultural production but impose cess and export duties on them.

To my mind, ASEAN, as a regional grouping, must address this problem in a determined and concerted manner. In this connection, future collaborative efforts in the field of agriculture and forestry should not stop purely at agro-technical fields, but must also be geared towards obtaining more favourable trade arrangements for the benefit of member countries.

ASEAN's agricultural trade has traditionally been based on the export of primary commodities. In the past few years, we have seen how the decline in prices of commodities in the world market have depressed agricultural commodity trading and affected our respective economies. The declining commodity prices have affected the terms of trade so much that for the same amount of manufactured goods from the developed countries we have to sell two to three times more of the commodities we export. Additionally we are meeting more and more unethical trade practices on the part of powerful competitors from the North. The cost of countering such unfair practices is so high that alone we will fall one by one. The need to cooperate is therefore more urgent now.

Regional interests aside, ASEAN must lend support to global efforts at eliminating protectionism. To this end, ASEAN must support the MTN - Uruguay Rounds which is to be held for a period of four years beginning this year. There is no denying that the Uruguay Rounds is of special interest to us as it involves negotiations with other member countries of the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) for the purpose of eliminating protectionism. As you are all aware, the Uruguay Rounds was specially called for by the Ministerial Declaration at the Special Meeting on MTN in Punta Del Este in September 1986 in view of the increasing number of GATT member countries that are exercising protectionist policies.

It is relevant to mention here that the group on agriculture has carried out several rounds of negotiations in Geneva, but without much encouraging results so far. This has been largely due to the posture adopted by certain highly industrialised countries with regard to the approach in reducing subsidies in the production and trading of agricultural commodities.

Nonetheless, I am happy to note that the "Cairns Group", of which Malaysia is a member, is currently working on a proposal which the group feels will be acceptable to the developed countries

concerned. The proposal will be submitted for Ministerial approval at the Mid-Term Review of the Uruguay Rounds scheduled to be held in Montreal, Canada in December this year. Hopefully, this effort will lead to the liberalisation of agricultural trade at the international level in the long run.

I am very optimistic that with close collaboration between member countries, ASEAN can overcome the obstacles to economic progress in the region. At this juncture, I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate the Committee on Food, Agriculture and Forestry for the commendable efforts it has undertaken thus far towards accelerating agricultural development in the region.

I am glad that the Committee, through its various subsidiary bodies has formulated several collaborative projects for the benefit of member countries. It is noted that many of these projects have been either successfully implemented or on-going, while delay in the implementation of some projects has been occasioned by the inability to secure third party funding for those projects.

However, it is heartening to note that the Committee on Food, Agriculture and Forestry in its efforts to overcome the constraints, has embarked on new initiatives to further enhance co-operation in the field of food, agriculture and forestry. These new initiatives which were considered and approved at the ASEAN Summit Meeting in December 1987 highlighted, among others, the main areas of cooperation and the mechanism for their implementation which include generation of funds from within ASEAN itself, and the participation of the private sector in the implementation of the projects.

These initiatives by the Committee are indeed commendable, for such efforts will surely go a long way towards speedier implementation of projects and encourage the sharing of available resources within the region for mutual benefit. It is my fervent hope, therefore, that the Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry, the

Committee on Food, Agriculture and Forestry and the various subsidiary bodies under it will address themselves to the Summit decisions and translate into meaningful activities the "Programme of Action", especially with respect to participation of the private sector, in order to ensure the achievement of the immediate and long term goals of ASEAN in food, agriculture and forestry.

I am convinced that these endeavours if relentlessly pursued, will not only help ASEAN to bring about positive institutional changes in the agricultural sector but will also ensure the desired human resources development in that sector.

Given the above framework, I know that the task you have before you is not an easy one. Nevertheless, I am confident that you will give the best of your efforts to achieve our objectives in the true spirit of ASEAN solidarity, co-operation and understanding so clearly manifested up till now. Once again, I wish you all a fruitful and successful deliberation.

With great pleasure I now declare this Tenth Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry open.

Opening Address By Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia AT The Official Opening Of The Tenth Meeting Of The Asean Ministers On Agriculture And Forestry (Amaf). 20th October 198, The Hilton Hotel, Kuala Lumpur.

THE 9TH CONFERENCE OF THE HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

May I on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf offer you our sincere congratulations on your unanimous election as Chairman of the Ninth Conference of the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement. We are confident that under your distinguished Chairmanship, the deliberations of this Conference will be successfully concluded. My delegation would also like to express our deep appreciation for the warm and generous hospitality accorded us, as well as the excellent arrangements made to ensure our comfortable stay in this beautiful city of Belgrade.

My delegation also wish to place on record our deep appreciation to His Excellency Mr Robert Mugabe for his guidance of the affairs of the Movement during his Chairmanship. The Movement's current high standing in international affairs is a tribute to the dedication and statesmanship of Mr Mugabe.

It was in Belgrade that the historic meeting of the heads of non-aligned nations was held in 1961 to usher into a troubled world a third force to mitigate the effects of East-West confrontation. In the 28 years of its existence the Non-Aligned Movement has played a vital role to prevent the world from being completely split into two warring blocs.

It has been a costly role. Many of us have had our arms badly twisted, have been subverted, have been wasted by proxy wars, have had to fight and fight again to retain our independence--social, economic, political and ideological independence.

But we have also gained. Slowly and painfully the world has been made a more peaceful place. The East-West rivalries also served to highlight the needs of poor countries, and the necessity for helping them.

Today we see a vast change in the world's political scene. Although it is too soon to say that East-West confrontation is over, the fact remains that the intensity of the ideological struggle between the two blocs has abated. We see the two superpowers talking to each other. We see the elimination of some nuclear weapons and the reduction of some conventional ones. We see the changes in Poland and Hungary, the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, the tendency to compromise and reduce the proxy fights in third world countries.

We see also a trend towards peace. The ceasefire has been achieved in the Iran-Iraq war, the UN is now overseeing the birth of Namibia, the problems in Angola and Mozambique are set to end.

On the economic front, however, we see disturbing trends toward consolidation of the developed countries into powerful trading blocs. We see the centrally planned socialist countries moving away from political affinities in favour of economic benefits.

The lines that divide East and West are becoming blurred. The first and second worlds are no longer distinct. If the reason for the Non-Aligned Movement is to provide a third force to limit and balance the disruptive influences of the other two, what will be its role now that its principle *raison d'être* is seemingly disappearing. Should we regard ourselves as no longer relevant or is there going to be a new confrontation for which we have to prepare, a confrontation between the combined East and West in the Northern Hemisphere and the erstwhile poverty stricken nations of the South.

While we mull over the future of our movement in a less divided world we have also to consider the realities of the present. Rapprochement between East and West may reduce tension between them but many of the pressures we have been subjected to have not lessened. Indeed in many instances they have increased and taken new forms.

There is a distinct attempt to relegate the United Nations to an inferior role while new and exclusive fora have been formed designed to exclude the participation of the poor nations. The group of seven rich nations have taken it upon themselves to regulate the world's economy and finances. One result is that countries like Malaysia have had their debts doubled by the upward revision of the Yen we borrowed. The intention is to reduce Japanese exports, but we have to pay the price.

But Japan has not been made any less competitive by the Yen revaluation. Instead it is now twice as rich and is buying up businesses and properties belonging to the other six. This can be regarded as poetic justice but unfortunately the finances of the poor have suffered as well.

The terms of trade are not getting any better for the third world. But now protectionism and unfair trading methods are creating havoc with the economies of the poor. While subsidies by the third world may result in countervailing duties by the rich, they themselves subsidise their industries to the point where over-production is encouraged and the markets become saturated. Consequently the products of the poor nations have become unsaleable. Surplus food is used to deprive poor countries of their markets.

The environment is now made into a trade weapon. The thinning of the ozone layer is blamed on logging of tropical forests. The fact that the burning of fossil fuels and release of CFC into the atmosphere occur largely in the rich countries are significantly ignored. Also ignored is the logging of vast tracts of temperate forests which is still going on despite the fact that millions of square miles of temperate forests have already been cleared for development of the rich countries over the centuries.

In the deserts of America underground water is pumped up to water golf courses and create lakes to build luxury hotels on. Yet the water can easily reafforest the deserts to reduce the gases which destroy the ozone layer as well as creating the green house effect. Instead poor countries are being forced not to extract wealth from their forests in order to keep the environment safe for the rich.

The developed countries have now appointed themselves the arbiter of human rights worldwide. In the name of human rights they have applied all kinds of pressures on countries unable to defend themselves. Every now and again new forms of human rights are invented and any country found defaulting is subjected to vile publicity and other repressive measures.

Having been responsible for the killing and torture of millions in the past, they now adopt a holier than thou attitude and want to impose their new-found ideas on human rights on the rest of the world. Although the missionaries have largely disappeared, they have now been replaced by the equally fanatical 'crusading environmentalists' and 'self-appointed human rights fighters' who would rather have disruptive civil wars in the poor nations than permit them to 'violate the latest in human rights'.

In Malaysia a campaign is being waged by outsiders to force a primitive jungle tribe, the Penans, to remain primitive on the grounds that this is their right. That the people live a miserable life, without the amenities that other Malaysians enjoy, is not given any thought. That these people suffer from all kinds of diseases and consequently have a shorter life span is ignored. The outsiders want to retain the so-called picturesque way of life of these unfortunate people forever. They are to remain museum pieces.

The sympathy for the Penans is hypocritical. All these so-called environmentalists are interested in is to prevent tropical timber from competing with temperate softwood.

Yet reafforestation is a natural process in the rain-drenched countries of the tropics. These forests regenerate without need for replanting and trees grow the whole year round. The debt for nature offer will still not solve our long term development needs. Besides, the shifting slash and burn cultivators whom we are prevented from resettling will still destroy the forests. The rich should spend their money to reforest their own lands and the world's deserts. Reduce the use of space-wasting motor vehicles and increase mass transport systems. Ban the use of CFCs and go back to squeezing rubber bulbs or hand pumps to spray. All these can be done immediately and there should be rapid improvements in the environment. Stop making poor countries to pay for the quality of life of the rich.

Many poor countries are now so much in debt that they can never repay without surrendering their independence. When a borrower overborrows, the fault is not entirely his. The lender is equally to be blamed as he has made an imprudent loan. He must therefore pay for his indiscretion.

Schemes to collect debts from some of the most extensively indebted countries are simply not going to work. Refusing to lend any more and bankrupting countries is not going to help anyone. Nor should the people of a country be punished as society punishes debtors.

The only real solution to the debt crisis is to write-off the whole or very nearly the whole of the debts owing. The lenders must admit they were indiscreet and must pay for it. Commercial banks and Governments alike must accept the losses. The Governments of the rich countries will not be bankrupted because of the write-off. And their banks can still be rehabilitated.

The countries of the South have formed a South-South Commission to look into ways of solving the problems of the poor countries through South-South cooperation. The willingness of poor people to help each other is limited. But the potentials of the poor are

not so limited. We have, if nothing else, our huge populations which can be harnessed for our development rather than being only migrant workers in the North. Instead some labour intensive industries should be relocated in the South to provide employment and contribute towards its economic growth. Induced brain drain to the North should be stopped.

Democracy is being preached by the liberal democrats of the West with religious fervour. Everyone must accept liberal democracy or have their countries destabilized, civil war fomented or at the very least economic sanction and vilification by the media.

We are all for human rights and for democracy. But human rights and freedom must begin with the right to be free from hunger and disease, malnutrition and illiteracy. Human rights as defined by the West is meaningless if there is no roof over our heads, no food on our tables and no schools for our children. The Western liberals must understand that we cannot practice their brand of democracy and human rights overnight. Nor do we want a carbon copy in their own image. The democratic system requires an advanced degree of sophistication among the masses practising it. The people must know the limits of freedom if anarchy is to be avoided. Only a vague boundary separates the exercise of freedom and the excesses of anarchy.

Countries which for thousands of years had only known authoritarian rule cannot become democratic overnight. Sudden freedom will result in disruptions, which in turn will retard the progress towards a more liberal and open society. The liberal democrats of the west should cease trying to force the pace. They should let the people concerned work things out for themselves.

Unfortunately instigations by the liberal democrats of the west have already resulted in bloodshed and retardation of the progress of some countries. The problem is exacerbated by the attempts to apply sanctions after the foreign inspired disturbances are put down.

The peoples in the countries undergoing change should exercise restraint. Demanding too much too soon is counter productive. The western liberals should be ignored. With patience and judicious pressure the changes will take place. Do not be goaded into wild demonstrations which can only attract repression and delay the very change you yearn for.

Many of the world's problems are still with us and among them is the despicable apartheid system of South Africa. The efforts to eliminate the hideous system and bring about majority rule in South Africa must be redoubled. A major socialist country who has always condemned apartheid would now appear to be soft peddling the need to intensify the struggle. Negotiations are being attempted when everyone knows that apartheid has to be eliminated and in no way can it be reformed. The blacks of South Africa cannot afford even the slightest slackening of world-wide support for their cause. The white regime of South Africa must be ostracised and condemned. Sanctions must be more effectively applied.

We already see some results from sanctions. The white regime is beginning to make overtures, although some of the noises emanating from them are hypocritical. In Namibia, the South African regime have been forced to be more accommodating. We have to sustain the pressure if we are going to get anywhere with this throwback of the racist past. Indeed, we have to increase the pressure for the process needs to be hastened. Our black brothers in South Africa have suffered long enough.

The Palestinian problem is another example where the Movement must insist that the international community particularly the major powers own up to their responsibilities and commitments. Israel's policy in Palestinian and other Arab territories must continue to be universally condemned. The Intifada has exposed the true character of the Israelis. They are no better than their former oppressors. Yet the PLO has been courageous enough to accept

reality and the need for a comprehensive political settlement. The friends of Israel must now force it to respond.

As regards Cambodia the conflict now has an international framework. Clearly the Cambodian factions must be mindful of their responsibilities. There must be a sharing of powers under the leadership of Prince Sihanouk. The universally condemned practices of the past must no longer threaten Cambodia nor can there be foreign armies transgressing Cambodian sovereignty.

As for Afghanistan, it is time that the unrepresentative Government steps down and the fratricidal fighting give way to a Government by consensus. The people of Afghanistan deserve this for their courage and unprecedented fortitude.

Malaysia has always taken a strong and consistent stand against drug traffickers. Now that drug barons are not only able to corrupt and to indulge in violence but also to declare war on a nation, we hope that the seriousness of the drug menace to a nation's independence and well-being will be better appreciated. The war on drugs is far from being over. We will see more tragedies before the world wakes up to the need for a truly all out effort.

In the meantime we have to ensure that the revitalisation of the UN is completed. There can be no doubt that but for the efforts of the UN we would not see the more peaceful world that we are seeing today. The Iran-Iraq war, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the South African recalcitrance on Namibia, the disturbances in several African Central American countries and the problems in Asia would not be resolved or reduced but for the UN.

We have a duty to strengthen the UN as the sole instrument for establishing a more equitable and just world society. We must not allow exclusive organisations to take over. We owe it to ourselves and to the rest of the world to sustain and support the UN and its work.

Finally we must ensure that the Non-Aligned Movement remains relevant. The East and the West may patch up their differences. They may cease trying to drag us into their conflicts. But there is no guarantee that we are going to get a fair deal from them either separately or together. The signs are not yet propitious for a fairer deal from the North. Released from their preoccupation with each other's threat, each will have more time to cast baleful eyes on us.

It is imperative therefore that we stay together, that we present a united front, that we continue to strive for a more just and equitable world. We must be free to choose our own way of managing our internal affairs without outside interference. We must not allow ourselves to be harassed by crusading movements which have now taken over where their Governments have become unacceptable. No one should have a monopoly on refining the definition of rights and wrongs. Free people must be free to refine and redefine basic values themselves. Unless the deviation from basic values is flagrant, they should not be interfered with. As much as human freedom must be upheld, so must national freedom be upheld. Internal democracy without international democracy means imperialism will continue to plague this world.

Address By Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister Of Malaysia At The 9th Conference Of The Heads Of State Or Government Of The Non-Aligned Movement, 4th September 1989, Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING

Let me begin by bidding you 'Selamat Datang'. This Malaysian greeting expresses much more than just welcome. It conveys the warmth and happiness that we feel in receiving you here in Kuala Lumpur.

I am happy to meet old friends and to make new acquaintances. We are all, I am sure, delighted to welcome Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, whose presence here today is really a sort of a homecoming. Pakistan's return to this family of nations will no doubt enrich our discussion and help strengthen Commonwealth collective action.

I would also like to take this opportunity, on behalf of all of us, to thank Prime Minister Brian Mulroney for his stewardship at our last gathering in Vancouver and for the unforgettable hospitality of the Canadians. I know that Prime Minister Mulroney as past Chairman, will have a valuable contribution to make.

Malaysia, situated at the crossroads between China and India, East and West, has for centuries been a meeting place for peoples and cultures. We carry this tradition today as we now play host to the leaders of the Commonwealth.

Although we have been trading with the rest of the world for over a thousand years, we had never participated much in international affairs. But since independence we have been forced out of our cocoon by international economic and political pressures. If we do not go out to protect our interests no one will protect us. Hence our increasing participation in multilateral organisations. The hosting of this Meeting is a part of that need to interact and to protect ourselves.

The Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Conference is timely and relevant. Developments in relations between the superpowers promise, for the first time since the war, a broadbased and unprecedented agenda for political and economic cooperation. Less heartening is that we enter the next decade with the economic issues of the eighties unresolved. And, equally disheartening, Apartheid is still with us.

These trends and circumstances provide challenges and opportunities which demand new responses from us. The Commonwealth, if it is to remain relevant, must provide some of the answers. The Kuala Lumpur Conference, I hope, will give us the opportunity to look for them.

There is some momentum towards superpower détente. We cannot assume that as they resolve their differences, our interests, especially those of the developing world, will not be sacrificed. We must be mindful of this. We must be able to forecast and to pre-empt. Peace will carry a cost. That cost must be equitably shared.

In West Asia ceasefire arrangements are now in place which, hopefully, will lead to an end to bloodshed. The Palestinians continue to be deprived of their homeland. Israeli security may be important but surely we must consider also the security of its neighbours and the fate of the Palestinians. State terrorism as practised by Israel is as despicable as any kind of terrorism and must be stopped. There cannot be peace and security without justice.

The situation in Afghanistan is far from being resolved. Afghans in their thousands continue to live in refugee camps. The Paris Conference on Cambodia failed to achieve a comprehensive political settlement. We must continue our efforts to resolve the Cambodian problem before it degenerates into another bloody civil war.

Of particular interest to us here is the situation in Southern Africa where our efforts need to be stepped up. We agreed that Apartheid must be eliminated. The correct signal must be sent to the racist regime in South Africa. Sanctions work. Do not be deluded into believing that the small changes we are seeing there is due to a sudden flowering of humanitarian feelings. Concern for the effect of sanctions on the blacks is misplaced. Consequently, sanctions must not only continue but must be escalated. Investments and financial flows to racist South Africa must be completely stopped.

We all know that the independence plan for Namibia is partly at least the result of sanctions. We also know that control over Namibia will be grudgingly surrendered, and every opportunity exploited to frustrate the implementation of the plan.

We must be vigilant that recent developments in Southern Africa do not obscure the central issues of Apartheid. We must not allow the racist Pretoria regime to deflect us. The establishment of a democratic, truly non-racial, unitary and representative government in South Africa must remain the principal objective of the Commonwealth. We must not think of settling old scores. Whites, blacks and coloured must live together in amity.

There may be cause for hope and encouragement with regard to the global political scene, but the world economic trends are not so propitious. While nearly all of the developed countries still manage modest growth, many of the developing countries are experiencing stagnation if not negative growth. The rich countries have apparently ganged up against the poor. They have arrogated to themselves the right to direct world trade and to manipulate currencies to their advantage. Subsidies, quotas, tariff and non-tariff barriers by the rich have distorted costs and supplies worldwide. Now environment and human rights are to be used to hamper economic development in the developing countries.

On the question of poverty, especially in Africa, our response cannot simply be assistance alone. The linkages of poverty to debt and trade -- and even to the environment -- must be recognised and addressed.

The debt burden of the poor is getting heavier. An unacceptably high percentage of their GNP is spent to service debts, resulting in a reversal of the net flow of funds between the rich and the poor. For the poorest the situation is hopeless.

The African debt problem continues to deteriorate -- largely unnoticed. Part of Africa's problem is that the countries concerned simply do not owe enough to pose a threat to the international financial system. Hence, the scant attention to African debts.

What we need is a bold financial initiative. Such a plan would have to recognise that existing debts, public and private, are not worth their full value and that most African debtors cannot sustain full debt-servicing. Making debt-slaves of whole nations is worse than the inhuman practice of debt-slavery in the past. Those who can must pay, but consideration must be given to those who truly cannot.

Yet another dimension of the problem is the increasing attempt by the G-7 to interfere decisively in the management of the global financial and trading system. Their decisions to realign currencies have not only severely affected the debt-servicing burden of developing countries but also the resource flows and their growth prospects.

Problems of debt and poverty cannot be overcome while significant disparity exists between the economic growth rates of the developed and the developing countries. Developing countries need better access to markets and a greater flow of foreign investments not only for economic growth but also to provide them the means and the capacity to service their debts.

For world trade to grow, the principles of an open and fair multilateral trading and payment systems must be upheld. While we try to reduce tariff barriers, and stimulate global trade, we are now threatened by a discernable increase in non-tariff barriers. Further, the focus has shifted from "free trade" to "fair trade". Industrialised countries are increasingly demanding reciprocity even as they deny the developing countries tariff concessions and preferential treatment.

This is evident in the current Uruguay Round of the MTN. Pious pronouncements have been made on inter-dependence and the importance of multilateralism. But they are contradicted by the actions of those who make them. Bilateralism and regionalism are being allowed to gain at the expense of an open multilateral trading system.

The environment is now a matter of grave concern to everyone including the developing countries. The degradation of the environment can no longer be ignored and urgent solutions must be found. Unfortunately, many developed countries seem intent on laying the blame for the world's environmental problems on the developing countries. Yet by any measure, it is the developed countries which have most assailed our environment. Nuclear testing, excessive use of fossil fuels, private transportation, release of CFC into the atmosphere, massive wastage of paper, toxic chemical disposal; all these and more are the direct result of the life style of the rich.

Poverty, of course, contributes towards environmental decline, but it is only because the poor cannot help themselves. If they are denied the few resources they have, they are going to become poorer and would cause even greater environmental degradation. On the other hand, the rich can afford not only to reduce their waste generating life style but can expand more on reafforestation of the agricultural land they had wrested from their forests. With their technology and their wealth they can actually make millions of acres of desert bloom.

Unfortunately the line taken by environmentalists is to lay the blame on poor countries and seek to force them to slow-down their development in the interest of restoring the environment which the rich had polluted. Even World Bank loans are now to be made conditional upon environmental consideration.

We agree that concerted international effort is needed. The Commonwealth can help by bringing some sanity and balance to the current debate. We all must share the burden of keeping our environment livable, but, the sharing must be fair and in accord with the means at the disposal of each of us. The poor must not be made to pay for the past and present sins of the rich.

Another problem which transcends national boundaries and which requires a global approach is the drug problem. Malaysia makes no apology for the severity of our punishment for drug traffickers. We see today how very serious the problem can become. Whole Governments are being threatened, subverted and corrupted by the drug traffickers. Alone many nations may just go under. Only a combined and coordinated anti drug trafficking war by the international community can hope to defeat this evil and prop up Governments against the violent assaults by the merchants of death. An all-out global war must be waged with all the money and forces at our disposal. The cost will be high but the price we will have to pay if the drug menace spreads will be far higher. We are seeing this now. Extradition, confiscation of all proceeds from drug trafficking and severe punishment for traffickers must be universal. It is the laxity of some nations which has caused the drug habit to spread. Remember that along with the drug habit will come AIDS. Those who advocate leniency are guilty of spreading AIDS as well. We must act now.

In keeping with custom, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, as Head of the Commonwealth, is in Malaysia during the course of the Conference. Malaysia, as host, would like to thank Her Majesty for her gracious presence. The Malaysian Government and the people of

Malaysia are greatly honoured by her acceptance of our invitation to make a state visit to Malaysia immediately before the Conference. She has won the hearts of everyone of us by her friendliness and charm. Her Majesty's presence makes the Commonwealth that much more cohesive and meaningful. We wish her good health and long may she reign.

In conclusion, let me state that the relationship which binds the Commonwealth together can be enormously rewarding. There is much that we can do for each other and for the world if we set our mind to it and we act.

Malaysia in a way has rediscovered the Commonwealth. We admit that we were at one time disenchanted. But in an increasingly interdependent world the Commonwealth provides an important forum for the discussion and even the settlement of some international problems. We also see a role for ourselves in the Commonwealth, small though it may be. We pray and hope that the Commonwealth will, in this era of rapid and radical change, live up to the expectations of its members. We hope the Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Conference will contribute towards this end.

Once again, I bid you welcome to Malaysia. We will do our best to make your stay comfortable.

Address By Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister Of Malaysia At The Commonwealth Heads Of Government Meeting, 18th October 1989, Kuala Lumpur.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TROPICAL OZONE AND ATMOSPHERIC CHANGE

Let me begin by bidding 'Selamat Datang' to all, especially our visitors from aboard we are happy to receive you here in Penang Island, a major tourist destination in Malaysia.

Malaysia is proud to host this important international conference which has also attracted several Environmental Ministers. I wish to thank the Universiti Sains Malaysia for organising this Conference, at a time when much of the world's attention is focussed on global environmental issues including the depletion of the ozone layer in the stratosphere, transboundary movements of hazardous wastes, global warming, and loss of biological diversity.

Global environmental issues certainly require not only global attention but also practical solutions at all organisational levels. I note with satisfaction the rapid progress that has been made by the United Nations Environment Programme in the protection of the ozone layer including the control of substances that deplete the ozone layer as well as in the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal. I also note that further progress are being made at the international, and hopefully later at inter-governmental level, in the proposed Convention on Climate Change as well as in the maintenance of biological diversity.

It is worthwhile to note that concern over the depletion of the ozone layer in the stratosphere as translated into global action in the form of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer is unprecedented in the history of international law. However, the full socio-economic implications of the Protocol to the low-consuming countries, particularly the developing countries, had not been fully taken into account. The developing countries are required to use less than 0.3 kilogrammes of the controlled substances per capita. In contrast, the protocol requires the producing countries

namely the developed countries, to cut consumption within ten years to only 50% of their 1986 consumption. It is estimated that this will merely require a progressive reduction from two kilogrammes of the controlled substances per person annually to one kilogramme per capita.

Clearly, this represents a double standard, effecting both production and consumption of Chlorofluorocarbons or CFCs, that unfairly limits developing countries' consumption to a level 70% lower than that of developed countries. Furthermore, our global efforts to save the ozone layer are further complicated by the unnecessary provisions of trade restrictions to non-parties, a form of non-tariff barrier. A serious consequence of not acceding to the Montreal Protocol is that by January 1, 1992, CFC-containing goods exported from non-parties will be banned by importing countries that are parties to the Protocol. This is only mitigated by further restrictions to be imposed in 1994 on the export of goods which are produced with the controlled substances. Therefore all countries should take an active part in future work on this Protocol and in other international affairs generally.

The holding of this international conference is not that late for all concerned to re-assess the problems relating to the protection of the ozone layer. Not only the releases of the controlled substance from the tropical countries are less significant than that of the temperate region, but also the effects on the environment are least understood. I hope the outcome of your useful work in the tropics, other than over the Arctic and the Antarctic, will help enlighten not only the localised health and ecological effects of ozone depletion but also the associated socio-economic implications of the instituted control measures over the consumption of the otherwise very safe substances while in use.

Barring the difficulties that arise from the implementation of the Montreal Protocol, Malaysia is nonetheless committed to reduce its consumption of CFCs and Halons by 20% in the year 2003, and by

50% in the year 2008. In the meantime, Malaysia has to restructure both its domestic and international investments and trade strategies in matters affecting its present and future consumption of the controlled substances in a number of its important industries. These include the assembly of electronic chips manufacture of room air-conditioners and refrigerators, fabrication of rubber foam products and packaging materials and in fire protection. Like others, Malaysia should have access to any research work and development of any ozone friendly and environmentally safe CFC substitutes and technology. It is hoped that safe CFC substitutes which are also economically viable are discovered early. Otherwise developing countries, including Malaysia, may not be able to fulfill the requirements under the Montreal Protocol.

Indeed, when required to address global environmental issues the developing countries have to stretch themselves so thinly that their already limited technical and financial resources are sapped away from earlier commitment not only to revive economic growth, but also to tackle the long overdue environmental problems arising from poverty and uneven distribution of population pressure.

Much more environmental protection activities need to be directed towards the abatement of industrial pollution, control of soil erosion, safe disposal of domestic animal, municipal and toxic wastes, and rehabilitation of both idle and degraded lands. Thus, to many of us in the developing world, the so-called "global environmental issues" are quite remote from the management of present local problems.

It is for the developed countries to take effective measures to curb their heavy consumptions of fossil fuels and ozone-depleting substances. The developed countries should cut their own consumption of CFCs and Halons, not by 50%, but at least by 85% by the year 2000.

Should there be any further international initiative to mobilise global action to address any of the so-called "global environmental issues", such initiative must take into consideration the overall balance of world development, particularly in solving the debt crisis in many developing countries, the need to increase the flow of development finance, and the urgency of stabilizing the foreign exchange earnings of low income commodity producers. This initiative will have to prevail in order to induce far-reaching changes to produce trade, capital, and technology flows that are more equitable and well-balanced with the environment around the globe. Fundamental improvements in market access technology transfer, and international finance are necessary in order to help developing countries widen their opportunities by diversifying their economic and trade bases, and thus building up the necessary confidence to address both local and global environmental problems.

The root of the environmental problems, as admitted by many scholars, rests with the mismanagement of the global economy and the deliberate distortion of the value of renewable natural products from that of man-made capital goods and services. Valuing the environment properly is an issue in itself. All this time we have been misled by the way we have been calling "economic growth". If we use up our own natural resources, then that is capital depreciation, not a cost to us. But when we import technology and machinery, we have to count their depreciation as a cost to the nation. Yet depreciation of environmental capital is not recorded at all. There ought to be a fair deal, not one based on the presumption that the environment is free! Unless the developing countries receive a fair deal for their natural resource-based produce and exports, they should not be discriminated against for whatever little damage they may be capable of doing to the environment.

Most of us appreciate the apparent complexity in integrating environmental and resource depletion concerns more effectively in the economic decision-making process. We have yet to develop an effective tool that can help ensure that future calculations of national

income truly reflect "sustainable" income. The current calculations ignore the depletion of the natural resource base, and underestimate the values of agro-based and forest products. The current calculations also view the sales of non-renewable resources such as tin and petroleum as income.

The subject of the environment is far too important to be left entirely to the external "free" market forces. It would take quite some time for the current system of national income accounting, with all its limitations, to be revised. In the meantime, it does not mean that the world community could not possibly undertake effective interim measures, *inter alia* to consider seriously the setting up of a "Global Environment Trust Fund". The Fund could be financed by levies imposed on the emissions of greenhouse gases, the production of CFCs and other ozone-depleting substances, and even on chemicals that are in competition with the production and use of natural-product based biocides. Another possible source of revenue is a sales tax on various imports of natural products including agro-based and forest products that are not produced on sustainable basis. An international body with broad and effective representation could be established to manage the generated fund for environmental protection.

Malaysia is committed to the concept of sustainable development which addresses not only the issues relating to the protection and preservation of the environment but also how to ensure that the environmental issues are not abused by certain quarters to perpetuate their vested interests. The environmental challenges and opportunities should be treated as a major motivating factor to improve international economic relations and to resist the negation of the open market systems.

Malaysia has played its due role both at the regional and international level to promote world development that is well-balanced with the environment. Malaysia also made significant contributions to the Langkawi Declaration on the Environment, adopted by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in

October last year. In 1985, in Kuala Lumpur, ASEAN member countries reached a regional Agreement on Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

At the national level, Malaysia is proud of its achievements in controlling pollution from industrial sources. Much progress has been achieved in sewerage development programmes. Numerous sewerage master plans and feasibility studies have been completed practically for all major towns.

On air pollution, Malaysia has been successful in controlling the emissions of polluting gases virtually from all industrial sources. As a result, Malaysia has been largely able to maintain its air quality. In the urban areas, plans are being made to improve the air-pollution situation by introducing mass-transport systems and by encouraging public transport operators and smoky vehicle owners to switch to cleaner fuels or better performance engines.

To promote further growth of our industries, particularly electronics and petrochemicals, Malaysia has signed the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal. The Malaysian Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment has successfully promoted private investment in the establishment of fully integrated toxic waste collection transportation treatment, and safe repository of fully treated, innocuous residues facilities. When completed, it will be the first of its type in this part of the world. Malaysia is also actively implementing the London Guidelines on Banned or Severely Restricted Chemicals in International Trade.

By international comparison, particularly on forest conservation and management, our statistics are impressive. In Malaysia our tropical rainforests cover over 61% of the total land area. If we consider the total areas under both forest and tree crops such as oil palm, rubber and cocoa, it is 74 per cent. In Europe, there

is not much natural forest left with the exception of Portugal and Austria with about 40% of their lands under forest.

You have a busy schedule ahead of you. However, I hope you could find time after your meeting to see a little of this country.

I now have much pleasure in declaring open this Conference and I wish you all a successful deliberation.

Opening Address By Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister Of Malaysia At The Official Opening Of The International Conference On Tropical Ozone And Atmospheric Change, 20th. February, 1990, Penang.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BIODIVERSITY

I would like to thank the Council Members of the Malayan Nature Society for inviting me to officiate the opening of this International Conference on Biodiversity. The conservation of biodiversity is of global concern and I am glad that the Malayan Nature Society has given emphasis to this topic.

Malaysia is endowed with a great diversity of species in its forests and other natural habitats such as rivers, lakes and surrounding seas. Over 10,000 species of flowering plants, about 2,000 species of vertebrates and about 80,000 invertebrate species have been documented in this country. Only a small proportion of these resources has been utilized for our needs. As a medical man, I am aware of the many plants that are used in traditional medicine. I have no doubt that scientific investigation will reveal that many of these can replace some of the synthetic drugs and can provide new medicinal compounds.

What is of significance is that there is a high degree of endemism of these species in the country. Botanical studies in Peninsular Malaysia have shown that up to 30% of all tree species and 50% of the orchids are not found anywhere else. Biological diversity needs to be conserved to ensure that there remain genetic resources in this world for the further propagation and domestication of potential crops and animals as our forefathers had done with those which we are familiar with today. Many drugs and pharmaceutical products have been obtained from the chemical blueprints provided by plants and animals from the tropical rainforests. Many life-sustaining ecological processes particularly photosynthesis, the water cycle and the nutrient cycle are the result of the fine interaction of plants and animal species particularly in their natural environment. The question of carbon dioxide level and greenhouse effect is of great concern to all nations in the world. Maintenance of a critical level of

biodiversity is therefore compulsory for the sustainability of natural ecosystems.

Maintenance of global biodiversity is the common responsibility of everyone, as its benefits are universal and not limited to any one country or region. Developed countries with their advanced technological and scientific capability are in a better position to reap the benefits from the conservation of biodiversity. Thus this effort must be well supported by the wealthy developed countries without imposing restrictive burdens on the developing ones even though the habitat of the diverse species are now usually in the developing countries. It must be remembered that the developed countries were once also the habitat of numerous species until indiscriminate development eliminated them. While we would not wish to destroy biodiversity, it must be remembered that preserving it imposes a massive cost on the already poor. A way must be found to preserve without bringing development in poor countries to a standstill.

A number of existing international agreements have been formulated for the protection of biological diversity. In the general are of conservation of wild fauna and flora, Malaysia has demonstrated its commitment to conservation by signing such international agreements including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna. At this juncture we are also looking at the Ramsar Convention for the protection of Wetlands, the Bonn Convention for the protection of migratory species and the World Heritage sites convention.

I must once again stress that all these conventions are designed to benefit not just Malaysia but also the whole world. The Malaysian Government has also promulgated policies towards this end, including the passing of laws and enactments. A primary law is the Forestry Act of 1984 which provides for the establishment of a permanent forest estate comprising productive, protected and amenity forests. The permanent forest estate of Malaysia today total 12.74

million hectares of which about 29% is protected or maintained as amenity forests. 12.74 million hectares make up about 38% of the total land area of Malaysia. If tree plantations are included about 74% of Malaysia is covered by trees.

It may be argued that tree plantations are not forests. But even if they do not have the same range of biodiversity as the natural forests, they do contribute to the photosynthetic process, the water cycle and other natural functions of greenery.

The measures taken to preserve Malaysian forests carry considerable cost not only in terms of maintenance but also in depriving the people and the nation much land for living, working and cultivating. The price of land naturally increases as less land becomes available for agriculture and industry. Since what we are doing contribute to the better environment of the rest of the world, some thought should be given to the sacrifices by Malaysia and other developing countries.

Still we have dedicated ourselves to preserving the forests. To reduce forest exploitation we have established forest plantations of species that have short harvest periods.

National parks and wildlife are catered for through various Federal Acts and state enactments. A total of 1.485 million hectares have been set aside as parks, wildlife reserves and sanctuaries. The six percent of Peninsular Malaysia so reserved, most of it in pristine condition, represents one of the highest of such percentages in this part of the world. This figure compares well with or even exceeds that of some developed countries of the western world, many which are quite vocal on the subject of conservation.

We in Malaysia have a long and mature history of managing conservation areas. Taman Negara, for example, created in 1939 was the first National Park in South-East Asia to meet today's

international criteria for a national park. This park remains essentially the same as when it was first established.

The Environmental Quality Act sets standards for water and air quality and provides for mandatory environmental impact statements. We have not only sought to implement a high standard of environmental quality but are also determined to be a leader in this endeavour in the region.

In October last year at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting or CHOGM, I had the pleasure and privilege of presenting a document on the environment for the consideration of that important body. This document was adopted and came to be known as the Langkawi Declaration on the Environment.

This declaration marked a new level of understanding and awareness of the importance of the environment in today's world. It also was the fruit of our own environmental awareness which had been nurtured and developed over the years by many different organisations and institutions in this country. Today we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of one of the organisations in Malaysia that has helped nurture this consideration of nature, its conservation and of the environment.

The Langkawi Declaration recognises that environmental problems transcend national boundaries. Therefore there is a need for all nations to cooperate if these environmental problems are to be solved. The declaration promotes afforestation in developing countries to arrest the deterioration of land and water resources. It also calls on countries to upgrade efforts in sustainable forestry. It calls for the support of activities related to the conservation of biological diversity and genetic resources including the conservation of significant areas of virgin forests and other habitats. The unanimity with which this document was supported demonstrates the oneness and the will of the Commonwealth nations to carry out and implement the terms of the Declaration.

It is to the Malayan Nature Society and other responsible conservation bodies that we in the Government look to for feedback on how these national and international policies are actually working out in practice.

There must be a sharing of efforts and responsibility for maintaining biodiversity. The numerous species that are being preserved are not all harmless. Some are dangerous to health. To ask only the developing countries to preserve them is to expose the peoples of these countries to unacceptable threats to their well-being. It is difficult to convince a man who is about to be eaten by a tiger or trampled by an elephant or dying of typhus or malaria that he is helping to preserve biodiversity. It is imperative that the developed countries do their bit for biodiversity.

The developed countries are not only rich and advanced in technology but they have vast unpopulated and unused land. The deserts of the Western United States can in part at least be grown with trees using the vast resources of underground water. Some of the flora and fauna can be transferred to these new forests.

Last there be protest over this idea, let me remind you that quite a substantial area of these deserts together with their abundant aquifers have been developed as resort cities complete with vast golf courses and artificial lakes on which stand luxury hotels. Additionally it must be remembered that tropical plants and flowers have been and are being cultivated in the developed countries under artificial climatic conditions because they have commercial value. In suggesting that some of the deserts be converted to forests, I am not being facetious. Indeed if developed countries want to they can easily reafforest vast areas of the Sahel, the sub-Saharan areas where the poorest people in the world are dying by the thousands every day from lack of food. Let us not trot out the spurious argument that deserts are essential for biodiversity and must remain untouched by the hands of man. They have been touched. If they can be forested,

then a part of them should be forested. Reclaiming some of the deserts will not change the environment. Indeed a large part of these deserts are of recent origin, having been created by misuse by man and animals like the elephants.

We have today a gathering of eminent scientist, experts in different specialised fields related to conservation of nature and natural resources as well as the environment. It is your duty to assess the situation in this country accurately and fairly and to make constructive suggestions for the improvement of our present policies and efforts to conserve our rich resources, maintain our biodiversity while at the same time keeping a reasonable momentum of economic development. I assure you that the Government of Malaysia will examine all your suggestions for possible incorporation into our future plans.

I wish you all a most successful Conference and pleasant stay in Malaysia. It is now my privilege and pleasure to declare open this International Conference on Biodiversity.

Opening Address By Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister Of Malaysia At The Official Opening Of International Conference On Biodiversity At 12th June 1990, Kuala Lumpur.

MALAYSIA - THE WAY FORWARD

The purpose of this paper is to present before you some thoughts on the future course of our nation and how we should go about to attain our objective of developing Malaysia into an industrialised country. Also outlined are some measures that should be in place in the shorter term so that the foundations can be laid for the long journey towards that ultimate objective.

Hopefully the Malaysian who is born today and in the years to come will be the last generation of our citizens who will be living in a country that is called 'developing'. The ultimate objective that we should aim for is a Malaysia that is a fully developed country by the year 2020.

What, you might rightly ask, is 'a fully developed country'? Do we want to be like any particular country of the present 19 countries that are generally regarded as 'developed countries'? Do we want to be like the United Kingdom, like Canada, like Holland, like Sweden, like Finland, like Japan? To be sure, each of the 19, out of a world community of more than 160 states, has its strengths. But each also has its fair share of weaknesses. Without being a duplicate of any of them we can still be developed. We should be a developed country in our own mould.

Malaysia should not be developed only in the economic sense. It must be a nation that is fully developed along all the dimensions: economically, politically, socially, spiritually, psychologically and culturally. We must be fully developed in terms of national unity and social cohesion, in terms of our economy, in terms of social justice, political stability, system of government, quality of life, social and spiritual values, national pride and confidence.

Malaysia As A Fully Developed Country - One Definition

By the year 2020, Malaysia can be a united nation, with a confident Malaysian society, infused by strong moral and ethical values, living in a society that is democratic, liberal and tolerant, caring, economically just and equitable, progressive and prosperous, and in full possession of an economy that is competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient.

There can be no fully developed Malaysia until we have finally overcome the nine central strategic challenges that have confronted us from the moment of our birth as an independent nation.

The first of these is the challenges of establishing a united Malaysian nation with a sense of common and shared destiny. This must be a nation at peace with itself, territorially and ethnically integrated, living in harmony and full and fair partnership, made up of one 'Bangsa Malaysia' with political loyalty and dedication to the nation.

The second is the challenge of creating a psychologically liberated, secure, and developed Malaysian Society with faith and confidence in itself, justifiably proud of what it is, of what it has accomplished, robust enough to face all manner of adversity. This Malaysian Society must be distinguished by the pursuit of excellence, fully aware of all its potentials, psychologically subservient to none, and respected by the peoples of other nations.

The third challenge we have always faced is that of fostering and developing a mature democratic society, practising a form of mature consensual, community-oriented Malaysian democracy that can be a model for many developing countries.

The fourth is the challenge of establishing a fully moral and ethical society, whose citizens are strong in religious and spiritual values and imbued with the highest of ethical standards.

The fifth challenge that we have always faced is the challenge of establishing a matured liberal and tolerant society in which Malaysians of all colours and creeds are free to practise and profess their customs, cultures and religious beliefs and yet feeling that they belong to one nation.

The sixth is the challenge of establishing a scientific and progressive society, a society that is innovative and forward-looking, one that is not only a consumer of technology but also a contributor to the scientific and technological civilisation of the future.

The seventh challenge is the challenge of establishing a fully caring society and a caring culture, a social system in which society will come before self, in which the welfare of the people will revolve not around the state or the individual but around a strong and resilient family system.

The eighth is the challenge of ensuring an economically just society. This is a society in which there is a fair and equitable distribution of the wealth of the nation, in which there is full partnership in economic progress. Such a society cannot be in place so long as there is the identification of race with economic function, and the identification of economic backwardness with race.

The ninth challenge is the challenge of establishing a prosperous society, with an economy that is fully competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient.

We have already come a long way towards the fulfillment of these objectives. The nine central objectives listed need not be our order of priorities over the next three decades. Most obviously, the priorities of any moment in time must meet the specific circumstances of that moment in time.

But it would be surprising if the first strategic challenge which I have mentioned -- the establishment of a united Malaysian nation -- is not likely to be the most fundamental, the most basic.

Since much of what I will say this morning will concentrate on economic development, let me stress yet again that the comprehensive development towards the developed society that we want -- however each of us may wish to define it -- cannot mean material and economic advancement only. Far from it. Economic development must not become the be-all and the end-all of our national endeavours.

Since this Council must concentrate on the issues of economic development and economic social justice, which for this nation must go hand in hand for the foreseeable future, let me expand on the perception of the central strategic challenges with regard to these two vital objectives.

At this point it is well to define in greater detail the objective of establishing an economically just society.

Of the two prongs of the NEP no one is against the eradication of absolute poverty -- regardless of race, and irrespective of geographical location. All Malaysians, whether they live in the rural or the urban areas, whether they are in the south, north, east or west, must be moved above the line of absolute poverty.

This nation must be able to provide enough food on the table so that not a solitary Malaysian is subjected to the travesty of gross under-nourishment. We must provide enough by way of essential shelter, access to health facilities, and all the basic essentials. A developed Malaysia must have a wide and vigorous middle class and must provide full opportunities for those in the bottom third to climb their way out of the pit of relative poverty.

The second prong, that of removing the identification of race with major economic function is also acceptable except that somehow it is thought possible to achieve this without any shuffling of position. If we want to build an equitable society than we must accept some affirmative action. This will mean that in all the major and important sectors of employment, there should be a good mix of the ethnic groups that make up the Malaysian nation. By legitimate means we must ensure a fair balance with regard to the professions and all the major categories of employment. Certainly we must be as interested in quality and merit. But we must ensure the healthy development of a viable and robust Bumiputera commercial and industrial community.

A developed Malaysia should not have a society in which economic backwardness is identified with race. This does not imply individual income equality, a situation in which all Malaysians will have the same income. This is an impossibility because by sheer dint of our own individual effort, our own individual upbringing and our individual preferences, we will all have different economic worth, and will be financially rewarded differently. An equality of individual income as propounded by socialists and communists is not only not possible, it is not desirable and is a formula for disaster.

But I do believe that the narrowing of the ethnic income gap, through the legitimate provision of opportunities, through a closer parity of social services and infrastructure, through the development of the appropriate economic cultures and through full human resource development, is both necessary and desirable. We must aspire by the year 2020 to reach a stage where no-one can say that a particular ethnic group is inherently economically backward and another is economically inherently advanced. Such a situation is what we must work for -- efficiently, effectively, with fairness and with dedication.

"A full partnership in economic progress" cannot mean full partnership in poverty. It must mean a fair balance with regard to the participation and contribution of all our ethnic groups -- including the

Bumiputeras of Sabah and Sarawak -- in the high-growth, modern sectors of our economy. It must mean a fair distribution with regard to the control, management and ownership of the modern economy.

In order to achieve this economically just society, we must escalate dramatically our programmes for national human resource development. There is a need to ensure the creation of an economically resilient and fully competitive Bumiputera community so as to be at par with the Non- Bumiputera community. There is need for a mental revolution and a cultural transformation. Much of the work of pulling ourselves up by our boot-straps must be done ourselves. In working for the correction of the economic imbalances, there has to be the fullest emphasis on making the needed advances at speed and with the most productive results -- at the lowest possible economic and societal cost.

With regard to the establishment of a prosperous society, we can set many aspirational goals. I believe that we should set the realistic (as opposed to aspirational) target of almost doubling our real gross domestic product every ten years between 1990 and 2020 AD. If we do this, our GDP should be about eight times larger by the year 2020 than it was in 1990. Our GDP in 1990 was 115 billion Ringgit. Our GDP in 2020 should therefore be about 920 billion Ringgit in real (1990 Ringgit) terms.

This rapid growth will require that we grow by an average of about 7 per cent (in real terms) annually over the next 30 years. Admittedly this is an optimistic projection but we should set our sights high if we are to motivate ourselves into striving hard.

We must guard against 'growth fixation', the danger of pushing for growth figures oblivious to the needed commitment to ensure stability, to keep inflation low, to guarantee sustainability, to develop our quality of life and standard of living, and the achievement of our other social objectives. It will be a difficult task, with many peaks and low points. But I believe that this can be done.

In the 1960s, we grew by an annual average of 5.1 per cent; in the 1970s, the first decade of the NEP, Malaysia grew by an average of 7.8 per cent; in the 1980s, because of the recession years, we grew by an annual average of 5.9 per cent.

If we take the last thirty years, our GDP rose annually in real terms by an average of 6.3 per cent. If we take the last twenty years, we grew by an annual average of 6.9 per cent. What is needed is an additional 0.1 per cent growth. Surely if we all pull together God willing this 0.1% can be achieved.

If we do succeed, and assuming roughly a 2.5 per cent annual rate of population growth, by the year 2020, Malaysians will be four times richer (in real terms) than they were in 1990. That is the measure of the prosperous society we wish and hopefully we can achieve.

The second leg of our economic objective should be to secure the establishment of a competitive economy. Such an economy must be able to sustain itself over the longer term, must be dynamic, robust and resilient. It must mean, among other things:

- A diversified and balanced economy with a mature and widely based industrial sector, a modern and mature agriculture sector and an efficient and productive and an equally mature services sector;
- an economy that is quick on its feet, able to quickly adapt to changing patterns of supply, demand and competition;
- an economy that is technologically proficient, fully able to adapt, innovate and invent, that is increasingly technology intensive, moving in the direction of higher and higher levels of technology; - an economy that has strong and cohesive industrial linkages throughout the system;
- an economy driven by brain-power, skills and diligence in possession of a wealth of information, with the knowledge of what to do and how to do it;

- an economy with high and escalating productivity with regard to every factor of production;
- an entrepreneurial economy that is self-reliant, outward-looking and enterprising;
- an economy sustained by an exemplary work ethic, quality consciousness and the quest for excellence;
- an economy characterised by low inflation and a low cost of living;
- an economy that is subjected to the full discipline and rigour of market forces.

Most of us in this present Council will not be there on the morning of January 1, 2020. Not many, I think. The great bulk of the work that must be done to ensure a fully developed country called Malaysia a generation from now will obviously be done by the leaders who follow us, by our children and grand-children. But we should make sure that we have done our duty in guiding them with regard to what we should work to become. And let us lay the secure foundations that they must build upon.

Some Key Public Sector Economic Policies For The Foreseeable Future

Since the early 1980s, we have stressed that this country will rely on the private sector as the primary engine of economic growth. In a way we were ahead of the rest of the world, even the developed countries in entrusting economic growth to the private sector.

In the early years, our fledgling private sector could not fully respond to the challenge that was issued. Then came the unpredictable and difficult recession and slowdown years. However in the last three years the private sector has bloomed and responded. The policy is now bearing fruit. The outcome: in 1988, we grew in real terms by 8.9 per cent; in 1989, by 8.8 per cent; in 1990, by 9.4 per cent without expansionary budgeting by the Government. Even the tiger economies of North East Asia have not done so well.

No nation can afford to abandon a winning formula. And this nation will not. For the foreseeable future, Malaysia will continue to drive the private sector, to rely on it as the primary engine of growth.

In the meantime the Government will continue to downsize of its role in the field of economic production and business. The State cannot of course retreat totally from the economic life of Malaysia. It will not abdicate its responsibility for overseeing and providing the legal and regulatory framework for rapid economic and social development.

The Government will be pro-active to ensure healthy fiscal and monetary management and the smooth functioning of the Malaysian economy. It will escalate the development of the necessary physical infrastructure and the most conducive business environment -- consistent with its other social priorities. And where absolutely necessary the Government will not be so completely bound by its commitment to withdrawal from the economic role, that it will not intervene. It will play its role judiciously and actively.

The process of de-regulation will continue. There can be no doubt that regulations are an essential part of the governance of society, of which the economy is a part. A state without laws and regulations is a state flirting with anarchy. Without order, there can be little business and no development. What is not required is over regulation although it may not be easy to decide when the Government is over regulating.

Wisdom lies of course in the ability to distinguish between those laws and regulations which are productive of our societal objectives and those that are not; and it lies in making the right judgements with regard to the trade-offs. Thus Governments will be neither foolish nor irresponsible, and will cater to the needs of the wider society as well as the requirements of rapid growth and a competitive, robust and resilient economy. It will be guided by the

knowledge that the freeing of enterprise too -- not only laws and regulations, and state intervention -- can contribute to the achievement of the wider social objectives. In this light and given the fact that there are clear areas of unproductive regulation which need to be phased out, you can expect the process of productive de-regulation to continue. The recent move of Bank Negara to de-regulate the BLR regime is an example in point.

Privatisation will continue to be an important corner stone of our national development and national efficiency strategy. This policy is not founded on ideological belief. It is aimed specifically at enhancing competitiveness, efficiency and productivity in the economy, at reducing the administrative and financial burdens on the Government and at expediting the attainment of national distributional goals.

In implementing our privatisation policy, the Government is fully aware of the need to protect public interest, to ensure that the poor are provided access to essential services, to guarantee that quality services are provided at minimum cost, to avoid unproductive monopolistic practices and to ensure the welfare of workers.

There will be problems. No endeavour comes without a price tag. But it is clear enough that this policy has thus far generated positive results and we can expect its implementation to be accelerated in the future. With the completion of the Privatisation Master Plan Study, I believe that many of the bottlenecks and rigidities that obstruct the progress of the needed privatisation will be removed, thus accelerating its smooth implementation.

There will be in the years ahead an Accelerated Industrialisation Drive, a drive that is not based on a fascination with industry but on the simple truth that if we want to develop rapidly -- in a situation where the developed economies will be moving out of industrialisation into a post-industrial stage -- this is the way to go. If

we are to industrialise rapidly, we will need to capitalise on our national strengths and forcefully tackle our weaknesses.

In pursuit of this policy, the Government will need to deal with the problem of a narrow manufacturing base. In 1988, 63 per cent of total Malaysian manufactured exports came from the electrical and electronic and textile industries. Electronics alone accounted for 50 per cent of total manufactured exports. We must diversify.

Despite the most rapid development in the free trade zones insignificant demand has been generated for local intermediate products. We will have to deal with the problem of weak industrial linkages.

There is inadequate development of indigenous technology. There is too little value-added, too much simple assembly and production. There is also a need to counter rising production costs brought about by rising costs of labour, raw materials and overheads by improving efficiency and productivity. There is a serious shortage of skilled manpower. All these and many more issues will need to be addressed.

Small and medium scale industries have an important role to play in generating employment opportunities, in strengthening industrial linkages, in penetrating markets and generating export earnings. They have a crucial role as a spawning ground for the birth of tomorrow's entrepreneurs.

The Government will devise appropriate assistance schemes and will seek to raise the level of management expertise, technological know-how and skills of the employees in this very important and in many ways neglected sector of our economy.

The SMIs will be one of the primary foundations for our future industrial thrust. The Government is fully committed to its healthiest development.

Just as we must diversify the products we export so must we diversify the markets we export to. Malaysian exporters must look also at the non-traditional markets. It will require new knowledge, new networks, new contacts and new approaches towards dealing with unfamiliar laws, rules and regulation. It will be uncomfortable but it would be a mistake to consider that it is not worth the discomfort to deal with these markets. Alone they may be small but cumulatively the market of the developing Asian, African and Latin America countries are big. If the developed countries find it worth while to export to these markets then it must be worth while for us also. The Government will help but the private sector must play their part. Reliance on export-led growth is still the way to rapid growth.

Entry into the world market pits our companies against all comers and subjects them to the full force of international competition. This is a challenge we must accept not simply because the domestic market is too small but because in the long run it will actually enrich our domestic market and reduce our dependence on export.

We must persist with export-led growth despite the global slowdown, despite the rise of protectionism, trade blocs and managed trade. When the going is tougher, we must not turn inward. We simply have no choice but to be more lean, more resourceful, more productive and generally more competitive, more able to take on the world.

The liberalisation of the Malaysian economy has had beneficial result and contributed towards a more dynamic growth.

Obviously, liberalisation must be undertaken responsibly and in stages so as not to create economic uncertainty and impose excessive structural adjustment costs. We should take into the fullest consideration Malaysia's capacity to undertake liberalisation. We should not dismiss the infant industry argument, but we should not bow to illegitimate pressure.

At the same time, productive liberalisation ensures that our private sector will be less reliant on artificial profits and on protection, which benefits some producers at the expense of consumers and other producers. Infants must grow up. They must grow up to be sturdy and strong. And this cannot be done if they are over-protected.

For reasons that are obvious, the Government will continue to foster the inflow of foreign investment. This is essential for Malaysia's Accelerated Industrialisation Drive. Again, we will not abandon a winning strategy. But we will fine-tune it to ensure that measures are in place to ensure that Malaysia maximises the net benefit from the in-flow of foreign investment.

In the past, the domestic private sector has largely failed to meet the targets set in successive Malaysia Plans. Apparently domestic investors feel that the Government has not devoted enough effort to the fostering of domestic investment as we have devoted to those from overseas. This is not completely true but we will redress the situation as we get better feed back.

Small and medium scale enterprises must be assisted to grow bigger. Surplus savings and domestic capital must be more productively channeled into investments. Entrepreneurs must be spawned. Where necessary, technological and training help must be extended; and infrastructural support must be given.

It is worthwhile to stress again that the development that we need cannot take place without the infrastructural underpinning. We must keep one step ahead of demand and need. In the recent Budget, we clearly stated what we will do in the shorter term. The Sixth Malaysia Plan will make clear what we will do in the medium term while the second outline perspective Plan will indicate the direction over the long term. The Government is fully aware of the infrastructure bottlenecks and of the need for massive investments in the years to come. We will not let growth to be retarded by excessive congestion and investment indigestion, as has happened in many countries.

In our drive to move vigorously ahead nothing is more important than the development of human resources.

From the experience in the last two decades of all the economic miracles of the countries that have been poor in terms of "natural resources", it is blindingly clear that the most important resource of any nation must be the talents, skills, creativity and will of its people. What we have between our ears, at our elbow and in our heart is much more important than what we have below our feet and around us. Our people is our ultimate resource. Without a doubt, in the 1990s and beyond, Malaysia must give the fullest emphasis possible to the development of this ultimate resource.

Malaysia has one of the best educational systems in the Third World. But for the journey that we must make over our second generation, new standards have to be set and new results achieved.

We cannot but aspire to the highest standards with regard to the skills of our people, to their devotion to know-how and knowledge upgrading and self-improvement, to their language competence, to their work attitudes and discipline, to their managerial abilities, to their achievement motivation, their attitude towards excellence and to the fostering of the entrepreneurial spirit.

We cannot afford to neglect the importance of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial development, which goes, of course beyond training and education. We must ensure the correct mix with regard to professionals, sub-professionals, craftsmen and artisans, and the correct balance with regard to those with competence in science and technology, the arts and social sciences.

In the development of human resources we cannot afford to neglect half the population i.e. the Bumiputeras. If they are not brought into the mainstream, if their potentials are not fully developed, if they are allowed to be a millstone around the national neck, then our progress is going to be retarded by that much. No nation can achieve full progress with only half its human resources harnessed. What may be considered a burden now can, with the correct attitude and management be the force that lightens our burden and hasten our progress. The Bumiputeras must play their part fully in the achievement of the national goal.

Inflation is the bane of all economic planners. Fortunately except during the first oil shock when inflation went up to 17%, Malaysia has managed to keep inflation low. We must continue to keep it low. The Government, the business sector, and the people must be committed to keeping it low. The only real way to combat inflation is to live within one's means. If we cannot afford we just don't buy. In Malaysia this is possible for we can produce practically all we need in terms of food, shelter and clothing. When recently we had a recession, life was bearable because we were able to buy our needs at roughly the same price i.e. we had practically no inflation. Now that we have more money, demand-pull is slowly forcing prices up. So although we may be more prosperous now, although we may be financially wealthier now, but in terms of purchasing power we are not as well off as we should be.

The public must understand what causes inflation and must be disciplined enough to combat it. In some countries when inflation rates go up to thousands of per cent per year, Governments have been

changed again and again without inflation being contained. The reason is that the people are not disciplined and prepared to restrain themselves. No Government can put a stop to inflation unless the people are prepared to accept the discomfort of austerity.

In the fight against inflation nothing is more effective than education and discipline among the people.

In an interdependent trading world, the exchange rate plays a vital role. Too cheap a currency will increase import bills and debt payment but it will make exports competitive. But the full benefit of a low exchange rate on export can be negated by the cost of imported material which go into the exported products. A high currency value will "enrich" our people, particularly in terms of buying imported luxuries but our exports will not be competitive and the economy will eventually be adversely affected.

Clearly the management of the exchange rate is of extreme importance to the progress of our nation. There is only a limited ability to manipulate. In the final analysis it is how we balance our trade that will determine how our currency is valued. Malaysia must learn to be competitive through higher productivity rather than through manipulating exchange rates. Again the people must understand their role, particularly with regard to productivity.

In a world of high technology Malaysia cannot afford to lag behind. We cannot be in the front line of modern technology but we must always try to catch up at least in those fields where we may have certain advantages. We have already adopted a National Plan of Action for Industrial Technology Development. This is the easy part. We must now proceed expeditiously to the enormously difficult task of implementation.

The Government will certainly provide the necessary commitment and leadership to this national endeavour. The institutional and support infrastructure will be put in place to ensure

rapid, realistic, focussed and market-driven development of our technological capabilities. But let us never forget that technology is not for the laboratory but the factory floor and the market. The private sector and our people must respond. Far too often the results of research are ignored in favour of the tried and tested money-spinners. It has been said that the secret of Japan's success is its skill in applying research results to marketable products. If we don't do this we are going to be left behind whatever may be the level of our technology.

While increasing our industrial manufacturing sector, Malaysia must make sure that our agriculture and services sector will not be neglected. We must advance. We must strive for efficiency, modernity and competitiveness. These should be the key guiding principles of our national policy towards agriculture, tourism and the fullest development of the entire services sector.

Nor can we afford to neglect the rural sector of our economy and society. In the years ahead, we must work for a second rural development transformation, restructuring the villages so as to be compatible with both agriculture and modern industry. Less and less farmers should produce more and more food, thus releasing manpower for an industrial society.

While doing all these we must also ensure that our valuable natural resources are not wasted. Our land must remain productive and fertile, our atmosphere clear and clean, our water unpolluted, our forest resources capable of regeneration, able to yield the needs of our national development. The beauty of our land must not be desecrated -- for its own sake and for our economic advancement.

In the information age that we are living in the Malaysian society must be information rich. It can be no accident that there is today no wealthy, developed country that is information-poor and no information-rich country that is poor and undeveloped.

There was a time when land was the most fundamental basis of prosperity and wealth. Then came the second wave, the age of industrialisation. Smokestacks rose where the fields were once cultivated. Now, increasingly, knowledge will not only be the basis of power but also prosperity. Again we must keep up. Already Malaysians are among the biggest users of computers in the region. Computer literacy is a must if we want to progress and develop. No effort must be spared in the creation of an information rich Malaysian society.

In international relations, the emphasis should be less on politics and ideology but more on economic imperatives. Small though we may be we must strive to influence the course of international trade. To grow we have to export. Our domestic market is far too small. It is important to us that free trade is maintained. The trend towards the formation of trading blocs will damage our progress and we must oppose it. We must therefore play our part and not passively accept the dictates of those powerful nations who may not even notice what their decision have done to us.

A country without adequate economic defence capabilities and the ability to marshal influence and create coalitions in the international economic arena is an economically defenceless nation and an economically powerless state. This Malaysia cannot afford to be.

There are many other policies that must be in place if we are to make the 1990s the most economically productive decade in our history. Let me end by mentioning just one more: the necessity of making Malaysia Incorporated a flourishing reality.

Let me stress not all collaboration between our public and private sector is justifiable or productive. In many areas there must be a long arm's length approach. But there can be no doubt that a productive partnership will take us a long way towards our aspirations.

What The Private Sector Must Contribute

I have outlined what I think are the key economic policies that should be in place to accelerate our drive towards prosperity and a competitive economy. Let me now stress the role that the private sector must play.

This nation cannot rely on the private sector as the primary engine of growth if our private sector is inefficient and lethargic. You must be strong and dynamic, robust and self-reliant, competent and honest.

Malaysia cannot de-regulate if bankers eventually behave like "banksters", if the freedom afforded to enterprise becomes merely licence to exploit without any sense of social responsibility. Our companies must have a high sense of corporate duty. Our struggle to ensure social justice -- to uplift the position and competitiveness of the Bumiputeras and to achieve the other social objectives -- must be your struggle too.

Privatisation must not proceed if its objectives are defeated by those who think only of personal profit without social responsibility. The Accelerated Industrialisation Drive and the attempt to rapidly develop our small and medium scale industries must be driven by the enterprise of our entrepreneurs. They must be prepared to think longer- term, to venture forth into the competitive world markets. The attraction of foreign investment should not be the responsibility of the Government alone. The private sector too must engage the foreign investor in mutually beneficial partnership and joint ventures for this will help him to integrate more fully into the Malaysian economy. And the responsibility of domestic investors must be greater than that of their foreign counterparts because Malaysia is our country, not theirs. We can ask ourselves to make a sacrifice for our country but we cannot expect foreigners to do it for us.

In the development of our human resources, our private sector has the most important of roles to play. Train your own manpower. Equip them for their changing tasks. Look after their interests. Upgrade their skills. Manage them well. And reward them for their contribution.

There is obviously a lot for everyone to do. Unfortunately there is no simple one shot formula for developing a nation. Many, many things must be done by many, many people. And they must be done as correctly as possible. We must be prepared to be self-critical and to be willing to make corrections. But God willing we can succeed.

Conclusion

This is the agenda before us in this Council and before the nation. I hope you will discuss this agenda and criticise or improve on it. Whether we achieve perfection or consensus on this agenda is not absolutely important. No formula is perfect. But the least perfect and the least productive is the perfect agenda unimplemented.

Working Paper Presented By Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister Of Malaysia At The Inaugural Meeting Of The Malaysian Business Council, 28th February, 1991, Kuala Lumpur.

THE FORTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Allow me at the outset to extend my congratulations to you upon your election as the President of the Forty-Sixth Session of the United Nations General Assembly. It gives me great pleasure as a close friend of Saudi Arabia to see the world community honour your country through your election to the high office. With your wisdom, experience and skill, I am confident that you will discharge your responsibilities successfully, guiding this august assembly to a fruitful conclusion.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to your predecessor, H.E. Mr. Guido de Marco, who has carried out his task with dedication and innovative zeal contributing toward efforts in revitalising and re-examining the functions of the General Assembly.

It is with pleasure that I on behalf of Malaysia, extend a very warm welcome to H.R.H. Prince Norodom Sihanouk, President of the Supreme National Council and Head of the Cambodian delegation to the General Assembly. The United Nations which has long missed the statesmanship and the ebullience of the Prince will, I am sure, be happy to welcome the Prince back to the General Assembly. Malaysia is gratified to see at this General Assembly members of the Supreme National Council representing Cambodia, offering definite promise of a final solution to the Cambodian issue.

This is also an occasion to join in extending felicitations to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea for their historic decision to become members of the United Nations as separate nations. That decision will serve to defuse some of the tension in North East Asia and hopefully lead to normalisation in their relations. As a friend of both, Malaysia welcomes such developments. May I also welcome as members of the United

Nations the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania, having deservedly regained their sovereignty. I would also like to add my felicitations to the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Malaysia's Pacific neighbours, who have become members of the United Nations. Malaysia extends a hand of friendship and stands ready to cooperate with them.

The world has witnessed in the last two years more revolutionary changes than in the preceeding hundred years. Without doubt these changes have opened new and historic opportunities to build a better world, anchored firmly in the rule of law, the sovereignty of nations and a collective commitment to social and economic justice for all. The world is ripe for 'A New World Order' but it is hoped that this New World Order will not be one that is imposed upon the world by the main beneficiary of the current revolution. All members of this august body called the United Nations should participate in the shaping of the New World Order if we are to avoid a return of a new colonial era.

When the United Nations was formed after the Second World War, the allied victors assumed the right to create a world order in which each of the five major powers could veto anything that does not serve them. But then the five fell out and the East-West conflict divided the world into two antagonistic camps. The Cold War that followed not only retarded modern civilisation but converted poor countries into pawns and proxies, devastating their territories and economies with confrontations and wars. That they were not fighting their own battles is clear from the outbreak of peace in every continent as soon as the East-West confrontation ended.

With these experiences still fresh in our minds how can we be assured that a New World Order formulated by any one country or group of countries will be good for everyone? We are already feeling heavy hands forcing us to do this and not that. In East Asia we are told that we may not call ourselves East Asians as Europeans call

themselves Europeans and Americans call themselves Americans. We are told that we must call ourselves Pacific people and align ourselves with people who are only partly Pacific, but more American, Atlantic and European. We may not have an identity that is not permitted, nor may we work together on the basis of that identity. Is this a foretaste of the New World Order that we must submit to?

Democracy, and only democracy is legitimate and permissible now. No one really disputes this. In fact, speaking for Malaysia, we can think of no alternative but democracy in the context of our pluralistic society. We can also affirm that we have no intention of siding with despots or tyrants and those that deny their people their rights to democratic government. But is there only one form of democracy or only one high priest to interpret it?

We see differences in the practice of democracy even among those who are preaching democracy to us. Can only the preachers have the right to interpret democracy and to practise it as they deem fit and to force their interpretations on others? Cannot the converts too interpret the details, if not the basics? If democracy means the right to carry guns, to flaunt homosexuality, to disregard the institution of marriage, to disrupt and damage the well-being of the community in the name of individual rights, to destroy a particular faith, to have privileged institutions which are sacrosanct even if they indulge in lies and instigations which undermine society, the economy and international relations; to permit foreigners to break national laws; if these are the essential details, cannot the new converts opt to reject them? We, the converts, will accept the basics but what is the meaning of democracy if we have no right of choice at all, or if democracy means our people are consistently subjected to instability and disruptions and economic weaknesses which make us subject to manipulation by the powerful democracies of the world? Hegemony by democratic powers is no less oppressive than hegemony by totalitarian states.

Democracy means majority rule. The minority must have their rights but do these rights include denial of the rights of the majority? Admittedly the majority may not oppress the minority but if the minority exercise their rights without responsibility, become the agents of foreign democracies, and try to weaken their own country so as to make it a client state to certain democratic powers, must the majority in the name of democracy submit to the minority?

If democracy is to be the only acceptable system of Government within states, shouldn't there be also democracy between the states of the world? In the UN we are equal, but five are more equal than the rest of the 166. Seven countries on their own lay down the laws which affect adversely the economies of others. A few nations on their own have taken it upon themselves to determine the New World Order. Powerful trade blocs demand voluntary restraints and impose laws and rules extra-territorially. Clearly the states of the world are not equal; not in the UN, not anywhere. If democracy is such an equitable concept why must we accept inequality between nations?

All these point towards an unhealthy and undemocratic relation between nations. Yet equality and freedom is supposed to be the sole guiding principle of this modern civilisation.

When the UN was formed in 1945 the victors of World War II arrogated to themselves the right to dictate the roles and the distribution of power between nations. Many things have happened since then. The victors of 1945 are no longer the powerful major players in world affairs. New powerful nations have emerged while some major powers have changed structurally. And new ideas about rights and wrongs and democracy have crystallised. Are we going to be shackled forever to the results of World War II?

If international democracy as represented by the UN is to be meaningful and effective, there must be an infusion of some of the current ideas and realities. The world needs policing, as the Gulf War demonstrated to us. But are we to have self-appointed policemen or are we to have a police force that is beholden to this august body, the UN?

Police action by the UN needs to be governed by principles, and rules. Laying siege and starving out a castle or a city until the people had to eat rats or starve may seem appropriate and acceptable in the olden days. But can our conscience remain clear if a whole nation is starved into submission? Can our conscience be clear if the principal victims are the old and the infirmed, the pregnant mothers and the newborns, the young and the innocent?

With the advent of modern weapons, should wars be fought or police action taken by destroying the recalcitrant nation totally in order to avoid casualties among our police force, and above all to avoid the demoralising coffins being brought home? Is it truly possible that everything that is hit by massive bombs and rockets is military in character?

Is the Geneva Convention still relevant in the conduct of war? We condemn chemical warfare but must we still have the nuclear weapons around? Are the people who possess them responsible and concerned about the horrendous effect of these weapons and will not use them other than as a deterrent? Who determines when a deterrent is needed?

The leaders of nuclear nations, the people who will push the nuclear buttons, are not safe as events in the Soviet Union amply demonstrated. We cannot even be sure that someone irrational might not become a leader and gain access to the button. Accordingly, the existence of all nuclear weapons cannot be justified in the present world.

The UN which is playing the role of inspectors in Iraq should extend that role to supervise the destruction of all nuclear weapons everywhere. More, it should supervise the invention and production of other diabolical weapons. Weapons for defence should be solely for defence and their capabilities must be such as to prevent them from being used as weapons of aggression except in a limited way. Researches in new weapons by all nations should be reduced and no weapon should be sold by anyone without permits issued by the UN. Malaysia has joined efforts with other delegations at this General Assembly to work towards a UN Arms Register to provide transparency and confidence as a first step towards giving the United Nations a comprehensive authority over disarmament.

We need weapons only for fighting criminals. If a nation is subjected to armed uprising then the UN should take part in putting it down. Democratic Governments should only be brought down by democratic process. Anything that goes beyond democratic processes should merit UN intervention if a request is made. We cannot preside over the disintegration of nations into ethnic communities, particularly if military action had no role in the initial consolidation of a nation.

Perhaps it may be asked why a tiny developing nation like Malaysia should be advising on how the world should be managed. We should not, except that what the world does and what some nations or even individuals do, can affect us and affect us adversely.

Today individuals in some developed countries consider it their right to tell us how to rule our country. If we don't heed them, then they consider it their right to destroy our economy, impoverish our people and even overthrow our Governments. These people latch on to various causes such as human rights and the environment in order to reimpose colonial rule on us. They are helped by the western media which also consider it their duty to tell us how to run our country. All these combine to make independence almost meaningless. Our only hope lies in the democratisation of the UN,

especially as the option to defect to the other side is no longer available to us. We want to remain independent but we also want to conform to international norms as determined not by some NGOs or the so-called advanced democracies, but by all the nations of the world. If we default then it is the UN and not some Robin Hoods which should chastise us.

We are glad that the winds of change have brought about significant developments in South Africa which we hope would bring about the dismantling of apartheid and the start of negotiations towards a new democratic and non-racial South Africa. All these would not have been possible without international solidarity, with the United Nations system playing a key role in putting the necessary pressure on Pretoria. Despite these important developments, international solidarity, as manifested in the 1989 United Nations Consensus Declaration, must be maintained to meet the still difficult challenges ahead and ensure a successful conclusion to the process of change in South Africa. Right now priority must be given to putting an end to violence in black townships, reviving the preparatory process for constitutional negotiations involving the Pretoria regime, the ANC, Inkatha and others as well as addressing the problems of social and economic inequities brought about by decades of apartheid.

While the climate of peace and dialogue has benefitted many parts of the world, the Middle East remains the most volatile region and the Palestinian people continue to suffer under the cruel and illegal Israeli occupation. The current United States peace initiative has raised the hopes of many nations, including Malaysia, for an active peace process that would lead to a comprehensive solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the establishment of an independent state for the Palestinians. We welcome the initiative and commitment of President Bush and Secretary Baker in undertaking this difficult task and wish them well.

The plight of the Palestinian people touches the heart of every Malaysian. We would like the Palestinian people to be treated fairly and justly. If what they do to protect themselves is considered criminal then the same deeds committed by the Israelis should be considered equally criminal. Governments, which kidnap and kill people, should be condemned even more than desperate freedom fighters who are forced to violence because they can seek justice in no other way. The accelerated build-up of illegal Jewish settlements in the occupied territories is an act of unwarranted provocation by the Israeli authorities and constitutes a very serious and unacceptable obstacle to the current peace efforts. In our view Jews in the Soviet Union are better off there, where their entrepreneurial skills could be put to good use to re-build the economy of the country.

Next year the nations of the world are expected to meet in Rio de Janeiro to discuss the environment. If we are to meet there, there is a need to know whether it is going to be a constructive meeting or a finger-pointing third world bashing session.

If that conference is going to be productive then let us face the facts and deal with them. Unless we accept the truth regarding the sources and the causes of environmental pollution, rising temperatures and ozone depletion we are not going to get anywhere in our efforts to reverse the process. If we go to Rio, let us go there to discuss and agree on a common course of action on environment and development.

The idea that the tropical forests can be saved only by boycotting tropical timber smacks more of economic arm-twisting than a real desire to save the forests. If selective logging and sustainable management is prevented and consequently the forests become no longer a source of wealth, the worthless forests may be cleared in order to produce food crops, or to provide firewood in poor developing nations.

On the other hand, the vast potential for reafforestation has hardly been touched. The deserts of California can be converted into a tropical forest complete with rainforest flora and fauna simply by pumping the ground water and planting trees. Instead, the underground water is being used for golf courses and artificial lakes to surround luxury hotels. If we can build sophisticated warplanes at one billion dollars apiece, surely we should have the ingenuity and the money to create tropical forests out of deserts? Libya should be congratulated for tapping underground water to irrigate its desert. It is shameful that nations richer and more advanced than Libya have done nothing significant to green the world.

The use of CFC and fossil fuel is greatest in the richest countries. Is there really a need for CFC for spraying when a simple rubber bulb can do the same? Do the countries with huge populations of monster automobiles really need to use them when there can be small cars or efficient public transport systems using electricity generated by hydro-power plants?

We in the poor countries would like to have some cheap hydroelectric power. True we have to sacrifice a few thousand acres of our forests. But we can spare these, for we have millions of acres more. But all manner of campaigns are mounted against our proposals for hydroelectric projects. Now of course the World Bank will be used to deprive poor countries of cheap hydroelectric power. And all these after the rich have developed most of their hydro potentials. Can we be blamed if we think this is a ploy to keep us poor?

If the UNCED is to be meaningful let us hear now of the plans of the rich for reducing their own contribution to the environmental degradation. If the sole approach is to link aid to poor countries with what they must do environmentally for the well being of the rich, then UNCED would be a lost opportunity.

Economic growth in a poor country cannot depend on the domestic market. To grow poor countries must have either aid or free access to foreign markets. It would be near suicidal for poor countries to keep their market to themselves. On the other hand there is every reason for the rich to keep their markets for themselves.

GATT is conceived to promote free and equitable world trade. But how can poor individual countries argue their cases in the GATT Rounds when the huge trade blocs monopolise the meetings? Who would listen to the plaintive arguments of a tiny insignificant third world country?

To be heard the poor must band together not to form impoverished trade blocs but to lend weight to their arguments. And so the East Asia Economic Group or EAEG was proposed, not as a trade bloc, but as a forum for the nations of East Asia to confer with each other in order to reach agreement on a common stand for a common problem caused by the restrictive trade practices of the rich.

We are perplexed to find that this objective merely to have a voice in international affairs is being opposed openly and covertly by the very country which preach free trade. It is even more surprising that there should be such opposition when NAFTA itself is being formed on the principle of the right of free association of independent countries. Can it be that what is right and proper for the rich and the powerful is not right or proper for the poor? One is tempted to suspect racist bias behind this stand.

Malaysia has supported the UN at every turn. We believe that the UN is the only legitimate instrument for creating an equitable world, for protecting the weak and the poor from the pressures of the strong. We welcome the end of the Cold War but we must admit to feeling more naked and vulnerable now. There is nowhere else to look except to the UN. More than ever before, we need a greater role for the UN in the affairs of the world.

While we believe a restructured Security Council has a vital role to play, we would like to see a balanced constitutional relationship, including accountability between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretariat in order to truly make the United Nations the guardian of peace as suggested in the Secretary-General's report of 6 September 1991. Related to this, the Malaysian delegation has joined efforts with others to deliberate on ways and means to revitalise the organs of the United Nations, including the General Assembly and ECOSSOC. The experience of the Gulf conflict also makes it imperative for the United Nations to explore and put into effect all the potentials of preventive diplomacy, including a more pro-active role on the part of the Secretary-General and an expanded U.N. peacekeeping operations. Malaysia believes that the time has come for the international community to explore also the potentials of the International Court of Justice, the judicial organ of the United Nations, as a means of fostering the resolution of conflict by peaceful means and in accordance with the rule of law.

The international community is now at the proverbial crossroads. We truly have a chance to build a better world through consensus and to use the United Nations as the principal forum and vehicle for achieving our objectives. We cannot afford to miss this historic opportunity to benefit from the peace dividend resulting from the cessation of the Cold War. It must, however, be underlined that a global consensus approach requires tolerance for different ideas and practices inherent in our complex and pluralistic world. There is simply no place for an international order based on hegemony and domination. Let us then work together as partners in our common endeavour to build a better world.

*Address By: Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister Of Malaysia
At The Plenary Of The Forty-Sixth Session Of The United Nations General
Assembly, 24th September 1991, New York.*

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THE SECOND MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

I wish you a very warm welcome to Malaysia. My fellow Malaysians and I are honoured to have this opportunity to host the Second Ministerial Conference of Developing Countries on Environment and Development.

It is truly regrettable that despite two years of preparations for the UNCED meeting, major issues and problems have yet to be resolved. I was made to understand that the fourth and final UNCED Preparatory Committee Meeting, which ended in New York earlier this month, was not quite satisfactory in terms of commitment. Though there has been identifiable progress on some aspects there is, as yet, no balanced platter on the issues of environment and development.

The financial issue remains unresolved. The South are very disappointed that the North is unwilling to respond either in terms of quantum or other tangible commitments. If the rich North expects the poor to foot the bill for a cleaner environment, Rio would become an exercise in futility. It must be remembered the UNCED is also about development. There will be no development if the poor countries are not allowed to extract their natural wealth. The only way for them to develop and yet avoid damage to the environment is for them to receive substantial material help. To ask the poor to help the rich is against all human principles of charity and fairness.

Also progress on this issue is compromised by the insistence of the North that the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) be the sole mechanism for funding environmental projects within the framework of decisions to be taken at Rio, as well as for the Conventions on Climate Change and Biological Diversity. The issue of governance is a critical area under negotiation. If the GEF is to be another

appropriate funding mechanism after Rio, there must be a major transformation of the GEF to make it more democratic with universal membership encouraged and access and disbursement provided under agreed criteria.

It can be argued perhaps that the UNCED is too ambitious for total meaningful agreements to be achieved by the time of the Rio Summit. Certainly, the issues involved are extremely complex and Heads of Government meetings cannot resolve complex details. They, the Heads, do not normally negotiate the terms of treaties or agreements. They usually endorse and formalise what has already been negotiated by their experts and officials and fine-tuned by their ministers. The preparatory meetings are therefore more crucial than the ceremonials of a Heads of Government meeting. Failure at the preparatory stage will endanger the whole exercise.

If we think the success of UNCED is debatable, then why do we meet here? We meet here because the UNCED can be at least partially saved if the developing countries are able to have a clear view of what to expect and what common stand to take.

The basic reference point for the South would be the UN consensus resolution 44/228 which clearly signposted the expected global package; a World Charter of high declaratory import; a global programme of action called Agenda 21; a specific decision on additional financial resources to fund Agenda 21; a decision on technology transfer at preferential rates; a statement of principles governing the management of all forests and an intergovernmental institutional structure to monitor the follow-up to the UNCED. There was also agreement that by the time of Rio, negotiations for conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity would have been completed. The success of the Rio Summit can only be measured given significant achievements in all of these areas, in the context of a global package, not in terms of the advancement of one issue and the neglect of another. An intergovernmental institutional structure under the aegis of the United Nations would be of no value if there

was no real agreement to all the critical issues above. For that matter too, what use is there of an Earth Charter if there is no real advance on the critical issues of finance and technology?

In essence, the negotiations to prepare for Rio reflect the continuing attempt by the South to bring the North to the table to overcome over four decades of neglect on the growth and development of the South. Fear by the North of environmental degradation provides the South the leverage that did not exist before. It is fully justified for us to approach it this way. Unless there is a sharing of the controls in a broader base and more democratic control structure and a more supportive economic international environment, forever the playing field will not be a level one. Forever will the South be at the bottom of the heap.

Whether we like it or not the developed North, having destroyed their heritage, will want to declare that what is left intact in the developing countries also belongs to them. Consequently they are going to insist on having more than just a say in the management of these remaining ecological assets of the world. And when the powerful North speak, the voice of the individual developing countries will be drowned. It will be different if they speak together with one strong voice in Rio.

To illustrate this let us take the case of the logging of tropical timber. The developed countries have no tropical forest but by involving environmental issues they wish to control the exploitation of forests in developing countries. We in Malaysia are fully aware of the role that the tropical forests are playing in preserving the delicate balance in the environment. We are aware too of the thousands of species of flora and fauna that are to be found only in our forests. We are aware that trees absorb carbon dioxide and give back the precious oxygen without which we will all drop dead.

But we are also acutely conscious that we are a developing country which needs the wealth afforded by our forests. We do not cut down our trees foolishly. We need living space, we need space for agriculture, and we need the money from the sale of our timber. If it is in the interest of the rich that we do not cut down our trees then they must compensate us for the loss of income. The democratic North talk incessantly of fair compensation. They tell our workers to go on strike for "fair" compensation even if it destroys our economy. Well, if we have to service the world's need for oxygen, for ecological balance, then we must be fairly compensated. Or else allow us our right to our timber wealth.

But instead what have the North done? They launched a boycott of our timber. They reason that if they do not buy we will stop cutting our timber. It is so simple that is, if you can ignore the hundreds of thousands of people whose lives depend on the timber industry, and if you can ignore the loss of Government revenue with which we subsidise and support our people, particularly the poor. What the North is doing is not just to preserve the forest but to make Malaysians pay for it. Is this equitable?

Yet the extraction of timber can easily be reduced without making us pay for it. If the rich will pay twice the price, logging can be reduced by half. It is as simple as that.

They say most of the money in the timber industry is made in the rich North. Malaysia gets very little from the export of raw logs. So why export timber? We agree entirely. But the solution is not to stop logging but to relocate the processing industries to Malaysia so that we can earn more added value. We can then cut down even less trees without losing income. The boycott of Malaysian timber will help nothing. Indeed, if our timber is of no value to us, we might as well cut down the trees for fuel and release land for agriculture.

Once upon a time this planet was almost completely covered by forests. We are told that the deserts under which vast reservoirs of petroleum are found were once swamps and tropical forests. If we sincerely believe in equity and burden sharing, why not reafforest the deserts of the world and the vast farms in Europe and America which produce subsidised food the world does not need? If you can draw up ground water to build exclusive golf courses in the deserts of California, if you can create huge lakes in the middle of the desert on which to build luxury hotels, can you not use the same technique to water the desert and reafforest it? New tropical forests can be recreated complete with the flora and fauna transplanted from our tropical forests. Why should only the people in the tropics harbour disease-bearing insects for the world?

We do not want to obliterate all our deserts, of course. One cannot know what disaster will follow if we do this. But the farms of Europe and America which were hacked from the hard and soft wood forests of yesteryear and which today produce food inefficiently, can very well be returned to their pristine condition. The planting material, the technology and the experts are all available to make this project a success.

Let it be remembered always that it is not only the tropical trees which can absorb carbon dioxide and give out oxygen. All trees, including those in tree estates, do the job equally well.

Many tropical trees possess medicinal properties and must therefore be preserved. Again it is the rich who benefit because they have the technology to extract and to isolate the active substance. Are the poor tropical countries expected to preserve their forests for the rich to exploit through their mastery of the science? What compensations are being considered in return? In the negotiations for a Convention on Biodiversity, the North have not been forthcoming on proposals for joint research in gene-rich countries to benefit from biotechnology. As things stand the poor may not extract timber and

wealth from their own forest because the North would like to gain financially from the medical potentials of the tropical trees.

Last year vast tracts of forests in Indonesia caught fire and burned for months. The whole of Malaysia was covered in haze. More than logging, forest fires destroy everything. Nothing is left. Trees, animals, insects, and even humans are exterminated.

If the tropical forests are so precious to the erstwhile environmentalists then the fire should cause greater alarm among them than the controlled extraction of timber. Governments and NGOs should have rushed to put out the fires. But there was not a squeak. The excuse was that they were not asked. Were they asked to agitate against logging? Yet they mounted a massive campaign against logging.

A lot can be done to prevent and fight forest fires. The rich have spy satellites to locate the fires precisely. They have sophisticated and expensive firefighting equipment. They have experts who can put out even the raging infernoes of Kuwait. But they did nothing to save the forests they claim to love so much. We cannot be blamed if we think the campaign against tropical timber is because they compete too successfully with the temperate climate timber. Tropical timber destroyed by fire pose no threat to the sale of temperate climate timber but carefully logged timber do. So the forest fires are ignored while bitter condemnation is directed at the logging of tropical forests.

When the anti-tropical timber campaign did not attract sufficient attention, a human face was added to it. The Penans are a gentle law-abiding people numbering about ten thousand. They are originally shifting cultivators and hunters. But some nine thousand of them have already settled down on permanent farms or as wage-earners. Only one thousand are still in the jungle. If they should choose to stay in the forests, it is a choice which the government will

respect but this choice must be well considered. This choice must not be a part of the North's anti-tropical timber campaign.

The anti-tropical timber activists see in the Penans an opportunity to put a human face to their campaign for temperate timber. And so the gentle Penans are urged to be militant, to protest, to erect blockades, and defy the authorities.

Stop making an issue of the Penans. Promote temperate timber if you must but accept competition by tropical timber. You advocate open markets and free trade. Now live up to your own creed. Stop linking trade and aid to developing countries with environmental issues. Stop arm twisting.

On the other hand let us work together to protect and resuscitate the environment. Close down inefficient farms and polluting industries and reafforest the land released. Move the processing of primary products to developing countries so as to maximise their development. Help reafforest the deserts in the rich as well as the poor countries. Organise and coordinate the prevention and fight against forest fires worldwide. Pay more for tropical timber.

These are all positive things that can be done if there is sincerity in the campaign to preserve tropical forest.

The campaign against tropical trees is a clear case of an opportunistic use of the environmental issues. If not for opportunism the energy of the environmentalists can be rewardingly focused on other pollutants. Take the CFCs and the spray-cans. There are many non-polluting ways of spraying. Use biodegradable vegetable oil-based plastics instead of petroleum-based plastics. Reduce the use of fuel oils in transportation and electric generation. Allow reasonable hydro-electric projects to go on.

Stop the use of nuclear fuels for power. Above all outlaw the manufacture, storage and use of nuclear weapons.

If the environment is going to be cleaned, those most responsible for polluting it must act. 80 percent of the pollution is due to activities in the industrially developed North. They must first clean up their backyard. Their NGOs should stay at home and apply pressure on their own Governments, their industrialists and their military leaders.

The developing countries must of course do their bit too. The first thing is for them to come together to debate on a common stand. Let there be no break in our ranks when we talk about the environment. We will share the burden strictly in proportion with our culpability and our capacity. By no means can we accept that we sacrifice our development in order that the rich and the powerful can enjoy ever improving standards of living. Indeed, it is the rich who must be prepared to sacrifice their progress in the interest of our development.

We have a heavy responsibility to ensure that the South-South cooperation is effective in the area of environment and development. The South must identify specific areas of cooperation and interaction, particularly in forestry, technology transfer and sound environmental management. The South must set an example of international cooperation and even-handedness as its own contribution to UNCED. It is also important that we continue to consult with each other in the post Rio period.

I sincerely hope that the historic opportunity at Rio will not be wasted. Rio can be the occasion to take important historic steps for a true global partnership. The South has suffered enough. It is wrong that we should be made scapegoats for the past sins of the North. The South cannot remain the repository of the resources for the North including locking up its forest to serve as the global green lung and its genetic resource laboratory. The North must help the South to develop for it is in their environmental, economic and security interest that they do so.

Freedom is a commodity much touted by the North. Woe betide any country in the developing world which does not grant freedom to its citizens. Yet the North consider it right and proper to deprive the people in the developing countries of their freedom to exploit their own natural wealth. In campaigning against tropical timber and in boycotting it, they are denying us our freedom to make a living, to extract what little wealth we have, and to free ourselves from hunger, disease and poverty. How can they still talk of freedom when it is they who deprive us of freedom? When we achieved independence we thought we would be free. But the North is still subjecting us to imperial pressures. The late Indonesian President Sukarno was right when he talked of Neo-colonialism.

Development and economic growth cannot but be accompanied by some undesirable effect on the environment. While the developed countries had already damaged fully their environment, this is no reason for preventing developing countries from seeking to develop. If environmental damage is to be minimised, then the developed countries must be prepared to subsidise the cost. If the cost of development is higher because of present environmental considerations then the developing countries of today are being unfairly penalised. This is unacceptable.

Malaysia would like to propose to the world community a comprehensive environmentally beneficial programme involving the greening of the world. As a first step, we call upon the global community to target at least 30 percent of the Earth's terrestrial area to be greened by the year 2000. The world now has 27.6 percent of its land under forest cover and we need only increase this by 2.4 percent over the next eight years. This is clearly not an unreasonable target. All nations must set national greening targets and those which have no suitable land must contribute adequate funds to developing countries with available land.

The North, in particular, should not find this difficult because it has the funds, the technology and the resources. They can divert the subsidies for their inefficient farms towards a massive reafforestation of these farm lands instead. No new funds are therefore needed, and yet the result will be a greener and bigger carbon sink.

As for Malaysia I wish to announce that the Government of Malaysia undertakes to ensure that at least 50 per cent of our land area will remain permanently under forest cover.

I call upon the world community to urgently establish a Global Fund to support this global greening target. The Fund would serve to finance reforestation and afforestation programmes as well as forest rehabilitation and maintenance. Contributions to the fund should be based on the population, wealth, and the ability to meet greening targets as well as other relevant factors. Countries which have levels of carbon dioxide emissions that exceed a defined threshold should pay on the basis of an agreed schedule. However nothing in these proposals must compromise the principle of the sovereign right to development.

The greening of the world will hopefully inspire a new spirit of international cooperation and partnership in which global resources are fairly shared. If successful we would have solved at least partially an important environmental problem.

For our part, Malaysia has undertaken a number of measures towards ensuring a cleaner and healthier environment. These include the creation of awareness among the people and towards this end we have prepared a video film entitled "An Initiative for the Greening of the World" which reflects Malaysia's commitment and desire for a greener world. This video film will be shown to you shortly.

I wish you all a successful meeting and I hope that your stay in green Kuala Lumpur and greener Malaysia will be a pleasant one.

Opening Address By Dato' Seri Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister Of Malaysia At The Official Opening Of The Second Ministerial Conference Of Developing Countries On Environment And Development, 27th April 1992, The Crown Princess Hotel, Kuala Lumpur.

THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

I would like to thank our host, President Fernando Collor de Mello, and the Government of Brazil for the hospitality extended to us at this conference.

Malaysia has come to this conference because we are concerned about the environment. We are here to seek ways to achieve sustainable development and to establish a solid foundation for worldwide cooperation on environment and development. We appreciate that if anything is to be done towards sustainable development then all countries everywhere must work together. The boundaries of nations do not limit the pollution caused by them. Neighbours, both far and near, are affected by the pollutants produced by any nation.

Presently, Malaysia is well able to cope with its own pollution. In a country about the size of Britain, we have a population only one third as big. We are a developing country with a per capita income one-tenth of the developed countries. Our capacity for wasteful consumption is therefore very limited -- roughly one thirtieth that of the developed countries.

On the other hand, our capacity to deal with our own waste is far in excess of our needs. Our land is almost 60 percent covered with self-regenerating tropical rain forest, with an additional 15 percent covered by tree plantations. Any carbon dioxide we produce we can absorb.

If pollution can be contained within the boundaries of a country, then Malaysia has nothing to worry. But Malaysia has to deal with cross-border pollution. Most developed countries have already destroyed their capacity to deal with their own waste. Not only have they clear-felled their forests but their production of waste

is so great that they must rely on the poor countries to dispose of this waste.

Malaysia is prepared to do its bit. But can nothing be done to reduce the waste? Is it right that the poor be forced to clean up the mess created by the rich? Should there not be some sharing of the task, the responsibility and the cost for cleaning up? These are the questions we would like answered at this conference.

For the right answers there must be a modicum of sincerity and honesty on the part of everyone. We talk a lot now about a new world order, human rights, democracy and justice. Let there be evidence of all these when we try to identify the causes and to resolve the problems of sustainable development.

We recognise that man in his pursuit of development is the cause of the pollution and degradation of the environment. We cannot stop development altogether but we can at least minimise the pollution caused by it.

If we are to achieve sustainable development then we must all be prepared to make the necessary adjustments. But if we begin by saying that our life-style is sacred and not for negotiation then it would be meaningless to talk of development and the environment.

It is claimed that one of the causes of environmental degradation is the size of the population of some developing countries. We dispute this assumption.

However we note that rich developed communities tend to have low birth rates. If we want to reduce population growth then we must help poor communities to become developed. Yet we hear from the rich, proposals which would result in stopping the development of poor countries in order to reduce pollution. You may be able to reduce pollution but you will end up with massive overpopulation in the poorest developing countries.

We know that the 25 percent of the world population who are rich consume 85 percent of its wealth and produce 90 percent of its waste. Mathematically speaking, if the rich reduce their wasteful consumption by 25 percent, worldwide pollution will be reduced by 22.5 percent. But if the poor 75 percent reduce consumption totally and disappear from this earth altogether the reduction in pollution will only be by 10 percent.

It is what the rich do that counts, not what the poor do, however much they do it. That is why it is imperative that the rich change their life-styles. A change in the life-styles of the poor only, apart from being unfair, is quite unproductive environment-wise. But the rich talk of the sovereignty of the consumers and their right to their life-styles. The rich will not accept a progressive and meaningful cutback in their emission of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases because it will be a cost to them and retard their progress. Yet they expect the poor peoples of the developing countries to stifle even their minute growth as if it will cost them nothing.

One of the major issues we are expected to resolve is Global Warming. Here one of the major industrialized countries could not agree to cut-back on its emission of carbon dioxide at the rate generally accepted by others. Since it is the major source of industrial pollution its decision has rendered the agreement inequitable and meaningless.

Malaysia has for several years been cutting back on the emission of carbon dioxide. We impose a tax of 300 percent on cars with large capacity engines. Even small cars are heavily taxed. But in most developed countries the tax on automobiles and petrol is minimal thus accounting for the high car/population ratio. Surely a reduction in the number of private cars and better public transport would not change the life-style too much. Yet it will do wonders for Global Warming.

The other issue before us is bio-diversity. The poor countries have been told to preserve their forests and other genetic resource on the off-chance that at some future date something is discovered which might prove useful to humanity. This is the same as telling these poor countries that they must continue to be poor because their forests and other resource are more precious than themselves. Still they are not rejecting the value of bio-diversity, at least not totally.

Denying them their own resources will impoverish them and retard their development. Surely if something is discovered in their forests, they should be entitled to some returns.

But now we are told that the rich will not agree to compensate the poor for their sacrifices. The rich argue that the diversity of genes stored and safeguarded by the poor are of no value until the rich, through their superior intelligence, release the potential within. It is an intellectual property and must be copy-righted and protected.

Developing countries which met in Kuala Lumpur in April have agreed on a plan to reafforest the whole world. A Fund for this Greening of the World was proposed. But the North are resisting this proposal. Perhaps it is considered to be yet another attempt by the developing countries to squeeze the rich using the environmental issue. The rich North can only see the chiselling ways of the South and is determined that they will not be squeezed. Yet the North demands a forest convention.

Obviously the North wants to have a direct say in the management of forests in the poor South at next to no cost to themselves. The pittance they offer is much less than the loss of earnings by the poor countries and yet it is made out as a generous concession.

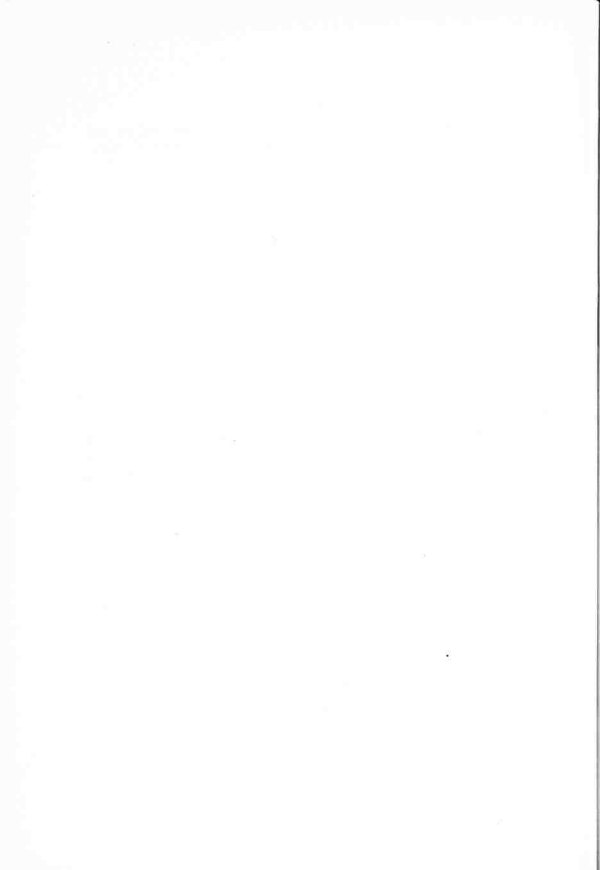
We will accept the Global Environment Facility, and we will accept that it be administered by the OECD dominated World Bank. But can we not have a little say; can we not have more transparency in the administration of this Fund? Surely, this does not amount to the South squeezing the North.

The poor is not asking for charity. When the rich chopped down their own forests, built their poison-belching factories and scoured the world for cheap resources, the poor said nothing. Indeed they paid for the development of the rich. Now the rich claim a right to regulate the development of the poor countries. And yet any suggestion that the rich compensate the poor adequately is regarded as outrageous. As colonies we were exploited. Now as independent nations we are to be equally exploited.

Malaysia was disillusioned about these inequities long before we reached Rio. In a world that has been won for democracy, we find powerful nations laying down terms even for participating in a democratic process. We find scant regard for the principles of fairness and equity. We find that even the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 have been watered down upon insistence from the powerful and the rich.

Notwithstanding all these, we still have high expectations of this conference and we would consider this Conference on the Environment and Development a success if there emerged a better understanding of the enormity of the problems we face and the need for us to cooperate on an equitable basis. Malaysia will do what can reasonably be expected of it for the environment.

Paper Presented By Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister Of Malaysia At The United Nations Conference On Environment And Development, 13th June 1992, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



**THE SIXTH ISLAMIC ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD**

Bismillahir rahmanir rahim
Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Malaysia. Malaysia is indeed proud to be given the opportunity of hosting this conference, and I feel honoured to address such a distinguished group of Muslim scientists, planners and decision-makers who are here to discuss major issues on environment and development in the context of the Islamic world. I wish to congratulate the Islamic Academy of Sciences for organising this conference which is a fitting follow-up to the Earth Summit that was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil last June.

Environmental degradation and the need for economic growth and sustainable development are a common concern of all. It is a concern that should rightly transcend limited and parochial interests as it affects present and future generations. The Rio Summit highlighted this concern as well as underscored the inter-relationship and inter-linkages between environment and development.

At Rio, while there was agreement on the common concern, the rich industrialised countries unfortunately failed to respond favourably to the developmental needs of the developing countries, which in fact included all the countries of the Islamic world. Indeed they even failed to respond to the environmental problems of their own countries. The rich were preoccupied with population growth and management of natural resources in the South, attributing the degradation of the world's environment almost exclusively to these factors.

Admittedly, there exists significant differences between the developed and developing countries as to the priorities. The rich North, obviously reluctant to curb its profligate lifestyles, is merely concerned with extending its control over natural resources, particularly resources such as tropical forests, which are only to be found in the South. The South mired and entrapped in poverty, urgently requires economic growth and development, which are only achievable if a supportive international economic system is in place. Such a system requires vision and meaningful commitment from the North to the democratisation of global decision-making, and to make available the necessary resources.

If the Earth, in terms of the environment, is to be regarded as a single entity, as a nation is considered a single entity, then the wealth of the rich must be redistributed equitably also among the poor. This is the overriding principle that governs the nation as a unit. It is not the poor begging from the rich. It is pure inadulterated fairness and justice. For Muslims in particular, this concept of justice is familiar. Zakat and Fitrah are not charity contributions but are religious obligations in the interest of social justice in any human society.

During the Earth Summit, the leaders reiterated that problems of the environment and development were global, regional, as well as national in nature. Just as environmental problems have transboundary implications, development issues, particularly for developing countries, have transboundary implications as well. Synthetic rubber, plastics, glass fibres and numerous other substitutes for natural products, devised by the developed countries, all retard the development and well-being of the people in the developing countries. The need for continuing dialogue between rich and poor, between North and South, is obvious. If the South is to be effective in ensuring that the protection of the environment will not result in retarding development, then they must achieve solidarity and argue from a common standpoint. The Islamic countries must play their part in achieving this.

While North-South interaction and cooperation is central to the prevention of global environmental degradation and the need for sustained economic growth, the South must not ignore the many opportunities available to also enhance South-South cooperation. This Conference, in itself, is a tangible manifestation of South-South cooperation. We have much to gain by learning and working together on these important matters.

The scientists of the Islamic world have much to contribute towards South-South cooperation in the field of environment and development. Through intensified interaction among themselves, they can project a model of the kind of cooperation that can be emulated by all the countries of the South. There should be closer collaboration among the scientists in such areas as climate change and biological diversity. Your research findings and technical data will also serve to strengthen the bases of our negotiators as they negotiate the various environment-related conventions and protocols. Sound and verifiable data are crucial if the South is to safeguard its interests in multilateral negotiations.

Science and technology have a critical role to play in the global endeavour to protect the environment and to promote sustainable development. Through science and technology, our understanding of issues relating to the ecology, economics and society has become more matured, providing us with the bases for making choices in the direction of environmentally acceptable development. In this regard, scholars, scientists and researchers in the Muslim world must not lag behind if they wish to help the Ummah expand and consolidate their scientific and technological base, particularly in the vital area of research and development. Islamic countries, in many instances very richly endowed, must improve their educational and scientific research facilities so as to ensure the capacity of the Ummah to keep up with scientific and technological advancements and to improve on them.

In order to accelerate this process and indeed to make the quantum leap that is necessary to improve the quality of life of the Ummah, Muslim scientists must accumulate as much knowledge as possible so as to enable them to develop environmentally sound and appropriate technology. What is suitable for developed countries may not be suitable for developing countries. It is up to the scientists in developing countries to devise and modify the technologies of the developed countries to suit the needs of the developing countries.

We are aware that although the basic infrastructure of science and technology is available in many Islamic countries, it is neither large enough nor strong enough to cope with the rapid development in this field that is taking place worldwide. The importance of a strong and sound base of science and technology cannot be over-emphasised. The base underpins our efforts to solve the problems of food, defence, security, shelter, fuel and energy, health and pollution, exploitation of mineral resources and the enhancement of agricultural and industrial production.

Malaysia has recognised the need to develop our technological capabilities in our quest for the status of a fully developed nation by the year 2020. Indeed, acquisition of such capabilities represents one of the key strategies under the Second Outline Perspective Plan and the Sixth Malaysia Plan.

To be a developed nation does not mean merely achieving the same GNP per capita of the rich countries. This is important of course because national poverty tends to undermine independence. But equally important is the acquisition of knowledge that can contribute towards national security and scientific and technological independence. Without these we will always be supplicants, dependent on the charity of others.

But it must be clear that true independence should not lead to the kind of arrogance that results in rash actions and acquisitiveness. As much as we value independence, we must respect the

independence of others. Thus being developed must include the practice of good moral values within society and between societies and nations.

Muslim scientists must always remember and adhere to good moral values. Their knowledge should be for the good of the Ummah in general. The Ummah with the help of Muslim scientists must project to the world the true meaning of human civilisation and progress for it is enjoined upon Muslims to acquire knowledge not for evil but for the good of mankind. Certainly the protection of the environment would constitute the application of knowledge for the good of mankind.

Fellows of the Islamic Academy of Sciences have a significant role to play in promoting the development of science and technology in the Islamic world. As scientists in the Islamic world, you have a catalytic role in promoting growth and progress of the Islamic world in particular and the rest of the world in general. Individuals as well as Non-Governmental Organisations similarly have their own part in this collective exercise to safeguard the environment while promoting sustained economic growth. The Islamic Academy of Sciences, as a NGO, has a valuable contribution to make, particularly through the morally sound application of science and technology.

Islam is a progressive religion. There are no injunctions against the acquisition of knowledge as long as it is not intended for evil. I believe that the many challenges and difficulties that we face can be overcome if we adhere closely to the true teachings of Islam. It was the adherence to the true teachings that led to the Golden Age of Islam. It was during this Age that the various branches of science flourished as a result of the work of Muslim scientists. But when superstition and narrow interpretations of the teachings took over, the glorious Age faded. For as long as we submit to this kind of interpretation, for so long will we be subservient to others.

It is my earnest hope that your deliberations in this Conference will result in a better understanding of the problems and issues facing the Muslim scientists in this age, when in addition to their role of uplifting the Muslim Ummah, they have also to contend with the need of developing in a constantly restrictive environmental regime.

I wish you success in your deliberations and a pleasant stay in Malaysia.

Wabillahitaufik walhidayah wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

Opening Address By Dato^{} Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister Of Malaysia At The Official Opening Of The Sixth Islamic Academy Of Sciences Conference On Environment And Development In The Islamic World, 10th August 1992, The Islamic Centre, Kuala Lumpur.*

THE 14TH COMMONWEALTH FORESTRY CONFERENCE

It is a pleasure to be here today on the occasion of the official opening of the 14th Commonwealth Forestry Conference. Let me, first of all, thank the organisers for inviting me to address and officiate the opening of this conference. Let me also extend a very warm welcome to all our guests and participants and wish them a fruitful conference and a pleasant stay.

We have all witnessed how forestry has today emerged as a dominant issue high on the list of both the domestic and international agenda. As a country with substantial tropical forests, Malaysia has consistently voiced her concern over any unrestrained exploitation. The issue has to be viewed in its right perspective and approached in a balanced and holistic manner, taking into account not only the inter-relationship between environment and development, but also between forest and non-forest issues, as well as between tropical and non-tropical forests.

Environmental problems confronting the world today are a result of global pollution for which the developed countries are mainly responsible. Deforestation in the tropics occurs much later than the widespread destruction of non-tropical forests in developed countries due to the agricultural and industrial revolutions as well as the expansionist past of these countries. Problems of sustainability beset not only tropical forests but also all other types of forests which have suffered from past destruction and are in danger of continuous degradation and decline from acid rains, pollution and fires. More importantly, the underlying causes of tropical deforestation are not orderly logging but rather poverty, indebtedness as well as the needs for fuel and land for agriculture, food and shelter.

Our quest for a balanced and fair approach to these global issues on forestry has now been acknowledged. In fact, it was reflected in the Langkawi Declaration on the environment adopted by

the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kuala Lumpur in October 1989.

The momentum gained from the Langkawi Declaration was consolidated in the Paris Declaration passed by the 10th World Forestry Congress in 1991, which addressed all types of forests in the world in the desired holistic way. Among other things the declaration called on decision-makers to commit themselves to the greening of the world, limit emission of greenhouse gases and pollutants and increase financial provisions to offset losses incurred by developing countries.

More than a year has passed since the forest principles were adopted. Apart from the decision taken by the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) to review forestry related matters under its multi-year thematic work programme at its session in 1995, there has been no significant implementation of these principles and other UNCED decisions on forestry. The initiative for the establishment of an independent world commission on forests and sustainable development appears to have faltered for lack of support from many countries. Yet, the necessary preparations have to be put in place to ensure a substantive and fruitful review by the CSD in 1995. Given the heavy and wide-ranging work programme of the CSD and that forests have emerged as an issue which demands our urgent attention and action, it is imperative that an inter-governmental task force on forestry be established under the aegis of the CSD to undertake the necessary preparations and consultations for the CSD review in 1995. This is a more constructive way to push for the effective implementation of the entire post-UNCED agenda on global forestry.

Despite efforts to develop and adopt a more balanced and holistic framework for global forestry, general perceptions, attitudes and thinking of developed countries are still focused on tropical forests. Promises for new and additional resources and the transfer of technology remain basically unfulfilled. Tropical forests continue to

face unfair scrutiny and conditionalities while tropical timber is subjected to mounting pressures and threats of labelling, bans and boycotts.

The only set of internationally agreed standards on sustainability in existence is the one adopted by the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) which applies exclusively to tropical forests. Tropical forest countries which are members of ITTO have also given their commitment to the attainment of the ITTO sustainability target by the year 2000. What bothers us most is that non-tropical forests and timbers which compete with tropical timber in the same international timber market are not being subjected at all to any internationally agreed standards and commitment to sustainability. Yet we know that the practice of clear felling of miles and miles of temperate forests causes more environmental damage than the controlled selective logging practised in tropical forests.

This is a glaring case of double standards and a clear contradiction to the decisions of UNCED. It requires immediate redress. In the on-going negotiations for a successor agreement to the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) 1983, producer members have proposed the expansion of the scope of the agreement to cover all timbers, so that non-tropical timbers can be subjected to the same sustainability criteria and all problems of discrimination and double standards can be effectively eliminated. Not surprisingly, this proposal has been rejected by consumers of the North.

The truth is consumers in the North have been dragging their feet on the issue of the sustainability of their non-tropical forests and timbers and have not shown any serious and sincere intention to make a concrete commitment to the sustainability of their forests even outside the ITTA. A recent effort by the ministerial conference on the protection of forest in Europe at Helsinki has been criticised as being too little too late and seriously lacking in clarity, substantiveness and time frame. Forests are renewable natural resources and developed countries can redeem themselves by raising

their forest cover to a respectable level through, perhaps, the conversion to forests of their heavily subsidised farms which are causing grievous harm to unsubsidised commodity export of developing countries.

The 14th Commonwealth Forestry Conference is the first being held after the historic Earth Summit which took place in Rio last year. In view of this and considering its pioneer effort in promoting a balanced approach to the global issues of forest and environment through the Langkawi Declaration, the Commonwealth is well placed to once again lead by example in the implementation of the UNCED decisions. Uncertainties clouding some of the existing international efforts on forestry, including the Tropical Forestry Action Programme (TFAP), give further credence to this emerging opportunity.

On the basis of this need, I would like to suggest that the initiative be launched to streamline the implementation of the UNCED forest principles within the Commonwealth with emphasis on the following:

- (a) Acceptance by all that states have the sovereign right to exploit and manage their forest resources on a sustainable basis taking into account the need for social and economic development, as well as the protection of the forests and the environment;
- (b) Sustainable forest management and the sustainability criteria should be made applicable to all types of forests and timbers;
- (c) Efforts towards the greening of the world should be the main responsibility of those countries with low forest cover and should be pursued in the context of increasing the world's forest cover to 30 percent of its land area by the year 2000;

(d) Developing countries should be provided with new and additional resources and be given access to environmentally-sound technologies on favourable terms in order to enhance their capacity to sustainably manage, conserve and develop their forests;

(e) The promotion of a supportive international economic climate and trade in forest products based on non-discriminatory and multilateral agreed rules and procedures, as well as the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers and impediments to trade in forest products; and

(f) The conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity as provided for in the convention of biological diversity should take cognisance of the importance of forests, particularly tropical forests, as the main repository of terrestrial diversity.

Malaysia has been known for her outspokenness on global issues concerning forests and the environment. Following our active participation in the negotiations at UNCED, we have stepped up our national efforts towards implementing the decisions of UNCED. These include conducting a national seminar on the follow-up to the Rio Earth Summit, signing of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, incorporating sustainable development into the governmental and administrative framework, formulating a national action plan on biological diversity and assuming the first chairmanship of the CSD.

On forestry, our forest and tree cover remain at almost 60 percent and more than 70 percent respectively and we are fully committed to our pledge of retaining a minimum 50 percent level of forest and tree cover in perpetuity. In this connection, our Permanent Forest Estate (PFE) has been expanded from 12.7 million to 14.1 million hectares. A total of 4.7 million hectares of forests outside the

PFE representing 14.3 percent of the total land area, has been dedicated for the protection of biodiversity and environment. The National Forestry Policy has been updated in 1992 and we have recently amended the National Forestry Act to strengthen its provisions and to introduce stiffer penalties for forest offences. The state of Sarawak is adjusting its log production in accordance with the recommendations of the Cranbrook Report by 1994 and has undertaken specific programmes to cater for the needs and welfare of the indigenous people who are directly dependent on the forests. At the international level, Malaysia as a member of ITTO, has given her full commitment to the attainment of the ITTO sustainability target by the year 2000, and is involved in collaborative work in forestry on a bilateral basis with a number of countries including Japan, United Kingdom, Germany, New Zealand, Canada, the United States and Sweden.

I believe that on the basis of these measures, Malaysia is in a good position to fulfill her commitment towards the sustainable management, conservation and development of her forests. This should give us the courage and confidence to meet the challenges and developments in global forestry in the years to come.

With these remarks, ladies and gentlemen, I have great pleasure in declaring open the 14th Commonwealth Forestry Conference.

Opening Address By Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister Of Malaysia At The Official Opening Of The 14th Commonwealth Forestry Conference, 13th September 1993, Shangri-La Hotel, Kuala Lumpur.

THE SIXTEENTH ASEAN MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY MEETING (AMAF)

I would like to thank the Ministry of Agriculture for inviting me to officiate the 16th Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry in Langkawi today. I hope that in the spirit of ASEAN cooperation you will be able to discuss candidly the issues before us and come up with proposals that will mutually benefit us all.

The ASEAN economies today are booming and experiencing rapid economic growth averaging 6.7 percent per annum in 1993. In all these economies, the leading sectors have always been the manufacturing and the services sector. Yet a large number of people are still highly dependent on agriculture and forestry for their livelihood. The agricultural sector, compared to the manufacturing and services sector, has been lagging behind in terms of rate of growth and contribution to the GDP. As such efforts must be made to ensure that agriculture continues to develop alongside other sectors.

In Malaysia, between 1991 and June 1994, out of RM 82.8 billion of capital investment that was approved for 20 types of industry, agro-based and food-based industries accounted for about 11 percent or RM8.7 billion. This included food manufacturing, beverages and tobacco, wood and wood products, and paper and rubber products. Thus, even though the manufacturing sector takes on great importance in a country's industrialisation, the agriculture component is not an insignificant component. Besides, for Malaysia, the biggest import item and the biggest cause of inflation is food, especially imported food products.

The private sector of ASEAN countries can play a major role to enhance intra-ASEAN investment in the agriculture and forestry industry so as to exploit the complementarity within ASEAN in terms of factor endowments, labour costs, technologies, and skills. ASEAN

private initiatives should aim at strategic alliances and joint ventures in the production, processing and marketing of agricultural products. The thrust of cooperative efforts in this direction should result in penetration of extra-ASEAN markets. With the conclusion of the GATT negotiations, there will be more trade and competition, and competitiveness will be the key to survival in the world market place. Hence all the comparative advantages of the ASEAN member countries should be combined in order for ASEAN to be a low cost producer and exporter of quality agricultural products.

In ASEAN we have the Growth Triangle development strategy involving all ASEAN member countries, namely the IMT-GT between Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand; the SIJORI between Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia and BIMP-GT between Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. In all these projects, agriculture offers a great potential because these are resource frontier regions. I would, therefore, like to urge the private sectors of all the ASEAN member countries to initiate projects which would benefit all parties and help expedite the process of opening up these growth centres. Potential areas of development include food production and large-scale livestock rearing, as well as the various tree-crops.

We in ASEAN produce the same commodities, have the same climate, the same environment, eat the same staple food and face the same problems. In agriculture, as in other fields, we are both competitors and rivals. We want to be the best producers and to get the maximum market access for our products. In fact we want to be the best in all our endeavours because entry into the world market means we can develop faster and improve the standard of living of our people. This is a logical and rational mode of thinking and action because the real world is a harsh one. But I believe we can do better if we cooperate rather than compete ferociously and fiercely. It is in this spirit that the ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) can play an important role. I hope that the AMAF will be an effective forum for the resolving of common problems related to agriculture and forestry in the region. We have no time to engage in

polite and unproductive forums using scarce public funds that need to be used for the benefit of our peoples. We have to make a commitment to come up with more task-oriented and substantive work programmes. If we all do this sincerely and with commitment, then agriculture will continue to be an important contributor to our growth.

Although environmental issues have dominated the world scene since the UNCED summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 the role of agriculture cannot be ignored. It is obvious that expansion of agricultural land must be at the expense of forest land. But we can minimise this by more intensive cultivation of available land and through research on increasing yield per unit of land. It is worth noting that research has made the original rubber tree yield ten times more latex. The same is true for oil palm and other crops. Still there are many ways of improving quality and yield. It is up to the agriculturists to do research and to develop. Funds expended on R&D in agriculture is never a waste. ASEAN researchers should publish their works and exchange information on a regular basis. That way we can help sustain our environment and in particular our forests.

Growth in population tend to exhaust marine products. While fishing should be controlled, aquaculture should be expanded. Many ASEAN countries have more than adequate land for aquaculture. At the same time research in aquaculture should not only make the industry profitable but should help with the food needs of ASEAN countries, and for exports.

ASEAN remains a major tropical forest region in the world, with some 180 million hectares which represent about 60 percent of the ASEAN land area. ASEAN is also the most important supplier of tropical timber products in the world, accounting for more than 80 percent of the international trade in these products valued at more than US\$12 billion a year. Forestry has played a dominant role in the socio-economic development of the region.

You may recall that when the need to conserve the world's forests was first recognised, the focus was almost exclusively on the tropical forest and its exploitation. A full scale and emotive campaign was mounted in the West to ban the use of tropical hardwoods. It would seem that temperate land timber has no role at all in maintaining the ecological balance. The timber tycoons of the north could clear-fell millions of hectare of forest with impunity.

While we are not denying the role played by tropical forests in sustaining the ecological balance, we would like to point out that we do no clear felling. Extraction of timber is controlled so that if you fly over the ASEAN countries, you will still see only green below you.

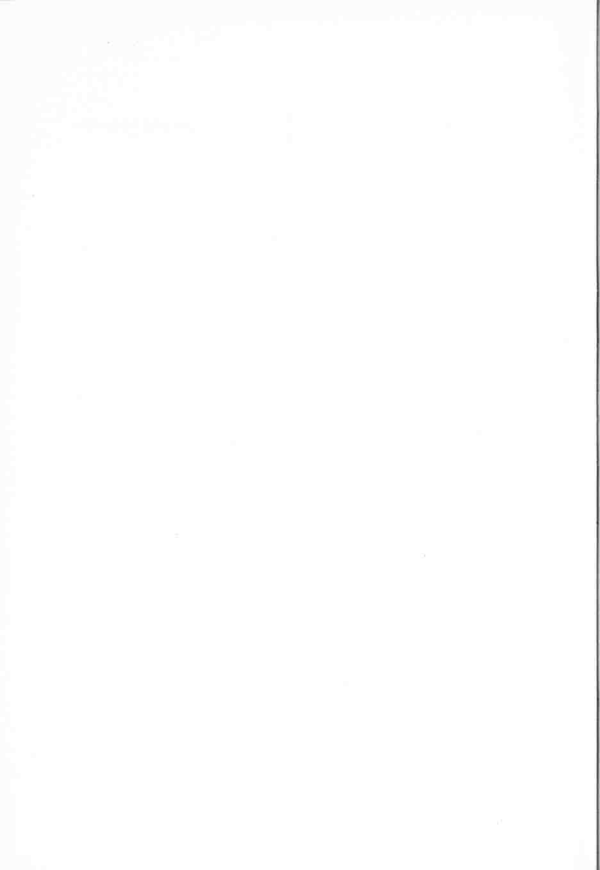
When ASEAN timber companies expand their operations to the South Seas and other regions they are equally careful not to destroy the forests they log. Unfortunately the activities of ASEAN loggers to help the economy of many developing countries have aroused resentment on the part of some regional powers. Suddenly money was offered to these developing countries to persuade them to stop Malaysian investors. We do not know what to call such aid but it is questionable whether ecology has anything to do with it.

While many ASEAN countries can afford to reduce dependence on the forest for their economic development, other countries may not be able to do so. They have a right to extract their forest products in order to free themselves from others.

Finally, I am glad to note that the ASEAN Secretariat has drafted a Memorandum of Understanding for the Joint ASEAN Agriculture and Forestry Product Promotion Scheme in order to strengthen the collective bargaining position of ASEAN and expand agriculture and forest products exports. This MOU is very timely and in fact is long overdue in the quest for ASEAN economic cooperation in the face of a more competitive world economy.

On that note, I have the pleasure to declare open the Sixteenth ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Meeting.

Opening Address By Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister Of Malaysia At the Official Opening Of The Sixteenth Asean Ministers Of Agriculture And Forestry Meeting (Amaf), 25th August 1994, The Langkawi Island Resort Hotel Langkawi, Kedah.



THE ASIAN PARLIAMENTARIAN CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

May I extend to you a very warm welcome to Malaysia and thank you for your presence at this Asian Parliamentarian Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development, organised by the Malaysian Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD).

The theme of this Conference "Environment and Sustainable Development" underscores the importance of the Implementation of the Agenda 21 of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). At the Rio Earth Summit, my colleagues, both from the developing and the developed countries, had agreed to work together to achieve sustainable development on the recognition that people cannot have a healthy society nor a vibrant economy in a world steeped in abject poverty, unsustainable lifestyles and environmental degradation. Economic development should not cease but must, however, adjust its course, given the increasing signals at various levels of society for an environmentally sound development process.

Rio gave rise to hopes for a new global partnership where both the South and the North, as well as the peoples of the world, would collectively work towards halting environmental degradation and promoting sustainable development. It also appreciates the need of developing countries to catch up with the rest of the world to achieve our common objective for global sustainable development.

The transition towards sustainable development requires international partnership based on such considerations as common but differentiated responsibilities, a supportive external economic environment and taking into account the specific social and economic conditions of individual countries and their sustainable development priorities.

Yet, regrettably two years and 4 months after the historic UNCED in Rio, the global community is running the risk of inaction. The fundamental problem currently confronting the implementation of the Rio decisions revolves around the issues of means of implementation, i.e. new and additional financial resources and technology transfer. The global partnership that was agreed to at Rio was the explicit understanding and commitment that the developed countries would assist the developing countries in making the transition towards sustainable development with the provision of new and additional resources. A great cause for concern for the developing countries is that the commitment of substantial new and additional financial resources made have not been translated into reality. UNCED had estimated that about US\$625 billion per year was needed by developing countries to finance activities related to Agenda 21. Of this amount, about US\$500 billion per year would have to come from domestic resources generated within developing countries while the estimated external flows from the developed to the developing countries was US\$125 billion per year.

We would be less than honest if we do not discern the prevailing general sense of disappointment among the developing countries vis-a-vis the commitment towards implementing the decisions we took at Rio in 1992. Agenda 21 remains far from being implemented.

At Rio, the industrialised countries reaffirmed their commitments to reach the accepted target of 0.7 per cent of Gross National Product for Official Development Assistance (ODA). I observe with great disappointment that the resources under ODA are falling instead of increasing. In fact the OECD countries' development assistance to developing countries fell sharply in 1993, from US\$60.8 billion in 1992 to US\$54.8 billion in 1993. The overall ratio of development assistance to GNP fell from 0.33 per cent to 0.29 percent.

The only new money available is in the restructured Global Environment Facility (GEF). The new GEF has been replenished with pledges from 26 countries, totalling US\$2 billion to cover programmes under the scope of GEF as well as the Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity. US\$2 billion is but a drop in the ocean in comparison to the requirements estimated at Rio. Regrettably, the situation is made worse in the sense that the release of funds for project implementation is subject to conditionalities.

Matters related to the implementation of financial commitments contained in Agenda 21, include those related to terms of trade, commodity prices, market access, debt relief, Official Development Assistance and other measures. The issue of financial resources and mechanism was reviewed by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its second session held in New York in May 1994. I am greatly disappointed that discussions on finance have not led to tangible advancement on this issue.

It has become fashionable at recent international meetings and conferences for developed countries to state that the onus of identifying and mobilising resources is at the national level, thus shifting their share of the burden by pushing for internally generated resources in the developing countries through restructuring budget priorities, national level policy changes, reordering of priorities and reduction in military spending. While I believe in the importance of national governments to implement plans of action, this would be incomplete without the concomitant role of the international community. I call upon the developed countries not to backtrack on their existing commitments.

Malaysia shares the concerns of other developing countries in other issues relating to sustainable development, especially in the areas of international trade, transboundary movement of toxic, hazardous and radioactive wastes, forestry and biodiversity.

The share of the developing countries in world trade is small. Many developing countries are not competitive in the international market place as they are mainly dependent on the export of raw materials and low technology goods.

Cheaper labour cost is still a form of competitive advantage most developing countries are relying on out of necessity. But in the quest to seek and develop markets in which they can be internationally competitive, the developing countries face fresh and unjustified impediments such as the linking of non-trade issues like eco-labelling, imposition of social clauses, global minimum wage and perceived human rights violations in order to wipe out what remains of the trade prospects of the developing countries. As it is, the developed countries already possess competitive advantages in proprietary technology, access to rich domestic markets, capital, management skills, credits extended specifically for the purchase of their own exports, and grants by their Government conditional upon projects being given to their companies or purchases of their exports. Developing countries have none of these advantages. I see the continued attempts by certain developed countries to introduce more conditionalities in the international trade regime as disguised protectionism to erode further not only the insignificant competitive advantage of the developing countries but also to impose an unbearable burden on the developing countries. In fact, some academics in developed countries are already arguing that trade between developed and developing countries is damaging to the economy of the developed.

Developing countries must strongly resist all these moves which will have very negative impacts on their economic development and may result in more unemployment and deterioration of the living conditions of their people.

Malaysia shares the growing concerns of the developing countries regarding the transboundary movement of toxic and hazardous waste. The discussions by the Parties to the Basel

Convention in Geneva on 24-25 March 1994 are certainly going in the right direction. Malaysia supported the ban on the export of hazardous wastes from the OECD to the non-OECD countries. The position taken by Malaysia is based on our strong belief that to knowingly pollute your neighbour's land and to cause harm to his family is an environmental crime that violates human rights. Malaysia will certainly support any call for international cooperation in the strengthening of institutions to assist governments and industries in the adoption of clean technologies as well as for the prevention of pollution and in the handling, treatment and disposal of hazardous wastes.

I would also like to highlight the possible damage inflicted by foreign ships carrying toxic and radioactive materials through their seas, especially through narrow straits. Such disposal of toxic, hazardous and radioactive wastes as well as oil spills and desludging activities on the high seas have serious and negative impacts on both marine and land resources. As a littoral state faced with a situation where more than 360 vessels daily ply the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea, there is an urgent need to take all the necessary precautionary measures to prevent risks involving the disposal of tanker sludge. The interest of littoral states must be safeguarded. In this respect, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) should seriously address these problems.

On forestry, the developing countries, especially the tropical timber producers, are victims of misguided campaigns. These impact negatively on tropical timber. Their timber exports are increasingly subjected to new and arbitrary requirements and conditionalities related to certification and labelling and new interpretations for sustainability of forest management. These conditionalities have resulted in the rejection of tropical timber products by municipalities of some European countries without giving fair assessment to the source of timber. Even the Do-It-Yourself people have been pressured to drop tropical timber products for their use.

If the developed countries are genuinely concerned about the sustainability of forest utilisation and management, the standards and criteria imposed on tropical timber should be applied fairly and equally on all timber products, including those from temperate and boreal forests.

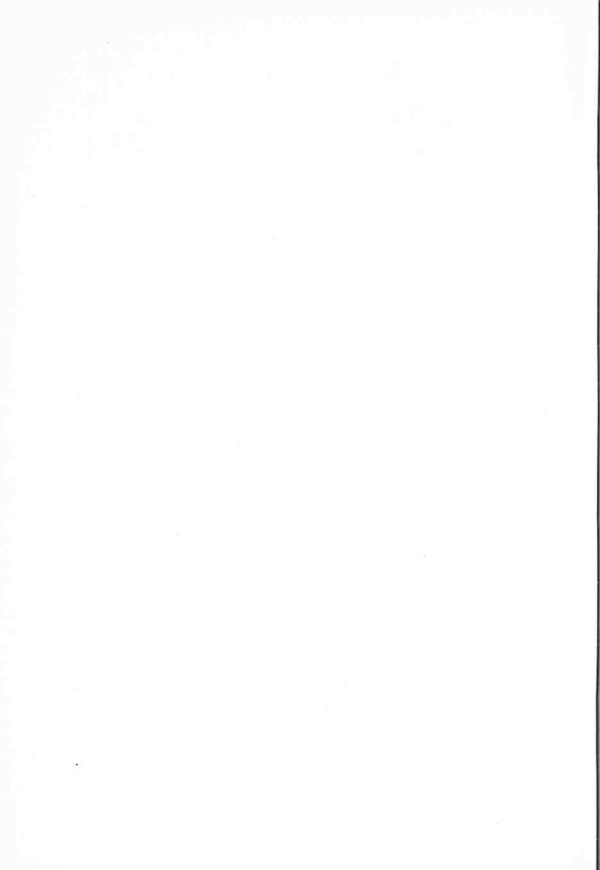
On biodiversity, the developed countries have been utilising freely the rich biodiversity resources of the developing countries with no benefits accruing to the resource owners. In developing biodiversity for the benefit of mankind, there must be fair and equitable returns to resource owners, e.g. in developing pharmaceutical products by the Western Trans National Corporation. Certainly developing countries would not want to see a repeat of the "Periwinkle" case of Madagascar where two drugs derived from this plant are reported to earn for its multinational company US\$100 million annually, but no appropriate and equitable financial benefits given to the resource owners. I would urge the developing countries which own the largest share of the world genetic resources to develop a strong and common stand pertaining to the modes of collaboration with foreign partners.

To achieve sustainable development requires the participation of all players, including law makers like yourself. What is most urgent at this stage is to focus on the means of implementation of the various agreements. The present approach to sustainable development and the implementation of conventions relating to environment is seriously flawed. It has lost its focus and this has unfortunately come about because the developing countries require financial assistance and technology transfer to fulfill the objectives of the conventions. This need has subjected them to conditionalities set by the developed countries. I get the impression that during discussions on the implementation of the various environment-related conventions, the developing countries are treated like beggars for aid. I have also observed with great disappointment the undesirable tendency of the developed countries to treat the environment-related conventions as an ODA exercise with all its obnoxious and patronising undertones.

It is my sincere hope that during this conference all of you could establish procedures and arrangements to monitor and assess the performance of the developed countries in honouring their commitments to existing conventions and indeed their own performance with regard to sustainable development in their countries. Your initiative in this matter would contribute usefully to the deliberations at the Commission on Sustainable Development which was established to monitor the implementation of UNCED decisions.

With these remarks, I now have the pleasure of declaring this Asian Parliamentarians Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development officially open.

Opening Address By Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister Of Malaysia At The Official Opening Of The Asian Parliamentarian Conference On Environment And Sustainable Development, 8th November 1994, The Pan Pacific Glenmarie Resort, Shah Alam, Selangor.



THE MALAYSIAN INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE FAIR 1995

At the outset I wish to thank the organisers, the Ministry of Primary Industries, the Malaysian Furniture Industry Council and the Malaysian Timber Industry Board, for inviting me today to officially open this International Furniture Fair 1995.

To our foreign guests I bid you "Selamat Datang" and hope that you will also take the opportunity to enjoy the many touristic sites which Malaysia offers.

It is significant that furniture is the focus of one of the first ever international trade fairs in Malaysia. In 1994, the forest sector was the most important foreign exchange earner amongst our commodities. Estimated export of forestry products fetched some RM12.9 billion or about US 5 billion, accounting for about 8.7 per cent of total foreign exchange earnings of the country, exceeding even earnings of the petroleum and gas sector. Furniture exports in particular, have achieved remarkable increases and have joined the ranks of the billion ringgit earners two years ago.

The Government has many a time drawn attention to the opportunities for commodities to develop downstream processing industries in order to achieve higher added value and export earnings together with other benefits to the economy. In the case of timber, such value-added processing has the benefit of slowing down the rate of harvesting of the forests. Furniture production is one such avenue to achieve these aspirations. This furniture fair will be especially useful in promoting the wood-processing capability of Malaysians.

Since independence, we have gone through a few decades of exporting primary processed timber and it may not be to our best interest in the context of current sentiments and concern about the environment and sustainable development to be literally only the

'hewers of wood'. The active campaigning against the use of tropical timbers has led to discriminatory and unfair unilateral legislative actions and boycotts against the use of tropical timber. Even though various actions have been taken to counter these negative attitudes, the industry together with the authorities, have to ensure that our forests are truly sustainable. It is in our interest to ensure a sustainable supply source for what has become a major sector in our economy. New strategies for the development of value-added processing industries which can maintain or even increase the contribution of the forest sector to the national economy must be pursued.

Since the Rio Earth Summit, Malaysia has taken the lead to promote discussions on forest issues based on a proper perspective. "Tropical forest" bashing is seen as the panacea for the ills of environmental degradation worldwide. This selectivity is unjustified. Actions on all types of forest should be considered if indeed deforestation is a cause of major global environmental problems.

In any case, Malaysia values her forests beyond the benefits of commercial logging and is fully aware of the significant ecological and environmental protective role of our forests. Little has been highlighted on the fact that forests and tree crops cover some 23.6 million hectares or 72 per cent of Malaysia's total land area. Of our permanent forest estates of some 14 million hectares, production forests of approximately 10.67 million hectares are managed to ensure that timber production is done on a sustainable basis. The many facets of tropical forest management is least understood by critics who may not have even set foot in our country and yet never fail to amplify shortcomings which appear to be not in keeping with environmental concerns. Malaysia has pledged that at least half of the country would remain forever green. Yet it has called for the greening of only 30 per cent of the other countries, a percentage which the developed countries with their excessive farming can well afford.

Malaysian manufacturers and traders must capitalise on the opportunities provided through the organisation of this fair here in Kuala Lumpur to meet the buyers and obtain as much market feedback with regard to the appropriate products, standards and design requirements. On the other hand, buyers can conveniently view the numerous designs and product quality of Malaysian manufacturers in order to choose the products that are saleable and meet with consumers' taste in their respective countries. Unlike selling your products domestically, the international market calls for creativity, appropriate designs, high quality and competitive products bearing in mind that serving the customer is of utmost importance.

To further enhance Malaysia's competitive edge in furniture exports and to add more value to our products, due emphasis must be given to design. Our cosmopolitan heritage should enable us to be more innovative in the global market-place where numerous cultural and economic variables determine market demand. Success in the international furniture market demands that we fully harness the technological skills, modern management and the essential arts in furniture design. In the evolution and growth of our furniture industry we have to offer original and attractive designs to the international market. The ability to create new designs is an essential prerequisite in our progress towards becoming an industrialised nation. Whilst modern design methods are highly essential, the creative skills of our home-grown designers must also be encouraged and nurtured to take advantage of our multi-ethnic heritage. In this context, we should strive towards a unique "Malaysia furniture design" with which buyers can identify us with. Manufacturers, therefore, must consider this role seriously.

I am happy to note that the relevant agencies under the Ministry of Primary Industries have been working with professional bodies and the furniture associations to organise annual national furniture design competitions since 1988. To encourage and promote designing capability from amongst local circles, such competitions are necessary for greater awareness among our manufacturers on the

importance of design. At the same time, they will highlight the creativity of Malaysian designers and forge closer links between designers and manufacturers. This continuous and sustained focus on creative furniture design will result in improvements not only by the individuals concerned but by the whole community through generation to come. The art will become a part of the culture of Malaysians..

Given the growing demand for skilled labour in our economy, optimal utilisation of our human resources to fulfil the more demanding requirements of an industrialised nation must now be given priority by each of our manufacturing sectors. In this regard, I understand that the skilled manpower requirements of the wood-based sector, particularly the downstream processing sectors such as furniture, joinery and mouldings, are being given due attention.

I understand that the MTIB has established the wood industry skills development centre at the Furniture Park in Olak Lempit, Banting. The centre, which will be operational in April 1995, will train operators and technicians for the value-added downstream wood processing sectors. Similarly, the Malaysian Timber Council, together with PERDA has set up a furniture technology centre in Seberang Prai to meet the needs of manufacturers.

The government has provided many incentives to encourage companies to train and develop their human resources. Hopefully our timber entrepreneurs will take advantage of these incentives and provide support to the programmes conducted by these two training centres.

I have followed with keen interest the development of the furniture industry as woodworking was a personal hobby of mine when I had more free time. As a part-time amateur wood-worker, I have come to appreciate the many fine qualities of our numerous timber species. Given this basic gift of nature, I am convinced that our country has the prerequisites to make the furniture sector an

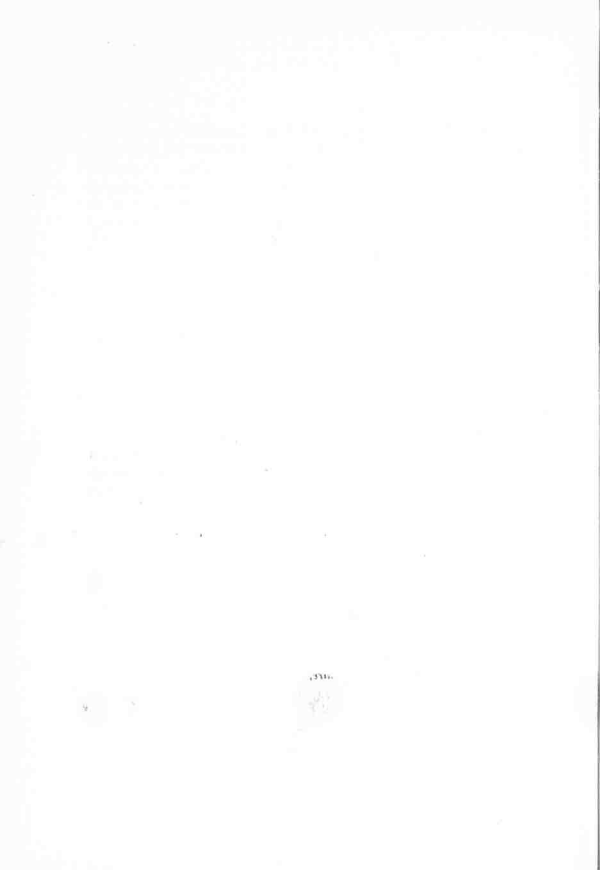
export-oriented industry on a much larger scale and of world-class standing. However, achieving this aspiration calls for bold investment not only in manufacturing capacity, but also in terms of upstream linkages of raw material supply. Investments in rubber plantations which produce both latex and material for furniture making, should be pursued in earnest. Entrepreneurs in this field can certainly reap the fruits of their ventures in the years to come. Malaysia which has a lead in research and development in the planting of rubber would benefit from such efforts and thus be able to stay ahead of competition from newcomers.

One area which I would like to stress is the quality of the finish. Malaysian manufacturers must put in more effort in order to achieve the kind of velvety finish typical of Scandinavian furniture and the use of layers of lacquer so as to get the high gloss effect. Far too often Malaysian furniture makers are too stingy in their use of lacquer.

Your presence here representing the industry and trade from countries around the globe and the keen support shown justifies the hosting of this international furniture fair here in Kuala Lumpur.

On that note, I have great pleasure to declare the 1995 Malaysian International Furniture Fair open.

Opening Address By Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister Of Malaysia At The Official Opening of The Malaysian International Furniture Fair 1995, 8th March 1995, Putra World Centre, Kuala Lumpur.



THE MEETING ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all delegates, local and foreign, to this Meeting on Regional Development Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific. Malaysia, and in particular Kuala Lumpur, is honoured to play host to this meeting which must be considered as being most timely.

Regional cooperation is both logical and desirable in order to achieve the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people. However, it cannot thrive within the framework of a master-disciple relationship. Instead, it must be predicated upon mutual respect for each country's sovereignty and sensitivities. I hope your deliberations at this meeting will contribute towards improving efforts to chart new approaches and directions for the growth of Asia and the Pacific region.

The Asia Pacific region which encompasses all countries in Asia and islands washed by the Pacific Ocean, presents a unique challenge to the world community. Due to the greatly increased demand for capital resulting from the former command economies switching to the free market system, the flow of funds to the region in the near future is likely to be limited. With this, the major challenge of the multilateral institutions will be to provide better and more cost-efficient development assistance in order to resolve the problems faced by the countries of the region.

With the end of the East-West hostilities, and with the growing euphoria over the predicted Pacific Century presaged by the achievements of many East Asian economies, many had expected the developing countries of the Asia and Pacific region to reap fully the dividends of peace. But instead, they are now being made to pay a heavy premium. The developed North has invented and imposed all kinds of conditions on developing countries including linkages with human rights, labour rights, environmental restrictions, access to

markets and an anarchic regime in the exchange rate of currencies. Every move by the North to protect their interests invariably results in the poor countries becoming poorer. The rich man's club not only disregards the interest of the poor but positively refuses to hear their views before damaging decisions are made. And so The Plaza Accord, for example, raised the value of the Yen, resulting in the developing debtor countries having to pay as much as 100 percent more for their Yen loans. And the value of the Yen is still being forced upwards with dire consequences for most developing countries. This gloomy scenario will continue unless the developing countries, particularly in the Asia Pacific region, are willing to cooperate in their development programmes.

We had expected the United Nations, at least, to serve as a forum for airing the views of the developing countries. But in fact their views there are totally ignored. The so-called free press censors the views of the developing world until it appears that they are, if not dumb, at least voiceless. You can be absolutely sure that nothing will be reported in the international media about this meeting except, of course, the negative aspects. Yet if certain members of the Security Council were to so much as sneeze, there will be headlines on the front pages of every one of these papers and prolonged interviews in the world electronic media. So much for the so-called free press.

It is perhaps symptomatic of the malady affecting the developed world that the recent World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen was remarkable for the absence of their representatives. Yet the Rio Conference on the Environment and Development was fully attended, perhaps because the developing world was supposed to contribute by sacrificing their own development in order to preserve their forests and resources as sinks for the pollutants of the rich.

The Asia and Pacific region is vast in size, vast in numbers, vast in the challenges it faces and equally vast in the opportunities it holds. In terms of size, it is one third of the planet. In terms of

numbers, it supports almost one half of the world's population. The region accounts for 25 percent of global exports, 22 percent of global imports and 33 percent of global international reserves. At the same time, it is also home to the largest number of poor people in the world.

More than 800 million people live in abject poverty in the Asia Pacific region. Several hundred millions are denied access to the basic necessities of life - food, clean water, clean air, shelter, education and health. The infrastructure for developing the resources of the people through education and training is inadequate. To make matters worse, a rapidly growing population coupled with rapid urbanisation have complicated the picture and are putting greater pressure on the fragile resources of the region.

This state of affairs is due in part at least to our own faults. Sometimes we are so sold on the efficacy of democracy that we are too free with our freedom and our rights. We take to the streets at the drop of a pin in order to force the hands of Government or to force it out. We believe that a change of Governments will heal all our ills. But changes in Governments have often resulted in worse Governments being set up, as incapable or as unwilling to do the right things as the previous ones. Again we take to the streets, hold general strikes and generally destabilise the nation, with no real results in terms of our well-being.

Good, strong Governments can go wrong too. So also can the systems of administration or the approach towards developments. We must admit that all these can go wrong and do go wrong. While it is right and proper for us to blame others, it is perhaps easier to correct ourselves than to ask the others, particularly the rich countries, to correct themselves in order that we may enjoy healthy growth and resolve our socio-economic problems.

Assuming that we are able to put our act together and really make democracy and our administration work, we will still not be able to resolve our poverty and development problems if we do not cooperate with each other. This is because the developed nations are all ganging up and forming all kinds of blocs. Although they may insist that they do not mean to be exclusive, but the fact remains that they have a tendency to jointly act against our economic interests if we do not conform or do what we are told. Mention has already been made about their insistence on linking trade with human rights, workers' wages and environmental issues. It is reasonable to expect everyone to be concerned with these issues. But what is worrisome is that the linkages invariably affect our competitiveness. It would seem that they are more interested in pushing up our costs than in seeing that our people and our workers are free, and our environment well-preserved. And yet when they were on their way up they exploited people and the environment more than we are doing. Those of us who were colonies of the developed nations before must remember how our people were fully exploited and our pristine forests were razed to the ground to make way for plantations and the extraction of minerals.

We should not object of course to what is reasonable and fair. But our problem is that we are unable to have our views heard, much less considered. And this is due to our lack of coordination and cooperation while the developed countries are not only coordinated but are arraigned against us in solid blocs.

For a long time developing nations had depended on the production and export of primary commodities in order to earn the foreign exchange we need to buy manufactured goods. Unfortunately, the advanced countries invented substitutes for our commodities and through market manipulation depressed commodity prices further. The terms of trade became more and more against us.

Some developing countries have now turned to manufacturing, particularly labour and resource-intensive industries in order to benefit from our lower cost of living and resources. But again we are being frustrated by conditionalities imposed on our exports, as for example, eco-labelling.

The only way we can counter all these is for us to coordinate and cooperate. By showing a united front we will be able to influence trade policies and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Admittedly, our clout will not be very powerful, but it will be better than no clout at all. Working alone and in isolation will get us nowhere.

Malaysia's experience is that the attainment of prosperity and progress by developing countries invariably benefits other countries as well. Thus when South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore achieved high growth, they became not only good trading partners for us but also good investors in our country. Very often these countries alone and together top the foreign investments in Malaysia.

In time Malaysia was able to switch to manufacturing, progressing from labour-intensive to high-tech industries. The extensive knowledge and capital accumulated in Malaysia have now enabled Malaysia to invest in other developing countries in the region. We fully expect the same cycle which Malaysia went and is going through to be experienced by the other developing countries in the Asia Pacific region. In time the whole region will be prosperous. Indeed, trade between the countries of East Asia is today comparable with intra-European or intra-American trade. All these go to prove that cooperation and cross-investments, together with transfers of technology, benefit everyone, rich or poor. They are mutually enriching.

The world can be a much better place if the rich were less obsessed with maintaining their status. They do not gain by impoverishing the already poor, by making them debt slaves or permanent recipients of aid. A world of evenly developed countries,

each exploiting its comparative advantages, be it knowledge or skills or resources or labour, trading and competing fairly with each other, is far better than a world divided into North and South, rich and poor, developed and developing, powerful and weak, and trade blocs and trade blocs. Maybe this sounds too idealistic. But humanity without ideals will certainly mean the end of history, of civilisation.

In the final analysis, our goal must surely be the well-being of our people. We hope to be respected members in the family of nations. Action, and not words, begets respect. In our haste to improve the lot of our people, in our race towards the status of a developed nation, we run the risk of putting undue pressure on the very elements that sustain development -- the resources, the institutions and the people. In so doing, we often lose sight of the goal of development, that is, the well-being of our present generation and the generations to come. We must, therefore, set our priorities right by putting the ultimate goal of people development firmly in our minds as we move ahead.

In making development happen, we must take to heart the lessons of history -- the successes that have been achieved which could be emulated and the mistakes to be avoided. For us, the search for that elusive balance between the need to develop and the capability of the resources to sustain development must be a matter of priority. Among the myriad possible approaches to development, the countries of Asia and the Pacific must tread the path of responsible development, that is, development with a conscience. In this, we must not bow to pressures exerted by the fads and fashions of environmental movements and economic lobby groups. We must determine our own national and regional priorities on the basis of our own circumstances. We must recognise that economic sustainability through responsible development does not only refer to issues related to the preservation of the environment. It includes other elements like social justice, the right to development and wealth and an equitable world society. While emphasising the most productive exploitation of our resources, and making sure that pollution does not retard

economic growth, we must also take into account that people must be treated fairly and have a voice in decisions that affect them, and that wealth must be distributed equitably among all segments of the population. We must also take pains to preserve the enormously diverse elements within our societies which in themselves give meaning to life.

The road to responsible development is fraught with problems and uncertainties. Towards this end, multilateral development institutions must play the role of the honest broker, matching universal principles and priorities with local circumstances. It is imperative that such institutions do not take a slanted view of development as prescribed by the western pundits. Instead they must initiate collaborative approaches with the developing countries. For us, the concept of responsible development holds out the hope of better times ahead. Much remains to be learnt.

I hope this meeting will come up with fresh insights into problems hindering regional growth and will propose measures that will identify new avenues for promoting regional cooperation.

On this note, I have great pleasure in declaring open this meeting on Regional Development Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific.

Opening Address By Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister Of Malaysia At The Official Opening Of The Meeting On Regional Development Cooperation In Asia And The Pacific, 28th March 1995, The Kuala Lumpur Hilton Hotel, Kuala Lumpur.

THE 50TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Let me congratulate you Mr. President on your election to the 50th United Nations General Assembly. I wish you a successful presidency. Appreciations are also due to your distinguished predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, who provided the leadership during the 49th UN General Assembly.

This General Assembly is meeting amidst hectic schedules of events to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations. Some of us have become preoccupied with these celebrations. We should ask whether these activities are merely media events or would they seriously contribute to a better UN? Will the high point of the 50th Anniversary be reduced to a special commemorative meeting condensed into a declaration of good intentions which no one seriously cares for, or should we resist the tendency to celebrate, to expand millions on galas and parties and to eulogise through rhetorical speeches the anniversary of the United Nations establishment? After all we cannot even answer the basic questions of where we stand and what the UN is, whipping boy or serious enduring player.

Admittedly it is easy to raise questions than to find answers. But these questions must be raised and they deserve to be answered. On its 50th year the UN system finds itself under criticism for being unable to handle basic and critical political, economic and social issues. Despite earlier hopes of a just world order following upon the end of the Cold War, what we see is still a UN which dances to the grating music of the major powers in total disregard for the high principles and objectives pledged at its formation. We will have to conclude that the narrow national interest of the few is still what the UN is all about. Also the principle which largely move the major powers, that what they need for themselves must influence their

dealings with the needs of others, is fully operative, making nonsense of interdependence, social compassion and justice.

And so we must forget the promise of an international political leadership that can collectively come to grips with the myriads of issues for a shared survival. Confrontation between states, intra-state conflicts, economic and military threats, the dehumanising effects of poverty; all these are heightened rather than diminished by the ending of the Cold War. The contradictory impulses of interdependence and isolationism are more evident than ever before. Humanitarianism is not only drying up fast; but what survives is replete with conditionalities. The UN presents a shattered image with a threadbare moral authority, despite the important early successes in decolonisation and the subsequent elimination of apartheid.

The victors of 1945 have clung tenaciously to the levers of power. They control the high ground, exercising influence and power as nakedly as when they were colonial powers. Only the masks have changed. The multilateral organisations created on the eve of war's end were and still are structured to further their economic interests and the pursuit of their strategic political goals. The Security Council, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, have merely become the instruments of power perpetuation. Less than six months ago, we were witness to the use of the UN to push through, draconian-like, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Before the ink was dry, some of the nuclear powers proceeded to test their diabolical weapons. What, may I ask, qualifies some countries for possession of the means of mass destruction in perpetuity? It is time that the nuclear-weapon states commit themselves to nuclear disarmament through a programmed reduction of their nuclear arsenal within a specific time frame, beginning with the immediate cessation of all nuclear tests and culminating in their total elimination. Soon it may be too costly and too late.

Perversely, the major powers not only continue to compete in developing ever more destructive conventional weapons, but they also compete to sell arms. And when some developing countries buy arms, the Western controlled media accuse them of indulging in arms races.

We seem to inherit a world in which moral considerations have no real role to play or those acts of real politic have no moral consequences. Tears appear to be shed about the human tragedies in Bosnia, Rwanda, Liberia, Somalia and Chechnya. But many have become desensitised to the horrors that flash across our screens. The Charter incorporating the idealism and dreams of 1945, is more honoured in its violations than its adherence. Tell us how have the principles of the Charter on the non-use of force and the illegality of claiming territory acquired by aggression been of help to the Bosnians? What protection or solace has the Genocide Convention been to those slaughtered in Rwanda, Bosnia, Cambodia and Chechnya? The lesson for the peoples of these countries is clear; no international order or international ethos will be defended unless the major powers see their vital interests are at risk.

The United Nations have been party to the double talk in Bosnia, insisting that morality had no place in peace-keeping since the impartiality that peacekeepers had to maintain required them to eschew making any judgement about the rights and wrongs of the situation. I ask the UN whether there can be a middle ground where genocide and ethnic cleansing are concerned? I ask the Secretary-General of the UN whether he is obliged to defend the moral principles in the UN Charter or whether he should console the dying and the bereaved that there are others elsewhere suffering worse fates?

Isn't there, in the context of the larger picture, a special role for the UN to provide international leadership? Clearly, the major powers have failed to provide leadership; choosing only to act in furtherance of their national or domestic political interests. They

continue to harp on human rights and the sanctity of human life but they act only when they run no risk.

Admittedly, blame must also be apportioned to many of us in the Third World. Some of us have led our people down the path of despair and misery. With the demise of colonialism, there was the promise of freedom, and development. Yet many succumbed to the temptations of creature comfort, failing to further the rights and welfare of our own people. But then when we were colonies, the only form of Government we knew was authoritarian colonialism. It is too much to expect some of us, at the midnight flag lowering, to suddenly become democratic and sophisticated.

The threat of a brutalised world is never more evident than in the Serb program of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the massacres in Rwanda. For a long time the major powers were opposed to taking strong measures against the Serbs. We are seeing belatedly some sense of purpose in the NATO bombings and efforts to negotiate a solution. However, we should be cautious about rushing towards solutions that reward aggression and genocide. It is possible that some in the West and in the United Nations longed for Bosnia's quick defeat. It would save them from making any decision. But the Bosnians refused to oblige. In Rwanda the European troops withdrew when the massacres began. And in Somalia failure to understand the situation lead to the victims fighting their UN saviours.

The United Nations Secretariat must take some of the blame for all these brutalities. In Rwanda it truly shirked its duty while in Bosnia it sent in a protection force which was instructed not to protect the Bosnians. Why it should be called UNPROFOR was a mystery until lately. It was there to protect itself. It makes a distinction between peace-keeping and peace-enforcement. If there is peace to keep, why do you need military forces? Isn't it because of the possibility of breaches of the peace that the forces are put there? And when there are breaches the forces must stop them, if peace-

keeping is to be meaningful. But instead when peace is broken the UN threatened to withdraw and leave the victims to their fate.

Fortunately, in Palestine, another historical flash point, efforts continue to be made towards durable peace. That peace process must result in a Palestinian homeland, a viable state at peace with its neighbours. The attempts to weaken the present Palestinian leadership by undermining its credibility will only result in the rise of extremism and a protracted and bloody intra-Palestinian conflict which will spill over into Israel and elsewhere.

The absence of international leadership and commitment is evident in the area of development as well. The rhetoric of development is increasingly devoid of meaningful content. The North has turned its back on commitments relating to development assistance. Yet such is the concern for the survival of insects and plant life that human development must be stopped if it is suspected it might endanger a few animals or plants. That there are plenty of the same species elsewhere is considered irrelevant. And so one-fifth of the world's population remain mired in poverty having been denied development assistance by the rich and the powerful. The latter have retreated into their regional clubs and cosy arrangements for perpetuating unconscionable levels of consumption. Some of the countries of the South have tried to pull themselves up literally by their own bootstraps. But the moment they appear to succeed, the carpet is pulled out from underneath their feet. GSP privileges are withdrawn and their records of human rights, democracy, etc are scrutinised in order to obstruct their progress.

Some among the more successful South have been enticed to join the rich and the strong, so they may not lend what little strength they have to their compatriots.

Commitment to the environment should not be turned into an occasion for recrimination and pointing of fingers. Worse, it should not be politically instrumentalised to disadvantage the South.

THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

BY
JOSEPH NEALE
OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON

1856

1857

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1862

Summit despite a consensus cobbled together to alleviate the sufferings of women, the mad quest for personal freedom took one more tradition bashing step. People it seems cannot be free unless they have sexual freedom; a freedom which rejects the inhibitions of traditional and religious values, of marriage and family as institutions of society. Sexual freedom will render fidelity meaningless as much as it renders marriages anachronistic. The new liberalism extends to a new definition of the family, which is to include homosexual pairs, unmarried women with children by unknown fathers, groups of men and women living together with no fixed partners and many other combinations.

If the West wants to be liberal and sexually free, this is its right. But what is wrong is the attempt to impose its morality or lack of it on the rest of the world. And in Beijing that was what it tried to do. The UN should not lend itself to this kind of undemocratic disregard for the rights of others.

Of late there has been much talk about reform of the UN. Clearly there is a need for this after 50 years of the UN carrying the tattered baggage of the last World War. Surely the results of that war cannot be reflected in the structure and procedures of the UN forever. It has to end some time. And the 50th anniversary is as good a time as any for burying the relics of past follies.

Since democracy seems to have displaced religion as a faith, it is fitting that there must be democratic reforms in the UN. Some of those countries which had vested themselves with infallibility and permanency have now become second raters. New players have emerged who should be accorded recognition. A more equitable representation on the Security Council is a must. This means that permanent seats should be given to regions possibly determined by a regional mechanism.

The veto power should be dropped. Under no circumstances must the Security Council be made an instrument of any one country.

Reform must extend also to the financing of the UN. It is wholly unacceptable that member states, especially the rich ones, should fall into arrears with impunity and yet exercise special rights and influence. The membership rules must be applied to one and all. New bases for assessment should be made taking into consideration the wealth or lack of it among the members.

Various global taxation schemes including modest levies on global air travel, a tax on global speculative flows of capital, a tax on the exploitation of mankind's common assets on the seabed, and a tax on the trade in weapons of war have been proposed. Of these the last one, based on the principle that he who profits from the tools of war must contribute to the maintenance of peace, merit urgent attention and adoption.

Reform of the United Nations also require the cleansing of the bureaucratic aegaeon stables in the Secretariat. The morale of the international civil service is at its lowest ebb. The excesses and the fat must be trimmed but failure to do so must not be used as an excuse for not paying dues or for opting out.

It is heartening to note that UNCTAD and other economic agencies of the UN have now acknowledged that linking trade with non-trade issues serves no useful purpose either for the developed or the developing countries. Unemployment in the developed countries is not due to workers in developing countries working hard to compensate for their lack of other competitive advantages, but rather to the profligate ways of the developed nations with their high wages and unemployment benefits. Why it is assumed that workers in developed countries would work when they are to be paid for not working is a mystery at par with the idea that people would be happy and productive if the diligent are paid as much as the indolent.

The reform of global institutions must encompass the Bretton Woods organisations. Their energies and resources must be channelled towards the battle against the pollution caused by poverty worldwide. The Bretton Woods organisations have to cease acting as debt collectors for the mighty and the rich bankers, who in turn must learn to live within the rules of their own creation, that of taking commercial risks which go hand-in-hand with the pursuit of gain. A return to their original mandates, that of promoting balanced development in the case of the World Bank, and that of enforcing monetary and fiscal responsibility in all countries, irrespective of their status in the global economy, is a first priority. Reform must include a re-evaluation of the governance arrangements at the Bank and the Fund through a realignment and re-allocation of quotas and share-holdings that take into account the changed structure of the world economy. New arrangements for governance must recognise the growing clout of the newly emerging economies that now contribute to a rising share of global output, to trade and capital flows.

The debt millstone weighs heavily on the poor. This burden must be eased, especially for the poorest nations of Africa. Malaysia hopes that effective actions will be taken forthwith taking into account decisions made at the 49th General Assembly on finding a durable solution to the external debt problem of developing countries.

While bilateral debts extended by donor countries have over the years been restructured and rescheduled - though with humiliating conditions imposed by the Paris Club of Creditors - multilateral institutions, led by the World Bank, have steadfastly refused consideration of restructuring debt owed to them. The World Bank continues to increase its profit levels and amasses reserves which today stand in excess of US\$16 billion. Why are these reserves, built from payments by developing countries, not used for debt relief? And why do we allow the intransigence of one or two countries to preclude the issuance of Special Drawing Rights by the International

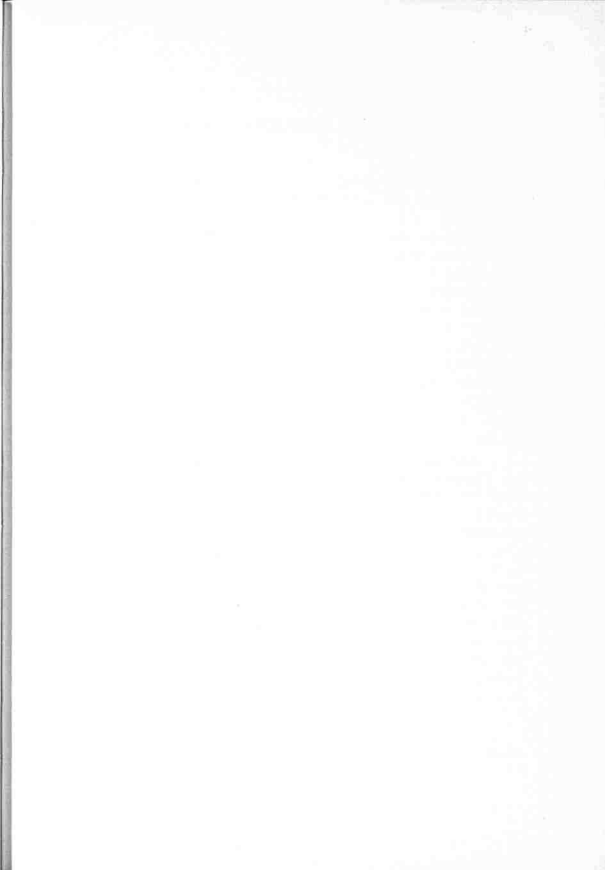
Monetary Fund? These and other issues must feature in a reform of the Bretton Woods institutions.

The conclusion of the Uruguay Round and the establishment of the World Trade Organisation offer a glimmer of hope for rule-based trading relationships. Malaysia applauds and welcomes the underlying principles and we pledge ourselves to play by the mutually agreed undertakings.

Regrettably, powerful trading nations threaten through unilateral actions to undermine the carefully negotiated agreements. The deliberate creation of regional trading blocs, the introduction of managed trade, the attempts to link human rights, environmental considerations, and labour codes to trade, are major threats, which if implemented would dim the hope of a free environment for trade. We reject such attempts. The new protectionism will return the world to a bygone era when trade wars led to military confrontations.

And finally the new threats with the advent of the Information Age. The poor countries have long suffered from biased reporting by the world media, controlled by the developed world. Now the computer network created for the spread of knowledge and information has become polluted by the irresponsible dissemination of filth through them. Someone is making money from this filth. The world community must find a way to keep out such filth and to provide for legal action to be taken against them by aggrieved countries even when they broadcast from outside their borders. They should be allowed to bring these miscreants for trial in the aggrieved countries under their laws. After all we have already had many instances of extraterritorial application of the laws of some countries without so much as a by your leave.

Freedom of information is fine but even in this age of freedom we cannot allow morals to be completely undermined in order to enrich the merchants of porn and filth.





THE CRYSTAL RAINFOREST AWARENESS WEEK

I wish to thank the Organisers for inviting me to officially launch the Crystal Rainforest Awareness Week here today.

Not since man's rape and plunder of nature worldwide have environmental issues become more a universal point of concern. In Malaysia, our concern for the environment is just as serious and caring especially on the need to ensure that the rich, resource-laden tropical rainforests that carpet our land with such evergreen abundance are preserved.

The tropical rainforest is by far the richest natural habitat on earth, home to an incredibly diverse array of flora and fauna. The rainforest is also an integral part of the planet's self-regulating support system, controlling climatic and hydrological cycles, and of course acting as a carbon sink to replenish the atmosphere with life sustaining oxygen.

Yet, given its importance in the life of this planet and those who populate it, and the fact that it has taken millions of years to transform into the wondrous complexity we know today, the rainforest is unimaginably fragile.

Not merely because modern machinery can deforest vast tracts of land at an unprecedented pace, but because the environmental consequences of such devastations are potentially catastrophic; uncontrolled exploitation of rainforest resources is a precursor to the extinction of plant and animal species, the degradation of natural resources, desertification, ecosystem destruction and climatic chaos - in short, a biological holocaust of global proportions.

And, in the event of such a tragedy occurring, man would certainly be the loser.

Therefore wanton destruction of the rainforest signifies so much more than the disappearance of a few flora and fauna in some secluded corner of the world. Rather, it is a matter that concerns the very future of the planet earth, the only home we have in this universe.

It is for this reason that the more we understand the nature of nature's fragile interdependence, the greater the need to protect and preserve this natural heritage.

That is why we are here today. We are here to articulate this need. And we are here to ensure we do whatever is necessary to protect and preserve our natural heritage.

However do not be mistaken and misled into thinking that the need to safeguard the bounties with which we have been blessed can only be achieved through a halt in the progress towards development.

Far from it. Conservation of our environment does not mean we must retreat to the Dark Ages. Our destiny lies not only in the protection of our natural environment but also in ensuring continued development too. For without development we have no future either.

The question then arises as to how we should resolve this need for nature's renewable resources to contribute towards national advancement while at the same time preserving our natural heritage.

The solution is simplicity itself. It lies in an environmentally sound and sustainable development.

This translates into the intelligent implementation of thoughtfully conceived policies that reconcile the fulfillment of human needs with a responsible, caring attitude towards the natural world.

Indeed, sustainable socio-economic development has been the policy of the Malaysian Government. And consistent with this policy, some 20 million hectares or two-thirds of the nation's total land area, remains under natural forest and tree cover. The Government has emphatically undertaken the responsibility to ensure at least 50 percent of Malaysia's total land area remain under permanent forest cover.

The fragile complexity of the rainforest must be analysed and understood holistically before decisions about development are made. Only then can the necessary balance between the protection we aspire to and the skilful, sustainable use of the rainforest's resources be achieved. And only then can we harvest the seeds of our destiny.

We must study the trees and the forests so that we will be able to maximise the usage of everything that we extract. It is distressing to learn that only 20 percent of the trees cut down is utilised. Eighty percent is burnt, producing carbon-dioxide, soot and haze. But today we have the skills and the knowledge to utilise 80 percent of the trees while the balance can be disposed of with minimal pollution.

We must manage our forests from a biological perspective. We must learn the dynamics of forest regeneration and record the reservoir of knowledge contained within. From these we can reduce waste and reduce the need to exploit the resources of the forests. We will find alternative sources of wealth.

Exceptionally rich and larger areas of the rainforest could then be preserved as national parks and reserves to ensure minimal disturbance of the ecosystem. To Taman Negara, Belum and the Endau-Rompin National Park which already illustrate our commitment to this principle, other parks can be added.

This is the true meaning and the benefit of sustainable management of the rainforest. We will not only be preserving the forests, but we will be adding to the body of knowledge which can

contribute to a cleaner and healthier life while reaping the commercial value of the inherent wealth of nature's endowment.

There is a viable economic argument for saving rainforests not normally propounded by conservationists. For contrary to what certain shortsighted quarters would have us believe, forests can provide a continuous sustainable source of resources despite working within prescribed ecological limitations.

Timber accounts for only ten percent of renewable forest resources. Great economic potential lies in fibre, fruits, natural latex and medicinal plants which can also be harvested. In fact one in every four modern medicines contains compounds derived from rainforest species. And there should be more if we only scientifically investigate all the herbal cures prescribed by people who live in or near our forests.

Furthermore, science informs us that as our supply of fossil fuels dwindles, we will surely find ourselves looking towards the plant kingdom for alternative energy sources. The tree plantations which have enriched Malaysia, the rubber, oil palms, cocoa, spices and flowers have all come from natural forests. It is for us to identify new plants or trees to cultivate to meet all our needs. This is a field which we have hardly explored despite the richness of the plant life in our tropical rainforests.

This fact of nature's potential emphasises further the necessity to conserve our valuable forest and to manage carefully and even lovingly the species-rich sites.

To further maintain the integrity of our forests, all our management programmes should be monitored. We should work towards attaining a sustainable logging industry, improve ways in which tropical timbers are used, encourage and support active reafforestation, devise less damaging methods of harvesting, reduce

waste production and develop more equitable and stable markets to meet domestic and international needs.

In sustaining the delicate ecosystem of our rainforest we will be helping to maintain its natural biodiversity whilst stabilising local climatic and hydrological conditions.

Furthermore, I see no reason why we should not actively promote training and education programmes which will equip our people not only with the skills of forest management but also the loving and caring attitude towards our forests. In the future only such trained and qualified people should be allowed to be involved in the extraction of our forest resources.

It is hoped that the launch of the Crystal Rainforest Awareness Week will provide a thought-provoking insight into the challenge that lies before us. We no longer have the luxury of time. Nor can we feign ignorance of the issues at hand.

We must rekindle our respect for the environment. And we must do it now. Effectively. Selectively. And Unilaterally if necessary.

There is so much to be done. But we can achieve so much more once we set our minds to the task at hand. After all, immediate action is ultimately superior to the counterproductivity of complex and emotive debates on the virtues of environmental conservation.

The earth is a precious place. Let us preserve it with all our strength, all our might and all our heart for ourselves, for our children and for the future.

And should we succeed, there will come again a day when we will enjoy a world where the warmth of the land, the freshness of the air, the sparkle of the water and the sweetness of the perfumes of the flowers and trees are still there.

On that note, I have great pleasure in launching the Crystal Rainforest Awareness Week.

Opening Address By Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohammad, Prime Minister Of Malaysia At The Launching Of The Crystal Rainforest Awareness Week, 30th March 1996, Putra Wold Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur.

THE THIRD PACIFIC DIALOGUE

I would like to thank the organisers for the honour of addressing this distinguished gathering of business leaders of the Pacific Rim and others who are interested in the affairs of this region.

This Pacific Dialogue is basically a gathering of outstanding personalities from the United States and East Asia. I wonder whether I may be permitted to say a few things to our American and Asian friends and to conclude with just one thought which it might be useful for us all to ponder together.

To our colleagues from across the Pacific, let me press three points. First, may we of Asia ask for a little understanding, a sense of fairness, a little time and a little space? By all means, do not let anyone of us, Asians, hide behind excuses. Let all oppressors and despots fear the conscience of mankind to which Asia as well as America must fully contribute. But let us be fair. We will lose nothing by so doing.

Second -- and here I direct my remarks not to America's politicians, media and NGO's but to America's enterprising corporations -- you have so much talent, so much creativity. You have so much to give, to contribute to our future and to your bottom line by coming out here to rebuild your companies or to take them to a higher level of performance and profitability. I would urge you to 'Go West', go West beyond the boundaries of your continent and your current imagination. Be our companion on our long journey to full modernity. Help us to build a new Asia.

Third, let me speak of productive partnership. Come and let us -- America, Asia and whomsoever wishes -- let us join hands in a joint venture, to build a new World, a global commonwealth such as the world has never seen, worthy of the hopes of mankind and worthy of the 21st century.

We, all of us have a right to ask that we be allowed to earn our daily bread the old fashioned way, through the sweat of our brows and the hard work of billions of our people. The developed among us have all the advantages -- technology, capital, rich domestic markets, educated workforce, market savvy, experience, organisation. They have all the products to sell. Those of us in Asia are only beginning to learn to produce manufactured goods, relying only on our cheaper labour cost, cheap because our cost of living is still low and our expectations not high. Surely you must admit that the threat we pose is minimal. Yet of late there has been such a crusade for leveling the playing fields. When the contest is between giants and midgets, would a level playing field be enough to ensure a sporting chance for the midget? Surely many of the businessmen of the West and even politicians play golf and understand the need for handicaps.

Most of the developing world have only the industriousness of their people to count on and the scraps which they can hope to pick up. Yet even this seems to be too much. There are so many amongst the rich who want to ensure that this single advantage, this one competitive element, is neutralised. If the rich take from the poor the only thing which they have, the only means by which they can work their way out of the pit of poverty, where is the justice? Or does it not matter?

When America was young and growing, finding its way and working its way up in the world, Europe did not demand that European institutions be introduced, that European labour practices be adopted, that you don't expropriate the land of the natives to grow wheat and tobacco and to rear cattle. For a time they even allowed you your slaves. Nor did they or anyone else stop you from clearing forests because of concern for the wolves and the bears, the mountain lions and the rattlesnakes. Europe in fact was happy to buy the products that you exported with no question asked. But of course that was then, not now. Things are different now. We are all a lot wiser

and perhaps a lot more humane. But is it humane and wise to keep so many Asians in a state of poverty for whatever reason?

I will not defend pollution and the desecration of the environment, the theft of intellectual property, the destruction of whole peoples, child labour. But as you look around, do you see us doing nothing else except these terrible things? We try, but as you may have noticed poor people are usually more desperate than the rich. They pollute and they chop down trees simply because they cannot help themselves. Electric ovens and gas cookers are still luxury items for a majority of Asians. Cutting down trees for firewood or for a living may be the only way out. The alternative may be uncooked meals or unemployment. We would like to manufacture sophisticated products on our own and market them worldwide but most of us don't know how under environmentally ideal conditions or cannot afford. Besides, if we do try we are told that we are not treating our workers right. Also we have to pay royalties or we are simply denied the technology. To subsist we have to chop down forests and opt for low tech, low pay labour intensive industries.

We speak of Asian values, meaning hard work, respect for authority, discipline, and submission to the interest and the good of the majority and filial piety. Suddenly we find Asian values equated with authoritarian rule, disregard for human and workers rights, political stability and economic success at all costs. We must now discard Asian values and adopt the so-called universal values as conceived by the West.

Our American and European detractors have forgotten that enormous tribulation separated the clarion call of "liberte, egalite, fraternite" and a truly democratic France. The First Republic replaced the absolute monarchy of the ancient regime with the imperial glory of Napoleon. The French saw a revolution not only in 1789 but also in 1830 and 1848. The 1848 revolution saw the birth of the Second Republic. The Third Republic came with the overthrow of Napoleon III after the Franco-Prussian War. The Fourth Republic came to an

end after the Second World War and the collaboration of the Vichy government with Hitler. It all took time and I don't think that even now French democracy is perfect.

In the United States of America two centuries and one civil war stood between the American Declaration of Independence where you so rightly proclaimed the virtues of democracy, where you so rightly proclaimed that "all men are created equal" and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Two hundred years. One civil war. And so many tribulations in between.

Women were granted the right to vote in Italy only in 1945, in Switzerland only a few years ago. The aborigines of Australia were granted citizenship, the right to vote, and full recognition as human beings only in 1967. But there still survive a few who, even now believe that the new attitude towards the aborigines and indeed the abolition of the White Australia Policy are mistakes.

So many of us Asians were not granted the right to democracy or even the right to govern ourselves, the most fundamental of human rights, until recent years. It is interesting that so many of us, who were regarded as obviously unfit for self rule and democracy for hundreds of years were required to be good or even model practitioners of democracy the moment the colonial flag was lowered and the flag of independence went up. No time at all is given. Perfection at the first try is required of us Asians. Having multi-parties and holding regular elections are not enough. To be truly democratic we must change Governments with each election, endure civil strifes and frequent disruptive demos and strikes and generally verge on anarchy. We should of course not do well economically and challenge the established developed countries.

None of these means that democracy is not important for Asia or that human rights are of lesser relevance to Asia than it is in other parts of the world. To argue the former is to utterly misunderstand the task at hand. To argue the latter to Asians who have advanced faster

and more fundamentally with the human rights of hundreds of millions -- at speeds never before seen in human history -- is to betray incredible myopia and to demonstrate incredible ignorance.

Asia can no longer sit down and take injury and insult in stoic silence -- from those who think that their own complete lack of knowledge should be no impediment to putting entire countries on trial. We of Asia will increasingly demand and we have a right to demand a little maturity and sophistication on the part of those who wish to analyse and proselytise; who so easily slip into the role of policeman, prosecutor, judge and jury; who so habitually try, judge, punish and persecute without even giving a hearing.

What Asians need is not theology and the easy assumption that we cannot think for ourselves. Once upon a time we might have bought snake oil. But we are a little bit more sophisticated now. Too much water has flowed under the bridges of history. To those politicians and all-knowing NGOs who still want to sell snake oil, we say take some yourselves for you may need it more. We would like to point out that the oppression of nations by nations is no less undemocratic than the oppression of Governments over their citizens. You cannot preach one without practising the other.

Let me now turn to my call to American enterprise to 'Go West', to come out in large numbers to what so many of you, and some of us, still call "the Far East". The Far East for America is actually Europe up to Asia Minor. The world is quite round as has been confirmed by satellite pictures. Any place can be the central reference point. Relative to America, Asia is the West. Even as you left the cosy comforts of home a century and a half ago and built the American West, you should now do the same but venture further, across the Pacific in fact and help build Asia. You will not have to deal with marauding natives and lose your scalps. You will be welcomed instead and you will gain more than you ever did when you pioneered the opening of your Wild West.

In the 21st century, no corporation can be a world player if it is not nourished by and strongly anchored in our part of the world. Already, the Asia Pacific is where 60 percent of the world is. On this planet, at this time, already 60 percent of all the goods and services produced is produced in the Asia Pacific. In the decades ahead, the economic centre of gravity must shift Westwards even as it did in America's own history only a hundred and fifty years ago.

To be sure, some of us in Asia may not want you and will not be prepared to ensure that you and you alone flourish and profit from your enterprise and our enormous dynamism. We would certainly want a share of that profit. That apart, let me say that in most of Asia Pacific and certainly in Malaysia you are most heartily welcome. We need you as co-builders of our co-prosperity. If you help us to prosper, then you would be building a great market for your goods and expertise, for no matter how we try there will always be things that we will need from you. No matter how much we want to be independent, we cannot help but be inter-dependent. We cannot only sell to you, we must buy also, as much as we realise you must sell in order to be able to buy what we want to sell to you. We know this and you know this.

Asians and Asian values are not identical. We differ quite a bit. Mostly we are polite and even accommodating. But sometimes we are not. So do not be surprised if the customarily polite becomes frank and the usually frankly brutal becomes nice and accommodating. If I may be allowed I would like to seriously advocate a joint venture between Asia and America and others in order to create a single global commonwealth. You see, we do believe in good friendly relations for the common good of mankind even.

A single interdependent global commonwealth was not possible in the great age of colonialism because the world was divided into exclusive economic blocs, each oriented towards its centre of the imperial cosmos. However, it is today possible for the

first time in human history. Imagine the productive consequences of such a new economic reality. It will be the real mechanism which will transform the whole political, strategic and psychological make-up of the world. We would indeed have a new world.

In a previous dialogue I suggested that we opt for win-win solutions. I said that we should forever bury the primeval and primordial beggar-thy-neighbour reflexes that have been so natural in the past. Let us put in their place prosper-thy-neighbour impulses aimed at ensuring that all our neighbours and all their neighbours, far and near, will prosper. Is it wrong for everyone to be prosperous? I am sure we have noticed that prosperous people have more time to attend to the well-being of human kind, their freedoms and their rights. Wouldn't a commonwealth of nations where wealth would really be common be better than wealth that is uncommon for most nations of the world?

There has been much talk of the 21st century becoming the Asian Century. I beg to differ.

I believe that the 21st century will not be the Asian Century in the way that the Nineteenth century was the European century and much of the 20th was the American century. The 21st century will be the century when the world takes precedence over the narrower interests of nations and continents. This will be best not only for the rest of the world but also for Asia.

But the century of the world will not happen if we all talk of the Asian Century. We should downplay this Asian Century thing. We should play up the 21st century as the Century of the world, the century when the world comes together, to build greater prosperity not only for Asians but for all mankind.

We Asians must forego the ego massage that so many others seem to need. The idea of Asians lording it over the rest of the world may seem attractive and satisfying for Asians. But let us not be lulled by this egoistic dream.

Yet we must surely want Asia to have a bigger say in the making of the 21st century. We cannot have a bigger say if we mess up our administrations through democratic irresponsibility, if we unnecessarily confront each other over trivialities, if we fail to seize the hour. How can we have a bigger say if we can't even make up our minds what to say?

If we are to command the respect of the world, we do truly need to do even better in the process towards modernisation. We must be more successful in devising systems of more democratic governance. We must advance faster, over a broader front, in the struggle to ensure the dignity of man, the dignity of all our citizens, their rights and responsibilities.

We have been able to secure the greatest advance of mankind in human history in the last generation because we were able to recognise what really counts is pragmatism, not ideological fervour; that the welfare of our people must take precedence over the egos of the few, and that that well-being can only come from economic growth, not jingoistic nationalism or even continentalism.

East Asian and Americans share a common Ocean, the Pacific, the Ocean of peace. It may have distanced us from each other in the past as the Atlantic never did between Europe and America. But that distance is no longer the dividing factor that it was. Where once it took months to cross today it takes a matter of hours. And we can talk and see each other as if there is no oceanic gap between us.

True, most wars have been between close neighbours. But neighbours have been known to form strong and lasting alliances. Cannot we be friends, Asians and Americans? Cannot we be a little

more tolerant of each other's quirks and foibles? Stop comparing. Neither of us are perfect, nor either absolutely imperfect.

During this Pacific Dialogue you will be concentrating constructively on three subjects: Moving Forward on the Economic Front, Moving Forward on the Political Front, and Moving Forward on the Culture/Civilisation Front. To move forward together on any front, we need understanding and tolerance. Otherwise we will be moving forward against each other and there can only be a destructive clash in the end.

Almost one thousand years ago, as the world that was Europe then moved towards the end of the first millennium and the beginning of the second millennium, there was near panic and utter depression. This was because the learned Christian clerics of that time believed that the world would come to an end exactly one thousand years after the birth of Jesus Christ. Economic development wound down. Human endeavour petered out. For what was the use of doing anything positive if the world was going to come to an abrupt end?

Today, one thousand years later, we know better. We must seek a new beginning. Let our uncommon sense prevail. Let us build as determinedly as we can destroy.

If Asia and America can be joint venture partners in prospering each other we will surely be the catalyst for a single global commonwealth of common prosperity and this will surely result in a century that is not Asian, not American, nor European, nor even African, but a World Century. Idealistic perhaps. But Man, working towards an ideal must achieve something nearly that.

Address By Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister Of Malaysia At The Third Pacific Dialogue, 21st November 1996, Hotel Istana, Kuala Lumpur.

THE INTERNATIONAL TIMBER CONFERENCE 1998

First and foremost, I would like to thank the organisers, The Malaysian Timber Board and the Malaysian Timber Council for inviting me to officiate the launch of this 1998 International Timber Conference. I would also like to welcome the foreign participants at this conference. As you may have noticed we are trying our best to sustain and even grow our economy. We believe that the economic prosperity of any country is good for other countries. We believe in our prosperity benefiting others and vice-versa. We do not believe in impoverishing others in order to enrich ourselves.

I also wish to congratulate the organisers for their effort in organising this conference, which is held in conjunction with the 'Malaysian International Furniture Fair'.

It is a pleasure and an honour for me to be with you to deliver this address to such a distinguished gathering of timber industrialists and experts at this 1998 International Timber Conference which has been appropriately given the theme 'Globalisation of the Timber Industry in the Next Millennium'. To our foreign guests I would also like to take this opportunity to bid all of you a very warm welcome and wish you 'Selamat Datang' and hope that you will also take this opportunity to enjoy the many touristic sites which Malaysia has to offer including our natural forests.

The conference theme and the various topics to be discussed over the next two days are appropriate and timely considering the numerous challenges and opportunities that are brought about by globalisation and liberalisation of international trade particularly in forest products. And we have also to examine market prospects arising from liberalisation under the Uruguay Round in view of the concern about the environment and sustainable development, which if improperly translated into trade policies and measures could restrict the export earnings of developing countries.

The sustainable management of the forests and the utilisation of timber products constitute fundamental components of the overall socio-economic development of many timber-producing countries including Malaysia. It has been estimated that the total world forest cover in 1995, comprising natural and plantation forests was 3.4 billion hectares with 50 percent of this located in the developing countries comprising mainly tropical forest. The tropical forest cover has unfortunately declined from 1.79 billion hectares in 1990 to 1.73 billion hectares in 1995, as countries with tropical forests have recently been utilising their forest resources as a source of revenue for their largely poverty-stricken countries.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992 highlighted the critical role of the forests for environmental conservation and sustainable economic development. This recognition is also reflected in international conventions such as the international convention on biological diversity, the international convention to combat desertification and the framework convention on global climate change.

Unfortunately the commitments made at UNCED and post UNCED agreements by the developed countries to provide new additional financial resources and environmentally-sound technology transfer to developing countries for the management of their forest resources have yet to be realised. The extent of global concern over forestry and its impact on the global environment has certainly not been matched by any determined action programme of operationalising and implementing the UNCED forest principles and forest related chapters of Agenda 21. Whilst the establishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was a major achievement, its funding levels have not been sufficient to meet its objectives, thus rendering it ineffective. The United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) which was convened in June last year, to review the implementation of Agenda 21, noted that the global environment has continued to deteriorate although some countries

have succeeded in curbing pollution and slowing the rate of resource degradation.

In this regard, I would like to urge the developed countries to re-affirm and put into action the commitments to provide concrete assistance to developing countries to achieve sustainable management of their forest resources. In addition, sustainable forest management should be promoted through mutually supportive trade and environmental policies. Malaysia remains convinced that an international forest convention would provide the necessary legal framework for ensuring an equitable, transparent and comprehensive mechanism that balances sustainable forest management, biodiversity and economic growth. Such a convention can remedy the problems of legal uncertainty and lack of predictability currently faced in international regulation of global forestry. In this respect, I would like to reiterate that Malaysia will continue to examine, identify and implement the commitments made under Agenda 21, especially those related to combating deforestation and conservation of biological diversity.

Recent trends which reflect the increased emphasis on environmental roles of forests include management of forests ecosystems, the adoption of environment-friendly logging systems and restrictions on timber harvesting in some countries. Environmental concerns have also led to certain developed countries putting pressure for timber certification schemes, effectively restricting importation and utilisation of tropical timber.

We cannot afford to ignore these changes in the global perceptions of forest and forestry. We accept that forests are no longer just a source of timber. They also play an important role in regulating the climate and in the absorption of carbon dioxide and other wastes. They are also a source of biodiversity and contribute towards medicinal products. Hence, the greatest challenge to mankind in the coming century will be to strike a balance between the need to conserve forests for environmental protection and

biodiversity, while trying to meet the need for living space as well as timber as a source of wealth for poor countries especially.

Indeed, we need to come to terms with reality: that forest resources could be utilised on a sustainable basis if the global community is committed to safeguarding this important natural heritage. Currently, there are many efforts being pursued by both governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), at national, regional and international levels to promote sustainable forest management. I would like to call upon the global community to accelerate regional and international cooperation in matters related to sustainable forest management and development. In addition, countries must also forge greater strategic alliances to exchange experiences and knowledge on sustainable forest management.

For sustainable forest management, countries will have to forego potential wealth and plough back considerable resources into the forestry sector. Poor countries cannot be expected to do this unassisted. Besides, if they are to provide a carbon sink for the world, including for the rich countries, it is only right that there should be cost sharing between them and the rich countries. This has become even more necessary as some of these countries have been made poorer through the activities of rich traders from rich countries. Malaysia has established its own fund for the purpose of carrying out activities related to sustainable forest management but the campaign against tropical timber is depriving the country of revenue needed to sustain the fund.

Malaysia is against unilateral actions taken by the major developed consumer markets to restrict or boycott the use of tropical timber. Such actions only render the forests valueless as a source of income and consequently the forests are being cleared for agricultural and other purposes. Of course no money will be spent on preserving the forests. In short, restrictions on trade in timber products will not help to reduce deforestation in the developing countries. In fact, if efforts are taken by the major markets to provide greater market

access and higher value to timber products, producer countries would be in a better position to undertake sustainable management of their forests.

The global trade in forest products is estimated at US\$114 billion and continues to increase in volume. However, the developed countries dominate this trade, accounting for about 80 percent of the timber trade. The developing countries have entered this field but their share of the trade is still small.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has estimated that world timber consumption would reach 3.8 billion cubic metres by the year 2010.

A global outlook study on trends to the year 2020 by the FAO also indicates that long term adequacy of supply of timber products will depend upon the sustainable management of forest resources. The world population is expected to grow to about 10 billion by the middle of the next century and this will create greater demand for timber and timber products.

Malaysia believes and supports globalisation and greater liberalisation in trade and investment both at regional as well as international levels. We believe they would contribute towards growth and development. Malaysia is one of the strong proponents of a more open economy and greater cross-border flow of capital and trade. We welcome foreign direct investments. However we believe that cross-border flows, liberalisation and globalisation must not be regarded as ends in themselves. They should contribute toward equitable distribution of wealth for all. Unilateral actions to achieve these objectives are not likely to benefit anyone else other than the party concerned.

18. The Uruguay Round Agreement aimed at reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers requires all participating countries to follow common trading rules. For the timber products category, although a

general consensus has been reached to reduce tariffs, the schedule of implementation has not been finalised. In the meantime local authorities are negating the commitments made by their countries towards tariff reductions and fair trade by imposing their own rules on the usage of timber within their jurisdiction. This renders international agreements meaningless.

At the last Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in Vancouver, member countries had reaffirmed their commitment to further market-openings in trade and investments. It is gratifying to note that under the agreed Early Voluntary Sectoral Liberalisation, APEC leaders had endorsed the selection of product sectors which had the support from members for early trade liberalisation measures. Among them is the forest products sector. Malaysia welcomes such positive developments as these efforts will provide increased market access, particularly for products from the developing countries in APEC. In this regard, developed countries should allow more room for the developing countries to adjust themselves and to pursue national goals effectively before forcing upon them liberalisation measures which they are not prepared for as yet.

I am also glad to note that the initiatives undertaken at the ASEAN, WTO and APEC meetings have led to the dismantling of tariff barriers for timber products. Unfortunately the recent forced lifting of restrictions on the export of unprocessed timber in order to liberalise trade has resulted in the erosion of incomes for timber exporting countries. Impoverishing countries through certain means also have the effect of forcing them to export unprocessed, low value-added timber in order to earn much needed foreign exchange.

I am happy to note that a number of Malaysian timber companies have ventured into foreign countries to establish strategic alliances and partnerships with local companies in the management of their forest resources. Malaysian companies believe in smart partnerships which result in equitable benefits for all the parties involved. Accordingly these Malaysian companies have not only extracted timber but have helped to develop infrastructural facilities such as schools, hospitals and other social amenities. They have of course practised sustainable forest management in order to preserve the timber resources of these countries. Unfortunately there have been accusations that they are "environmental marauders" even when they have not even ventured into certain countries. That Malaysia today still has 50 percent forest cover bears testimony to the efficiency and care of Malaysian timber companies when extracting timber. By contrast certain countries which have become developed have lost almost all their forest cover.

Timber as construction material has been used since the beginning of time. It is one of the most beautiful materials for furniture and other products. Over the years wastage from processing has been reduced so much that almost nothing is left unutilised. The maximisation of the use of timber has resulted in lesser need to extract timber.

The best way to reduce the felling of trees and destruction of the forests is to make every tree felled to yield maximum returns. This can be done by increasing the price of timber, by reducing the cost of extraction, by adding value to the maximum before exporting. If all these are done then countries which depend on timber for their economic development need not extract timber in an unsustainable way. The worst thing to do if we want to minimise timber extraction is to impoverish timber-producing countries. Therefore, there is need for the appropriate global policies to be put in place to ensure fair and equitable international trading practices and market access particularly for timber products.

Finally, I would like to call upon all participants to make full use of the conference to obtain as much information as possible from the speakers and panelists who I am told have vast experience and are experts in their respective fields. To all foreign participants I wish you a pleasant stay in Kuala Lumpur. I am confident that you will have a fruitful deliberation in this conference. On this note, I have great pleasure in declaring open the International Timber Conference 1998.

Opening Address By Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad At The Official Opening Of The International Timber Conference 1998, 3rd March 1998, Nikko Hotel, Kuala Lumpur.

POLMET 2000

I wish to thank the organisers for inviting me to declare open this conference. It is indeed a great honour that the first POLMET conference to be held in the new millennium is taking place in Kuala Lumpur. It is also very timely.

Urbanisation is taking place at a very rapid rate in Asia, as its city and town populations continue to grow. The region already has the largest population in the world, and about 700 million people now living in cities and towns. By year 2015, it is estimated that the region will have more than one billion people living in cities. There will be nine megacities with populations of more than 10 million and 17 very large cities with populations of more than five million. Economically and environmentally sustainable urban development in Asia is therefore a pressing need to ensure a safe, healthy, convenient and pleasant environment for its growing urban population.

We now face the daunting, yet inspiring, task of forging a new relationship with the natural world. Current patterns of population growth, resource use, economic inequities, and environmental degradation cannot extend indefinitely into the future. To ensure human well-being over the long term, people need to move toward consumption patterns that maintain and restore the earth's life support systems and safeguard earth's resources for the use of future generations.

This new relationship, between human and the natural world, is captured by the idea of "sustainability", a concept that has emerged in recent decades from a number of international studies and conferences concerned with regional and global trends in population, development and the environment. Sustainability implies meeting human needs while preserving the environment and natural resources for future generations.

The term "sustainable development" is used to stress the relationship between continued national development and long-term environmental conditions and goals. It is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Now, how does it apply to the Third World where uneven development, poverty and basic needs are problems which have to be given priority?

The disparity between poverty and wealth, levels of development and consumption among nations of the world present contrasting pictures when the developed and the developing worlds are compared. A newborn in the US, for example, requires more than twice as much grain and more than ten times of oil as a child in Brazil or Indonesia ? And produces far more polluting waste. In fact, a simple calculation shows that the annual increase in the US population of 2.6 million people puts more pressure on the world's resources than the 17 million people added in India each year. Unless developed countries choose less resource-intensive lifestyles and develop less polluting technologies, it will be impossible to make the transition to a sustainable world economy.

Studies indicate that by using resource more productively it will be possible in the coming decades to reduce energy and material consumption levels in industrial countries by a factor of four while actually improving the standard of living. And because developed countries are the model that developing countries follow one way or another the decisions they make about lifestyle and technologies could be decisive for the world as a whole. A further comparison between the United States of America and India shows that although the US has 5% of the world's population, compared to India's 16%, the US uses some 25% of the world's energy compared to India's 3%, emits 22% of the world's CO₂ compared to India's 3%, and accounts for 25% of the world's GNP compared to India's 1%. And yet, despite all odds, developing countries like India and others must continue to

operate in a world in which the resource gap between most developing and industrial nations is widening, in which the industrial world dominates in the rule-making of some key international bodies, and in which the industrial world has already used much of the Planet's ecological capital. This inequality is the Planet's main 'environmental' problem; it is also its main 'development' problem.

International economic relationships pose a particular problem for environmental management in many developing countries including Asia. Agriculture, forestry, energy production and mining generate at least half the GNP of many developing countries and account for even larger shares of livelihoods and employment. Exports of natural resources remain a large factor in their economies, especially for the least developed. Most of these countries face enormous economic pressures, both international and domestic, to over exploit their environmental resource base.

Many developing countries now have lower per capita incomes than when the decade began. Rising poverty and unemployment have increased pressure on environmental resources as more people have been forced to rely more directly upon them. Many governments have cut back efforts to protect the environment and to bring ecological considerations into development planning.

In Malaysia, we enjoy a relatively high average standard of living and our housing conditions are much better than in most developing countries. Nevertheless, there is a great deal still to be done in our country if we are to respond properly to the challenges presented by sustainable development.

The primary objective of Malaysia's housing goal is to ensure that all our citizens, particularly the low income group, have access to adequate, affordable and good shelter. Besides ensuring the adequate supply of houses for the various income groups, our policy also emphasises the importance of a safe, healthy, convenient and beautiful living environment to be achieved through comprehensive

settlements planning, including the adequate provision of basic infrastructure and social facilities in housing schemes, as well as landscaping. We believe housing provision should be a vehicle for achieving viable and sustainable units of human settlements that not only address the physical need for shelter but also our particular national need for social, cultural and ethnic integration.

The principles of sustainable development are progressively being incorporated into our planning systems, as well as into other policy areas. The government recognises that local authorities have a crucial role to play in developing and implementing policies for sustainable development. They are particularly well qualified to understand local needs and determine priorities for local action. Many non-governmental organisations are also involved in action at the local level. On the environmental front, they include groups concerned with practical conservation, preservation of historic buildings and sites. Housing associations and the private sector have become increasingly involved in the provision of low-cost accommodation.

The success of local initiatives will play a major part in determining whether Malaysia can properly achieve its targets in respect of sustainable development. People need to witness improvement at the local level. Critical to this will be the concept of partnership, bringing together the skills and resources possessed by the government, the private sector and local communities. The government seeks to ensure that the principles of sustainable development are taken into account with the operation of land use planning systems. Also, it will ensure that planning policies and guidelines are kept under review in the light of the understanding of the sustainable development concept. Environmental quality objectives and targets play an important role in guiding policies and environmental improvement. There is a need for the development of a series of indicators to help measure progress towards sustainable development.

Like our counterparts in much of the developing world, Asia as a region has the ability to make development sustainable. However, meeting essential needs requires not only a period of economic growth for nations in which the majority are poor, but also an assurance that the poor get their fair share of the resources required to sustain growth.

For Asia, it is imperative that growth must be revived. This is where the links between economic growth, the alleviation of poverty, and environmental conditions are essential. Yet developing countries are part of an interdependent world economy; and the levels and patterns of growth in industrialised nations must affect the growth of the developing countries. The mid-term prospects for industrial countries indicate a growth of 3 to 4%, the minimum that international financial institutions consider necessary if these countries are going to play a part in expanding the world economy. Such growth rates could be environmentally sustainable if industrialised nations can continue their recent shifts for less material and energy-intensive activities and the improvement of their efficiency in using materials and energy.

However, as industrialised nations use less materials and energy, they will provide smaller markets for commodities and minerals from developing nations. And this must affect the growth of the developing countries unless new markets are found among the developing countries themselves. Unfortunately the attack by currency traders on the tiger economies of East Asia has stunted their growth as a new market. Malaysia alone lost 250 billion US dollars in purchasing power because of the Ringgit's devaluation and the depression in the share prices. Those whose activities can destroy wealth and therefore purchasing power must be curbed if we are serious about achieving sustainable development whether in the rich or in the poor countries. But despite the concerns expressed about the environment by the rich, they are unwilling to do anything to curb the currency traders and the short term capitalists.

For developing countries to grow a lot more has to be done in terms of technology transfer, foreign direct investments and better terms of trade. These together with a new international financial regime will enable them to grow fast enough to overcome their internal problems. Of late there has been much talk about reforms being more important than growth. This is like putting the cart before the horse. Of what use are banking reforms and best practices if the banks have no money and there is no business to speak of. These can only come if there is growth, and if a certain degree of laxity is needed in order to achieve growth, then we should not be insisting on growth strangling reforms. Poverty we must always remember is almost synonymous with environmental degradation.

Future patterns of agriculture and forestry development, energy use, industrialisation and human settlements can be made far less material intensive, and hence both more economically and environmentally efficient. Under these conditions, a new era of growth in the world economy can widen the options available to developing countries. Reforms at international levels are needed to deal simultaneously with economic and ecological problems in ways that allow the world economy to stimulate the growth of developing countries while giving greater weight to environmental concerns.

In a region as vast and as diverse as Asia, a uniform application of the sustainable development concept is neither possible nor desirable. Here, the levels of development, standards of living and extremes of poverty vary remarkably from one country to another. Sustainable development needs to be applied gradually in accordance with the ability of individual countries to cope, and with what each country perceives as appropriate.

Important as it may seem, we in Asia, however, cannot afford to depend solely on outside help to develop. Most of our initiatives will have to come from within us using our own ingenuity, wisdom, available resources, regional cooperation and a lot of hard work. Although there seems to be some skepticism about the virtues of

'Asian values', this can actually be a source of strength that Asia can capitalise on in its efforts to develop and revitalise the region the 'Asian way'. What I mean by Asian values is an absence of extreme individualism, a sense of responsibility for the community, a belief in strong families, a reverence for education, frugality, hard work, national team work, a social contract between the people and the State, moral wholesomeness, a free but responsible press, a belief in citizens as stakeholders, and last but not least respect for the environment.

Much knowledge, know-how and capacity for improved decision making are now available in Asia. However, there is a great need for mechanisms that can transform what one person, group, firm, or nation knows into something that another person, group, firm or nation can use. These mechanisms are today taking the form of collaborations and partnerships rather than the unidirectional technical assistance of earlier efforts.

New forms of communication technologies now make possible a global electronic network that connects us to people in all countries and occupations. It allows us to access and assess the scientific and technical knowledge that we need to solve local problems and enhance the quality of our lives, as well as to communicate our own knowledge, insights, and needs to others. Connecting us to one another is a first step. We then must use these initial connections as a tool for spreading our knowledge, skills, and values throughout our own nations, including our local communities. By taking full advantage of new information technologies, we have an unprecedented opportunity to close the vast 'knowledge gap' between peoples.

In this respect, POLMET 2000 KUALA LUMPUR will be an important forum to contribute, learn and exchange ideas and experiences on environmentally sustainable development of cities and urban areas in Asia. I am very pleased to learn that as part of the POLMET 2000 Organising Committee's efforts to promote

networking among delegates attending this conference, a survey has been carried out. I hope that with the help of this information network, this conference will be the start of greater interaction and networking among POLMET delegates, especially through the Internet.

Opening Address By Dato' Seri Dr Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister Of Malaysia At The Official Opening Of Polmet 2000, 20th March 2000, Shangri-La Hotel, Kuala Lumpur.

THE 21st INTERNATIONAL UNION OF FORESTRY ORGANISATIONS (IUFRO) WORLD CONGRESS

It is my pleasure to be here today on the occasion of the official opening of the 21st International Union of Forestry Research Organisations, or IUFRO, World Congress. Let me, first of all, thank the organisers for inviting me to address and officiate the opening of this important forestry congress. I would also like to extend a very warm welcome to all our guests and participants and wish you all a very fruitful meeting and a pleasant stay in Malaysia.

I understand that IUFRO is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation, established more than one hundred years ago, in 1892 and that its mission is to promote international cooperation in forestry research and related sciences. I also understand that although IUFRO has about 700 member institutions in 105 countries, this is the first time that the Congress is being held in a developing country. Therefore, it would be incumbent upon me to congratulate the organisers for having successfully bid to host this World Congress in Kuala Lumpur and for having undertaken the necessary preparations that have led us to be gathered here today at the biggest ever forestry meeting held in this country. I hope that this will mark the beginning for the IUFRO World Congress to be held in other developing countries as well.

As we all know, forests play a major role in the livelihood of citizens of many developing countries, contributing significantly towards the economic progress of these nations. I am extremely pleased, therefore, that Malaysia has blazed the trail for developing countries to bid and organise such a congress, as forestry issues relate very closely to a large number of weak and impoverished citizens of the world. On this score too, I wish to congratulate the IUFRO for the very appropriate theme chosen for the Congress, linking society to forests through research.

I would be preaching to the converted if I were to embark on a discourse on the role and functions of forest. You are the experts on this subject. You are only too familiar with the fact that in the past, forests were considered separate from people who lived in or at its fringes and those forests were considered only for the timber that they supplied. In recent years, both rural and urban, are but two sides of the same coin and that beyond timber, forests provide a whole range of goods and services important for the well-being of society.

But what lessons have we learned from the not-so distant past, lessons in forestry that have triggered this change in perception and have set the stage for the current international debate on forests? We know that as the industrial revolution began in the early 1800s, vast tracts of temperate forests in Europe, already decimated in the proceeding centuries, were further cleared to provide wood that was necessary of the industrialisation process. Vast tracts of forests were also lost on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, in America in the 1800s. In just decades, millions of hectares of forests were destroyed for pasturage and cultivation, lumber and fuel.

The industrial revolution in the West led to massive negative effects on the environment. Pollution of the atmosphere and waterways, as well as degradation of the soil accelerated. The rapid economic growth following the Second World War, in what are now the developed countries, provided the impetus for further environmental degradation. The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment of June 1972 in Stockholm came and went. However, environmental degradation continued unabated. Global warming, ozone layer depletion, marine pollution, acid rain, deforestation and soil degradation – mostly the result of industrial activities – had become a great cause for concern by the early 1980s.

Within this context, the Langkawi Declaration on the Environment of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held in Kuala Lumpur in October 1989, planted the seed for a concept which took formal shape in subsequent global meetings.

The concept of 'greening of the world' became enshrined as a principle in the Paris Declaration of the 10th World Forestry Congress held in 1991. Subsequently, at the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, the Statement of Principles on Forest accepted by all Governments, embodied this concept in full.

In this connection, just prior to the Earth Summit in Rio, Malaysia had in fact suggested that the world forest cover of 27.6% at that time be increased to 30% by the year 2000 through vigorous afforestation and reforestation programmes throughout the globe. We had envisaged that this increase would cover all types of forests – boreal, temperate and tropical – as there is no discrimination in the way different types of forest sequester carbon, stabilise climate, protect the environment, conserve biological diversity, produce industrial resources and provide sustenance for the livelihood of communities living within and in the vicinity of forests. We had also envisaged that developed countries with low forests cover, a consequence of wanton forest destruction during the last few centuries, but now with strong economies, vast resources and technical know-how, would spearhead efforts at greening the world. We had envisaged further, perhaps in our naivety, that these economically powerful countries would pool their vast resources to actively help implement afforestation and reforestation programmes in the poorer countries of the world.

However, eight years down the road from Rio, it is 'business as usual.' All the hype generated during the run-up to, and at Rio, has virtually dissipated, almost overnight. No concerted movement to green the world has even been in the embryonic form. Each nation has been virtually left to its own to implement its forestry programme. I am told that the average total annual cost required to implement the forestry programmes under Agenda 21 of UNCED was estimated at US\$32 billion, a major portion of which was committed to come from developed countries. Despite the fact that Agenda 21, as well as the Forest Principles provided the framework

for strengthening cooperation among countries, it is now clear that most of the funds required for forestry programmes would have to be generated by developing countries themselves.

Malaysia has always been and is proactive on global issues concerning forest and the environment. We participated actively in the negotiations leading to UNCED, encompassing Agenda 21, the Statement of Principles on Forests, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change, and have continued active participation in the developments since Rio. We adhere very much to the concept of greening of the world, although forests were cleared during the time of our colonial occupation for the purpose of establishing plantations. Nevertheless, natural forests still cover about 58% of our land area. With the inclusion of plantations of rubber and oil palm, the tree cover is about 72% of the land area. We have pledged and will continue to uphold this pledge, that forest cover will remain at a minimum level of 50% of the land area in perpetuity and this will be our contribution to the citizens of the world.

In this regard, we have also acted to strengthen our forestry practices, in line with the concept of sustainable forest management, for example, we have expanded the size of our permanent forest estate from 12.7 million hectares to 14.1 million hectares, revised the National Forestry Policy in 1992 and amended the National Forestry Act in 1993, strengthening its provisions and introducing stiffer penalties for forest offences. We are increasing our efforts in research and development in all relevant fields of forestry, including efforts to develop downstream forest-based industries that would operate sustainably. At the macro level, the National Policy on Biological Diversity, endorsed in 1998, will provide guidance for the conservation of biological diversity and sustainable utilisation of its components.

Internationally, we have continued to provide input into the process of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). We are also active participants in the present implementation phase of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change, both of which have direct relevance to forestry issues.

We acknowledge that forestry is important to a nation's economy and its society, as well as to the national and global environment. Consequently, it has become a dominant issue in both the domestic and national agenda of many countries. However, there is still a glaring vacuum in the global agenda on forestry relating to a legal instrument on forests. We are only too aware of the arguments that did not allow for such an instrument to be developed in time for Rio, but now, eight years down the road from Rio, and after extensive and intensive debates, the issue of a legal instrument on forests has yet to be resolved. We are still no closer to a legal instrument than before.

Malaysia's position is that a legally-binding instrument on all types of forests is a necessity for addressing a whole range of issues on forestry and timber, in a holistic, integrated and comprehensive manner. We believe that such a legal instrument would facilitate the achievement of sustainable forest management by providing a legal transparent framework and equal treatment for all forests, compared to the present 'ad hoc' non legally binding international environment which can be a hindrance to the best forestry practices. We also believe that such an instrument would enable international level action to be taken to address underlying factors for forest shrinkage and degradation in transboundary areas, such as international debt and unsustainable consumption patterns. The instrument would also encourage and accelerate cooperation in the transfer of technology.

Presently, the lack of consensus regarding the necessity of a legally binding instrument is due to the impasse concerning critical issues such as finance, transfer of technology and trade. In this

regard, I would like to urge the developed countries to re-affirm and put into action their commitments to provide concrete financial assistance and technologies to developing countries to achieve sustainable management of their forests. In addition, sustainable forest management should be promoted through mutually supportive trade and environmental policies, not through boycotts and ban on forest products, particularly tropical forest products, or linking stringent environmental standards to market access. Such actions will only render forests valueless and will result in forests being cleared for other purposes. Trade and environmental restrictions will not reduce deforestation. In fact greater market access will help promote sustainable forest management by providing the much needed revenues for this purpose.

The dependence of society on forests goes back to time immemorial, when society was primitive and societal needs simple. In many corners of the earth, mostly in developing countries, societal needs still remain simple. Elsewhere, needs have increased with development of societies and unsustainable lifestyles have contributed much to the increased and often insatiable needs of expanding societies. But needs are more than just material and hence the maxim that 'forest resources and forest lands should be sustainably managed to meet the social, economic, ecological, cultural and spiritual human needs of present and future generations.'

I am gratified to have the chance to meet all of you today to address this congress of scientists who have committed your life to forestry research so that directly or indirectly, you are contributing to societal needs of the present, as well as of the future. Recent history has shown that investment in research and development in any field can lead to high returns. It is my sincere wish that your efforts will lead to returns that would improve the lot of society, as a whole, and of the weak and poorer segments of society in particular. You represent both the developed and developing world and it is by way of this kind of North-South partnership that you are linked through IUFRO.

In this regard, I hope that your efforts will help towards building a more equitable forestry agenda in the international arena, whereby the technologies that you develop in your endeavours will be shared equitably and more magnanimously with the developing countries to improve forestry practices globally. If the world is to achieve sustainable forest management, the transfer of technology from the North to the South on preferential terms as agreed to in Rio, must be forthcoming. Unfortunately, this has not been so and developing countries, without access to these technologies, will be unable to meet their commitments on sustainable forest management, which works to nobody's benefit. IUFRO can, therefore, play an important role to facilitate this transfer of technology. I hope that this Congress will help foster not just an exchange of research experiences but also develop more concrete networks which will serve as effective conduits for North-South transfer of technology. I therefore wish you all the best in your endeavours and hope you will have a productive congress.

In conclusion, let me once again extend our warm wishes to all delegates at this Congress. I hope that you will find time in the post-congress tours to savour not just the bio-diversity of our tropical forests but also the multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious society of our country. In Malaysia you will see Asia.

With these remarks, I have great pleasure in declaring open the 21st IUFRO World Congress.

Opening Address By Dato' Seri Dr Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Prime Minister Of Malaysia At The Official Opening of The 21st International Union Of Forestry Organisations (IUFRO) World Congress, 7th August 2000, Dewan Merdeka, PWTC, Kuala Lumpur. Read by Dato' Seri Dr. Lim Keng Yaik, Minister of Primary Industries, Malaysia.

PEMBUKAAN KILANG CEMBOARD SDN. BHD.

Saya mengucapkan terima kasih kepada Yang Amat Mulia Tunku Imran dan semua Lembaga Pengarah Cemboard Sdn. Bhd. kerana menjemput saya membuka dengan rasmi kilang papan simen ini.

Dalam dekad 80an kita memberi keutamaan kepada usaha pengeluaran negara dan juga hasil pertukaran asing. Perusahaan-perusahaan 'resource-based' iaitu perusahaan yang berasaskan penggunaan sumber-sumber dan bahan-bahan tempatan adalah diberi tekanan di dalam strategi pembangunan perusahaan negara. Saya mengalu-alukan penubuhan perusahaan papan simen Cemboard ini yang selaras dengan matlamat tersebut.

Bahan-bahan mentah bagi pengeluaran papan simen adalah 70% kayu getah dan 30% simen. Sebagaimana yang kita maklum kayu getah telah sekian lama dianggap hanya sesuai sebagai sumber arang bagi kilang-kilang besi baja, sebagai kayu api untuk masak memasak, bagi menyalai getah asap dan mengering hasil-hasil batu-bata.

Memandang bahawa Malaysia adalah pengeluar getah asli yang terbesar di dunia dan setiap tahun beribu-ribu hektar pokok getah ditebang bagi penanaman semula, potensi kayu getah sebagai bahan perusahaan yang berfaedah dan menguntungkan perlu sekali diberi keutamaan. Penggunaan kayu getah sebagai sumber bahan membakar adalah satu pembaziran yang patut kita elakkan. Kilang Cemboard ini yang menggunakan kayu getah sebagai sebahagian besar bahan mentahnya membuktikan kemungkinan kayu getah bagi penggunaan perusahaan secara lebih meluas dan menguntungkan. Ia membuktikan bahawa kita mempunyai peluang yang luas lagi bagi penggunaan sumber-sumber asli kita yang begitu banyak di negara ini.

Papan simen dapat digunakan bagi berbagai tujuan, Rancangan Malaysia Ke Empat. Bagi mencapai matlamat ini, lebih banyak bahan-bahan pembinaan yang dikeluarkan di dalam negeri dan yang menggunakan bahan-bahan tempatan perlulah diberi keutamaan.

Saya yakin, bahan-bahan keluaran Syarikat ini mempunyai pasaran tempatan yang baik. Walau bagaimanapun, oleh sebab papan simen merupakan satu bahan yang baru di negara kita, usaha-usaha yang gigih hendaklah dibuat bagi membolehkan bahan-bahan ini digunakan dengan berkesan dan memuaskan dalam perusahaan pembinaan di negara kita.

Sebagai satu perusahaan moden yang dikendalikan oleh pakar-pakar, sesebuah perusahaan seperti Kilang Cemboard tidak seharusnya melihat kepada Kerajaan sebagai tempat bergantung. Ia harus menggunakan teknik-teknik pengeluaran, kawalan mutu, penyelidikan dan pemasaran yang progresif bagi meningkatkan prestasinya. Orientasi seperti ini adalah amat penting bagi sesebuah perusahaan yang juga akan mengeksport hasil-hasil keluarannya.

Papan simen adalah bahan eksport yang mempunyai potensi yang baik. Saya telah difahamkan bahawa Syarikat ini mengeksportkan bahan keluarannya ke negara-negara ASEAN, khususnya Singapura dan Negeri Thai. Walaupun pada masa ini jumlah yang dieksport agak kecil, yang penting ialah pengeluaran Syarikat ini telah dapat bersaing di pasaran luar dan ini harus menjadi dorongan yang kuat bagi Syarikat ini untuk mengatur strategi pemasarannya dengan lebih kemas lagi.

Syarikat Cemboard merupakan usahasama Alaxander Shand (Holdings) Limited dari United Kingdom yang memegang 80% ekuiti dan rakan tempatannya, Syarikat Pesaka Antah yang memegang 20% ekuiti. Syarikat ini akan meningkatkan pegangan ekuiti bumiputera dari 20% ke 40% dan ekuiti bukan bumiputera ke 20% menjelang 1990. Peningkatan ekuiti tempatan boleh dicapai samada melalui

proses mengambil-alih bahagian ekuiti asing atau pun dengan cara memperbesarkan syarikat ini di mana ekuiti tempatan ditingkatkan melalui pembesaran. Pada hemat saya, peningkatan ekuiti tempatan dengan cara pembesaran adalah lebih sesuai dan saya harap Cemboard akan bersama-sama dengan Kerajaan menjayakan pencapaian matlamat pembangunan negara ini.

Disamping meningkatkan ekuiti tempatan, anggota pengurusan dan pekerja-pekerja tempatanseharusnya bersungguh-sungguh mempelajari selok-belok kewangan, pengeluaran, pemasaran dan pengurusan perniagaan Syarikat papan simen ini. Pihak pengurusan tempatan seharusnya boleh mengendalikan perusahaan ini pada penghujung tahun 1980an ini.

Mengenai pemasaran pula, kita bercita-cita memperluaskan pasaran antarabangsa untuk keluaran barang-barang negara kita. Walau bagaimanapun, cita-cita ini harus dilaksanakan dengan usaha-usaha meningkatkan mutu barang-barang keluaran negara. Kita tidak harus mengeksport barang-barang bermutu rendah kerana hendak memperoleh keuntungan cepat. Barang-barang bermutu rendah adalah cara yang paling senang bagi mencemar imej Malaysia di pasaran antarabangsa. Pengawalan mutu atau 'quality control' harus ditekankan bagi menentukan pasaran antarabangsa yang luas bagi keluaran negara. Pemasaran yang berkesan harus memberi penekanan kepada kepuasan terhadap mutu yang tinggi.

Saya yakin Syarikat Cemboard akan terus menekankan pentingnya pengawalan mutu yang diperlukan tadi.

Ucapan Perasmian Oleh Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, Perdana Menteri Malaysia Di Pembukaan Kilang Cemboard Sdn. Bhd., 17 Ogos 1982, Cembong, Negeri Sembilan.

UPACARA PERASMIAN FASA I & PELANCARAN FASA II KOMPLEKS PERINDUSTRIAN DAN PENGILANGAN KERTAS LANGAT

Saya mengucapkan terima kasih kepada pihak pengurusan Genting Sanyen Industrial Paper Sdn. Bhd. kerana menjemput saya untuk merasmikan Fasa I dan pelancaran Fasa II Kompleks Perindustrian dan Pengilangan Kertas Langat pada hari ini.

Majlis ini sungguh bermakna kerana ia merupakan perasmian sebuah industri yang penting bagi negara iaitu industri kertas perindustrian bergred (industrial brown grade paper) dan pelancaran fasa kilang 'duplex board'. Dengan pertumbuhan industri pembuatan, kertas-kertas jenis ini diperlukan dengan banyaknya untuk pembungkusan.

Kompleks ini juga menunjukkan komitmen Kumpulan Genting, yang sebelum ini menumpukan operasinya kepada bidang-bidang 'resort' dan perhotelan di dalam dan luar negeri, untuk mempelbagaikan aktivitinya dengan lebih ketara lagi ke dalam bidang perkilangan. Penyertaannya di dalam sektor pengeluaran kertas mencerminkan prihatinnya kumpulan ini terhadap keperluan jangka panjang negara untuk bekalan berbagai-bagai jenis kertas dan peluang-peluang yang luas terbuka di dalam sektor kecil ini, terutamanya daripada segi pusing-guna (recycling).

Dalam hal ini empat faktor asas mempengaruhi penggunaan kertas negara iaitu urbanisasi; peningkatan kadar pembacaan; kenaikan kadar pendapatan dan pertumbuhan jumlah penduduk. Penambahan penggunaan kertas oleh negara bererti pertumbuhan kertas buangan dan ini bermakna wujudnya peluang-peluang untuk mempertingkatkan aktiviti-aktiviti ekonomi berasaskan pusing-guna.

Negara kita pada masa ini terpaksa mengimport segala keperluan kertas dan barang-barang yang diperbuat daripada kertas kerana kita tidak mempunyai industri berasaskan kertas yang bersepadu. Nilai import Malaysia bagi barangan tersebut telah meningkat daripada \$516 juta ringgit pada tahun 1983 kepada \$1,586 juta ringgit pada tahun 1991 iaitu 300 peratus dalam jangkamasa hanya lapan tahun.

Sebahagian besar import tersebut adalah kertas-kertas cetak dan tulis (printing and writing paper) yang bernilai \$371 juta ringgit pada tahun lepas, dan kertas akhbar (newsprint) yang bernilai \$316 juta ringgit pada jangkamasa yang sama. Untuk pembuatan input bagi kotak pembungkusan seperti 'corrugating medium', 'linearboard' dan 'kraft liner', nilai importnya berjumlah \$247 juta ringgit.

Dengan tertubuhnya kilang ini, ianya akan dapat mencapai tiga matlamat penting, iaitu memenuhi keperluan negara bagi kertas perindustrian bergred sebanyak 220,000 tan setahun, berasaskan keupayaan pengeluarannya sebanyak 250,000 tan; menjimatkan pengaliran keluar pertukaran asing sebanyak \$165 juta ringgit setahun, dan memusing-gunakan lebih daripada 300,000 tan pelbagai jenis kertas buangan.

Selaras dengan komitmen Malaysia terhadap isu-isu berkaitan dengan alam sekitar, ciri pusing-guna projek ini adalah tepat pada masanya. Ini akan secara tidak langsung mengurangkan keperluan kawasan pelupusan dan pembuangan sampah serta menjimatkan kos pelupusan sampah yang dianggarkan sebanyak \$6 juta ringgit setahun. Tahniah diucapkan kepada syarikat Genting Sanyen di atas inisiatifnya mempelopori konsep pusing-guna secara komersil.

Sungguhpun demikian, pengeluar-pengeluar tempatan dijangka hanya dapat memenuhi di antara 35 dan 40 peratus permintaan tempatan bagi semua jenis kertas, berpanduan kepada angka 300,000 tan yang diimport setahun. Jika diambilkira rancangan-rancangan pembesaran syarikat yang sedia ada, menjelang

tahun 1993, pembekalan tempatan akan meningkat kepada 45 peratus hingga 50 peratus dan seterusnya menjangkau 70 peratus pada tahun 1995.

Penggunaan kertas 'per capita' negara kita dianggarkan sebanyak 28 kilogram berbanding dengan purata dunia sebanyak 38 kilogram. Bagi negara-negara maju seperti Amerika Syarikat dan Jepun, angkanya adalah dalam lingkungan 100 hingga 150 kilogram bagi setiap penduduk. Berdasarkan kepada hakikat ini jelas sekali industri ini mempunyai potensi yang amat cerah untuk berkembang di Malaysia.

Walau bagaimanapun, faktor kurang bekalan kertas buangan dalam jangkamasa lima tahun akan datang mungkin membantut kemajuan industri kertas yang akan mengakibatkan negara terpaksa bergantung kepada kertas buangan yang diimport. Oleh yang demikian, saya menyeru kepada pengusaha-pengusaha tempatan, khususnya yang berkecimpung dalam sektor kertas, supaya meningkatkan kecekapan dalam proses pemungutan kertas buangan (waste-paper collection) dan pusing-guna.

Ini adalah kerana kini terdapat sebanyak 250 syarikat pemungut kertas buangan, yang mana lebih kurang 40 syarikat memungut lebih 100 tan sebulan. Saya rasa jumlah syarikat ini dapat dikurangkan melalui proses 'consolidation' demi mempertingkatkan kecekapan industri pungutan.

Sehubungan dengan itu, kadar 'recovery' bagi kertas buangan dapat juga diperbaiki daripada angka 39 peratus yang dicapai buat masa kini. Adalah dianggarkan daripada jumlah 193,000 tan kertas buangan negara setahun, sebanyak 148,000 tan ataupun 78 peratus dapat dipungut. Ini bererti pencapaian sekarang hanya sebanyak 50 peratus daripada keupayaan sebenarnya dan pencapaian ini kurang memuaskan.

Justeru itu, saya berharap dengan pelaksanaan projek ini, pengusaha-pengusaha tempatan dapat menyusun usaha integrasi mereka dan memperbaiki keadaan dalam sektor pungutan dan pemerosesan kertas buangan. Amatlah merugikan jika sesuatu yang bernilai seperti kertas dibuangkan begitu sahaja. Namun untuk kepentingan semua pihak, harga tidak harus dinaikkan dengan sewenang-wenangnya kerana ini akan merugikan semua pihak akhirnya.

Saya mengucapkan tahniah kepada Kumpulan Genting di atas tekad mereka untuk mendirikan kompleks kilang kertas yang terbesar di rantau ini yang jumlah pelaburannya bagi Fasa I sahaja adalah sebanyak \$400 juta ringgit. Saya difahamkan kompleks ini akan dimajukan dalam enam fasa kesemuanya. Fasa II dijangka meliputi pembinaan kilang 'duplex board' berharga \$100 juta ringgit.

Dengan ini, saya dengan sukacitanya merasmikan Fasa I dan melancarkan Fasa II Kompleks Perindustrian dan Pengilangan Kertas Langat ini.

Ucapan Perasmian Oleh Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Perdana Menteri Malaysia Sempena Upacara Perasmian Fasa I & Pelancaran Fasa II Kompleks Perindustrian Dan Pengilangan Kertas Langat, 12 November 1992, Daerah Kuala Langat, Selangor

MAJLIS PELANCARAN KEMPEN MENANAM POKOK SELURUH NEGARA

Saya ucapkan terima kasih kepada pihak penganjur, Kementerian Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan, kerana menjemput saya pada hari ini untuk merasmikan Majlis Pelancaran Kempen Menanam Pokok Seluruh Negara ini.

Wawasan Kerajaan ialah untuk menjadikan Malaysia Negara Taman menjelang tahun 2005. Apa yang dimaksudkan dengan Negara Taman ini ialah wujudnya secara keseluruhan keseimbangan di antara kawasan hijau dan kawasan pembangunan di dalam negara. Ia juga bermakna kehijauan di mana taman-taman dan pokok-pokok menjadi komponen penting dalam semua pembangunan fizikal. Bagi negara seperti Malaysia yang banyak terdedah kepada matahari, pokok-pokok dan tumbuh-tumbuhan diperlukan untuk memberi perlindungan. Penanaman pokok dengan kuantiti yang banyak boleh mengubah iklim mikro di sesuatu tempat di samping dapat mengurangkan pencemaran. Juga terdapat banyak faedah daripada penyediaan kawasan hijau dan penanaman pokok terutamanya daripada segi peningkatan keindahan dan keselesaan. Malahan persekitaran yang bersih dan indah berjaya meningkatkan produktiviti rakyat dan negara.

Seluruh negara sedang menjalani pembangunan yang pesat hasil pertumbuhan ekonomi yang sangat menggalakkan. Perubahan ketara sedang berlaku ke atas alam sekitar negara di mana sebahagian daripada kawasan hutan telah bertukar menjadi kawasan pembangunan. Namun pembangunan tidak seharusnya disertai dengan pemusnahan pokok dan kawasan semulajadi secara total. Dalam hubungan ini, apa yang penting ialah kawalan dibuat ke atas pembangunan supaya kawasan-kawasan hijau dapat dikekalkan di tahap maksima dan pokok yang telah hilang dapat diganti melalui penanaman pokok baru. Tekanan pembangunan yang tinggi, terutamanya di bandar-bandar utama jika tidak dikawal dengan baik,

boleh menggantikan kawasan hijau dengan 'concrete jungle' yang hodoh dan tidak selesa sepertimana yang wujud di kebanyakan negara maju.

Untuk membentuk satu masyarakat yang maju dalam semua aspek seperti yang dicita-citakan dalam Wawasan 2020 khususnya, mutu hidup kawasan persekitaran yang selesa dan seimbang diperlukan. Kualiti persekitaran yang baik adalah penting dalam memupuk masyarakat yang sihat daripada segi mental dan fizikal serta berkeyakinan. Dengan adanya persekitaran kehidupan yang teratur dan mampan sahaja baharulah Malaysia akan mencapai taraf negara maju mengikut acuan kita sendiri menjelang tahun 2020.

Oleh itu usaha untuk menghijaukan bandar adalah penting. Sejak Deklarasi Langkawi 1989 dan Deklarasi Kuala Lumpur mengenai Alam Sekitar dan Pembangunan yang dimeteraikan pada tahun 1992, Kerajaan telah menekankan keperluan untuk menghijaukan bukan sahaja negara tetapi dunia. Kita juga berpegang kepada pernyataan prinsip bagi hutan dalam Agenda 21 yang dipersetujui dalam Persidangan Antarabangsa Alam Sekitar di Rio de Janeiro dalam tahun 1992, iaitu semua negara perlu mengambil bahagian dalam penghijauan dunia melalui penanaman dan pemeliharaan pokok. Sebarang kerja penanaman pokok yang dilaksanakan tidak bererti hanya bagi persekitaran sendiri atau alam sekitar negara sahaja, tetapi juga secara langsung menyumbang kepada peningkatan kualiti alam sekitar dunia.

Malaysia sedang mengalami proses transformasi ekonomi yang pesat. Dengan itu, kita perlu bergerak pantas dan kompetitif. Negara-negara maju telahpun mengguna unsur-unsur kecantikan dan keselesaan hidup sebagai komponen penting untuk menarik para pelabur dan pelancong. Industri lanskap mereka berkembang pesat. Dalam hal ini, saya yakin dengan sumber dan kepakaran yang sedia ada di negara kita, pembangunan lanskap kita boleh menandingi pembangunan lanskap di negara-negara maju. Apa yang penting ialah kita mesti bijak dan profesional dalam merancang dan melanskap

seluruh negara. Lanskap bukan lagi aspek sampingan pembangunan, malahan adalah penyumbang penting kepada sektor pelancongan dan pembangunan ekonomi negara. Oleh itu, aspek lanskap mesti diwajibkan dalam setiap projek pembangunan. Saya ingin menyeru kepada semua Kerajaan negeri dan pihak berkuasa tempatan supaya menangani isu lanskap ini dengan lebih serius. Mereka mesti melengkapkan keupayaan organisasi dan kepakaran dalam bidang ini bagi menghasilkan mutu lanskap yang tinggi.

Dalam usaha kita menghijaukan sekitaran kita, kita perlu mengambil kira faktor-faktor tempatan. Yang pertamanya ialah penyediaan ruang yang sesuai bagi penanaman pokok. Jumlah bangunan dalam satu-satu skim pembangunan hendaklah dihadkan untuk memberi lebih ruang bagi kolam takungan, pokok-pokok perhiasan dan bunga yang boleh mewarnakan taman. Di samping kecantikan, penanaman ini boleh menolong kita mengelakkan banjir kilat dan keruntuhan tanah. Jika dilihat daripada sudut ini, penanaman pokok dan penyediaan kawasan hijau dalam kawasan pembangunan adalah sesuatu keperluan yang amat mustahak.

Perancangan pembangunan hendaklah disediakan dengan kawasan penanaman pokok. Kawasan ini hendaklah dikekalkan dan tidak diambil alih untuk kegunaan lain apabila tanah hendak dibangunkan semula. Jika perancangan dibuat dari mula lagi, kawasan pokok tidak akan dimusnahkan kerana kegunaan-kegunaan tanah lain.

Selain daripada mewajibkan penyediaan kawasan lapang minima 10 peratus, pihak pemaju juga hendaklah melanskap dan mencantikkan kawasan lapang dan keseluruhan kawasan perumahan dan kawasan pembangunan. Dalam hal ini, pihak Kerajaan Negeri dan Pihak Berkuasa Tempatan harus memastikan rezab lanskap untuk tanaman pokok disediakan di tepi-tepi jalan bagi mengelak pemusnahan pokok yang kerap berlaku akibat daripada kerja-kerja pelebaran jalan dan penyediaan talian utiliti. Bagi memastikan perkara ini dipatuhi, peraturan dan akta berkaitan dengan lanskap hendaklah diadakan.

Dalam melaksanakan aktiviti penanaman pokok, jenis pokok yang sesuai hendaklah ditentukan. Jika tidak pokok yang ditanam akan membawa masalah, umpamanya, mengganggu talian elektrik dan telefon atau akarnya akan merosakkan jalan atau paip air dan kabel di bawah tanah. Cara menyelenggara juga adalah penting. Jika dibiarkan, pokok mungkin condong dan tidak tumbuh dengan baik. Ranting-ranting juga perlu dipotong secara teratur supaya tidak terlalu rendah dan menghalang lalu lintas. Tiap pokok mempunyai 'character'nya yang tersendiri yang perlu diketahui supaya penyelenggaraan dapat menghasilkan tumbuhan yang indah dan menepati tujuan menanam pokok berkenaan.

Untuk kawasan awam, pihak-pihak berkuasa tempatan terutamanya mempunyai peranan yang penting bagi memastikan pokok-pokok yang telah ditanam sentiasa dijaga dengan baik. Pihak-pihak berkuasa tempatan perlulah memastikan pelaksanaan satu bentuk pengurusan penyelenggaraan yang sempurna dalam kawasan pentadbiran mereka. Janganlah kita anggap tanggungjawab dan kerja kita tamat apabila pokok ditanam. Penjagaan sepanjang masa tidak kurang pentingnya daripada penanaman, bahkan mungkin lebih penting.

Untuk menanam pokok di seluruh negara ini, penyediaan stok tanaman perlu ditingkatkan. Sebenarnya masalah stok 'planting material' amat mudah diatasi di Malaysia. Iklim Malaysia dan tanahnya begitu subur sehingga apa sahaja yang ditanam dapat tumbuh dengan baik. Namun demikian cara menyelenggara benih yang ditanam memerlukan pendekatan yang separa saintifik sekurang-kurangnya. Kerajinan dalam mengawasi juga amat penting.

Penanaman pokok secara komersil tidak begitu menguntungkan kerana kos tanah yang tinggi dan masa yang amat panjang sebelum hasil diperolehi. Justeru itu siapa sahaja yang memiliki tanah lapang yang tidak diguna, umpamanya di tepi jalan raya dan sungai-sungai atau di mana sahaja ada kawasan yang tidak akan diguna buat

beberapa lama, pokok hendaklah ditanam sebagai punca bekalan pokok 'instant'. Jika pemilik tanah, sama ada kuasa tempatan, Kerajaan atau swasta tidak berminat, mereka hendaklah membenarkan pihak yang berminat menggunakan tanah mereka untuk tanaman pokok dengan bayaran nominal sahaja untuk tanah. Sebaliknya pemilik tanah yang enggan memberi kebenaran tetapi membiarkan tumbuh-tumbuhan yang tidak sempurna tumbuh atau menjadikan tempat membuang sampah atau diduduki oleh setinggan, pihak kuasa tempatan hendaklah mengenakan bayaran atau denda tertentu.

Keindahan dan keselesaan adalah satu keperluan asas bagi masyarakat Malaysia yang semakin makmur dan canggih. Untuk itu piawaian dan syarat yang khusus bagi penyediaan kawasan lapang dan penanaman pokok perlu diadakan dan dipatuhi. Pemaju-pemaju perumahan seharusnya peka terhadap kehendak masyarakat. Lagipun, taman perumahan yang disediakan dengan kehijauan yang secukupnya akan lebih menarik minat pembeli dan mempunyai nilai pulangan yang lebih baik.

Selain daripada kawasan perumahan, kawasan-kawasan bandar, kawasan pelancongan dan kawasan industri perlu juga diberi penekanan untuk dilanskap dan diindahkan.

Tugas untuk menjadikan Malaysia 'Negara Hijau' yang indah bukanlah tanggungjawab yang harus dipikul oleh Kerajaan semata-mata, malahan ianya adalah tanggungjawab bersama semua pihak. Oleh itu, saya menyeru pihak-pihak swasta, pekilang, pemaju, sektor korporat dan orang perseorangan untuk tampil ke hadapan membantu menaja lampu-lampu dan program-program lanskap di bandar-bandar dan kampung-kampung di seluruh negara. Syarikat-syarikat bekalan elektrik, termasuk IPP hendaklah memberi sumbangan kepada lampu hiasan sama ada melalui tarif yang rendah atau dengan membayar tarif kepada Tenaga Nasional yang menjadi pembekal tunggal.

Pelancaran kempen menanam pokok secara serentak di seluruh negara pada hari ini menandakan bermulanya usaha menanam pokok secara besar-besaran untuk mencapai matlamat tiga juta pokok pada tahun 2000 dan 20 juta pokok pada tahun 2020. Untuk menentukan kejayaan kempen ini ada baiknya jika tiap negeri mengadakan satu hari yang dikhaskan untuk tiap seorang penduduk menanam sepohon pokok di tempat tertentu. Dengan usaha ini, diharapkan suasana kehijauan, keindahan dan keselesaan akan menjadi sebahagian daripada kehidupan masyarakat negara ini. Kerajaan-Kerajaan negeri dan pihak-pihak berkuasa tempatan adalah bertanggungjawab untuk memanjangkan hasrat ini kepada semua pihak dan seluruh rakyat. Kepada semua agensi Kerajaan, pihak-pihak swasta, badan-badan bukan Kerajaan dan individu, saya juga menyeru supaya sama-sama melibatkan diri bagi menjayakan kempen ini. Semoga dengan adanya kerjasama yang rapat antara semua pihak, bukan sahaja dalam melaksanakan kempen ini tetapi juga usaha untuk mempertingkatkan lanskap negara, kita akan berjaya menjadikan cita-cita 'Negara Hijau' yang indah ini satu kenyataan.

Dengan itu, saya dengan sukacitanya melancarkan Kempen Menanam Pokok Seluruh Negara.

Ucapan Perasmian Oleh Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Perdana Menteri Malaysia Sempena Majlis Pelancaran Kempen Menanam Pokok Seluruh Negara, 3 Mac 1997, Taman Rekreasi, Medan Idaman, Kuala Lumpur.

PERASMIAN PUSAT REKABENTUK PERABOT MALAYSIA (MFDC)

Saya mengucapkan terima kasih kepada Majlis Kayu Kayan Malaysia (MTC) kerana menjemput saya untuk merasmikan Pusat Rekabentuk Perabot Malaysia (MFDC). Penubuhan pusat seperti ini bukan sahaja penting dalam pembangunan industri perabot tetapi adalah tepat pada masanya memandangkan industri hiliran dan bernilai tambah telah muncul sebagai sumber pendapatan tukaran wang asing yang utama dalam sektor komoditi. Lagipun industri berasas bahan mentah tempatan yang dimiliki rakyat Malaysia boleh menolong meningkatkan pendapatan negara kerana segala hasil akan dikembalikan ke negara kita hampir sepenuhnya.

Pendapatan daripada eksport perabot di negara ini telah bertambah dengan banyaknya sejak tahun 1990. Pada tahun 1990, pendapatan eksport perabot berjumlah hanya RM269.5 juta, akan tetapi pada tahun 1997, ianya telah melebihi RM2.6 billion iaitu peningkatan sebanyak 10 kali ganda. Dalam tempoh enam bulan pertama tahun ini, industri ini telah terus maju dan mencatatkan perolehan eksport sebanyak RM1.97 billion. Walaupun sebahagian daripada pendapatan ini ialah keuntungan yang tidak dijangka disebabkan kejatuhan nilai Ringgit, tetapi apa yang penting ialah prestasi industri perabot yang membanggakan. Keupayaan industri ini untuk menyesuaikan diri hingga mencapai kejayaan, walaupun negara sedang menghadapi pergolakan ekonomi, perlu diberikan sokongan dan galakan supaya ianya akan terus maju dan berdaya saing.

Dalam tempoh lima tahun yang lepas, industri perabot tempatan telah diiktiraf sebagai pengeluar dan pengeksport perabot yang berkualiti dan bertaraf dunia. Walau bagaimanapun, persaingan yang semakin meningkat berikutan proses globalisasi dan liberalisasi dagangan di peringkat ASEAN dan antarabangsa, seharusnya tidak menjadikan kita terlalu berpuas hati dengan tahap pencapaian

sekarang. Sebaliknya, kita perlu menguatkan azam dan berusaha ke arah kecemerlangan dengan mengeluarkan produk-produk kayu atau perabot bernilai tambah yang lebih berkualiti tinggi dan mampu menjadi standard antarabangsa. Saya yakin, ini akan dapat dicapai melalui perkembangan rekabentuk asli yang tinggi mutunya serta mengamalkan proses dan teknologi perkilangan yang lebih kos efisien.

Industri perabot di negara ini masih banyak bergantung kepada rekabentuk sedia ada di pasaran dan juga citarasa pembeli dan mengikuti kaedah pembuat peralatan asal (Original Equipment Manufacturer) (OEM). Keadaan ini menyebabkan penekanan harga yang berterusan di mana pengilang-pengilang kos rendah dari negara-negara di rantau ini telah muncul dengan barangan yang berharga rendah serta kompetitif. Sebagai pengilang yang beroperasi mengikut OEM, kita berpandukan kepada rekabentuk-rekabentuk yang disediakan oleh pembeli dari negara-negara asing dan harganya ditetapkan oleh mereka. Dalam kegawatan ekonomi, saya difahamkan bahawa pembeli-pembeli asing telah meminta supaya diskaun diberikan berasaskan kejatuhan nilai Ringgit. Bagi menentukan pasaran, para pengilang dan pengeksport kita terpaksa memenuhi permintaan mereka dan mungkin keuntungan jangka pendek dapat dikekalkan. Sebaliknya, sekiranya nilai Ringgit kita kembali kukuh, tidak pasti harga yang lama akan diberikan kepada pengeksport-pengeksport perabot tempatan. Dengan demikian, margin keuntungan akan berkurangan sementara kos pengeluaran akan meningkat, yang akhirnya industri perabot di negara ini akan menghadapi pelbagai masalah.

Bagi jangka masa panjang, penekanan perlu diberikan kepada keupayaan pengeluaran-pengeluar perabot untuk bersaing dengan faktor bukan harga seperti kualiti yang unggul, rekabentuk yang unik serta kaedah pasaran yang inovatif. Pengeluar-pengeluar perabot perlu beralih dari kaedah pengeluaran "OEM" kepada pengeluaran mengikut "Original Design Manufacture" atau "pengilangan rekabentuk asal" secara agresif dengan mengamalkan strategi seperti

mencipta rekabentuk dan jenama yang tersendiri. Selain daripada itu, ia juga boleh dilakukan melalui "networking", membentuk hubungan strategik ataupun perkongsian pintar dengan pembeli-pembeli luar negara atau firma-firma rekabentuk perabot di negara-negara pengimport. Tindakan-tindakan ini bukan sahaja akan menjamin kewujudan industri perabot Malaysia yang tulin tetapi juga pembangunannya akan memberi faedah "spin-off" yang lebih meluas kepada penduduk di negara ini.

Daripada segi perniagaan dan perdagangan perabot, matlamat utama kita ialah untuk menarik minat pembeli jangka panjang dan menggalakkan mereka membeli produk tempatan berdasarkan kualiti barangan dan "value for money", bukan semata-mata sebagai pembeli runcit yang inginkan harga rendah. Walau bagaimanapun, kita harus mempelbagaikan barangan daripada produk berharga rendah dan sederhana hingga ke produk premium yang berharga tinggi. Setelah itu barulah kita berpeluang untuk bersaing tanpa tekanan harga yang ditetapkan secara terang-terangan oleh kuasa pasaran.

Sudah tiba masanya bagi industri perabot mengamal dan menggunakan "value-strategy" dan beralih dari "volume-strategy" melalui rekabentuk asal dan jenama sendiri. Dalam perkara ini, pengilang-pengilang tempatan perlu memberi tumpuan untuk mengeluarkan produk yang berkualiti tinggi dan konsisten, mempunyai fungsi serta rekabentuk yang menarik.

Saya ingin mengucapkan tahniah kepada Kementerian Perusahaan Utama di atas inisiatifnya menubuhkan pusat ini bagi membantu industri perabot kearah kecemerlangan serta menjadikannya sebuah industri bertaraf dunia. Dengan adanya pusat ini, kita mempunyai tempat untuk mempamerkan perabot buatan Malaysia yang terkini sepanjang tahun. Di samping itu, pameran yang diadakan oleh "Malaysian International Furniture Fair" setiap tahun memastikan promosi serta kejayaan yang berpanjangan untuk industri perabot Malaysia.

Saya yakin dengan adanya kemudahan seperti ini dan di atas usaha inovatif industri serta sokongan dari Kementerian Perusahaan Utama, maka industri perabot kita akan bertambah maju dan meningkat ke tahap yang lebih tinggi lagi supaya menjadi salah satu tunggak pendapatan tukaran wang asing bagi negara kita.

Saya difahamkan bahawa Pusat Rekabentuk Perabot Malaysia dibuka kepada semua pengilang, peniaga dan pengeksport dan akan menjadi tempat untuk mempamerkan rekabentuk perabot Malaysia yang terkini serta menyediakan khidmat nasihat teknikal dalam merekabentuk perabot yang bercirikan rekabentuk tempatan. Dengan itu, saya berharap mereka yang terlibat dalam perniagaan dan perdagangan perabot akan mengambil peluang untuk menggunakan kemudahan serta perkhidmatan yang disediakan.

Saya dimaklumkan juga bahawa dalam tahun 1997, dianggarkan terdapat 3,009 kilang perabot dan kilang kerja kayu di negara ini. Akan tetapi hanya 500 hingga 600 kilang sahaja yang terlibat dengan aktiviti eksport. Oleh yang demikian, industri kecil dan sederhana digalakkan untuk mengambil bahagian dalam perniagaan eksport perabot yang bernilai lebih kurang USD55 billion setiap tahun di seluruh dunia. Mereka boleh bermula dengan menjadi pembekal komponen tertentu kepada pengeksport lain.

Bagi memastikan pusat ini memainkan peranan yang berkesan untuk memanfaatkan industri perabot, terdapat satu persoalan yang penting mengenai perlindungan harta intelek. Isu ini mungkin menjadi batu penghalang di mana pengilang-pengilang pintar yang mempunyai rekabentuk ciptaan mereka sendiri, enggan mempamerkan barangan di MFDC kerana khuatir pengilang-pengilang lain akan meniru rekabentuk mereka. Seperti yang telah kita ketahui, ia merupakan satu masalah universal di mana tidak terdapat penyelesaian yang mudah dan jelas.

Walau bagaimanapun, saya telah diberitahu bahawa MFDC akan mengemukakan cadangan untuk pertimbangan Kerajaan supaya pendaftaran bagi perlindungan hak harta intelek bagi rekabentuk perabot dapat diwujudkan di negara ini. Adalah diharapkan dengan adanya proses pendaftaran yang cekap ianya akan meyakinkan pengimport dan peniaga perabot asing untuk menempah kontrak OEM dengan para pengilang negara ini tanpa takut rekabentuk mereka ditiru. Isu rompakan rekabentuk merupakan punca utama timbulnya kebimbangan di kalangan pengimport terutamanya dari negara Jepun di mana mereka telah banyak membuat pelaburan wang dan masa untuk penyelidikan dan pembangunan (R&D) dalam aspek rekabentuk perabot.

Sukacita saya mengulangi bahawa pengilang perabot harus menumpukan perhatian kepada pembeli dari negara asing yang bersedia untuk membeli produk berkualiti dan bernilai tambah, bukan hanya menuntut harga yang terendah. Saya berharap dalam masa dua hingga tiga tahun hadapan, pusat ini akan mempunyai pelbagai barangan untuk memenuhi keperluan setiap sektor dagangan perabot.

Saya juga telah diberitahu bahawa MFDC merupakan tempat di mana perekabentuk tempatan yang berbakat boleh mempamerkan kreativiti dalam merekabentuk perabot, melalui pameran "works-of-art" yang kerap kali diadakan oleh para perekabentuk Malaysia. Ini akan memberi peluang kepada para pengilang Malaysia memperolehi rekabentuk yang anggun serta berfungsi hasil daripada perekabentuk tempatan. Para perekabentuk tersebut juga berpeluang untuk menjual koleksi rekabentuk mereka kepada pengilang-pengilang yang berpotensi. Langkah ini dapat melahirkan perekabentuk perabot yang mampu untuk menghasilkan produk bertaraf dunia dengan mewujudkan rekabentuk Malaysia yang asli.

Dalam era teknologi maklumat, saya difahamkan perdagangan elektronik, dan laman Web telah diwujudkan oleh pusat ini sebagai salah satu alat pemasaran untuk mempromosikan industri perabot

Malaysia. Saya berharap rekabentuk terbaik dan terkini dapat disebarkan kepada dunia melalui rangkaian "Internet".

Akhir kata, saya yakin pengilang, perekabentuk dan pembeli bersama-sama akan memperolehi faedah daripada penubuhan pusat ini sepertimana yang disarankan dalam Pelan Induk Perindustrian Kedua menerusi konsep "manufacturing plus-plus". Selanjutnya pusat ini akan menjadi jambatan kepada rekabentuk cemerlang dan hubungan perniagaan.

Dengan kata-kata ini, saya dengan sukacitanya merasmikan Pusat Rekabentuk Perabot Malaysia ini.

Ucapan Perasmian Oleh Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Perdana Menteri Malaysia Sempena Perasmian Pusat Rekabentuk Perabot Malaysia (Mjdc), 20 November 1998, Menara PGRM, Cheras, Kuala Lumpur.

THE LANGKAWI DECLARATION ON ENVIRONMENT

We, the Heads of Government of the Commonwealth, representing a quarter of the world's population and a broad cross-section of global interests, are deeply concerned at the serious deterioration in the environment and the threat this poses to the well-being of present and future generations. Any delay in taking action to halt this progressive deterioration will result in permanent and irreversible damage.

2. The current threat to the environment, which is a common concern of all mankind, stems essentially from past neglect in managing the natural environment and resources. The environment has been degraded by decades of industrial and other forms of pollution, including unsafe disposal of toxic wastes, the burning of fossil fuels, nuclear testing and non-sustainable practices in agriculture, fishery and forestry.

3. The main environmental problems facing the world are the 'greenhouse effect' (which may lead to severe climatic changes that could induce floods, droughts and rising sea levels), the depletion of the ozone layer, acid rain, marine pollution, land degradation and the extinction of numerous animal and plant species. Some developing countries also face distinct environmental problems arising from poverty and population pressure. In addition, some islands and low-lying areas of other countries, are threatened by the prospect of rising sea level.

4. Many environmental problems transcend national boundaries and interests, necessitating a co-ordinated global effort. This is particularly true in areas outside national jurisdiction, and where there is transboundary pollution on land and in the oceans, atmosphere and outer space.

5. The need to protect the environment should be viewed in a balanced perspective and due emphasis be accorded to promoting economic growth and sustainable development, including eradication of poverty, meeting basic needs, and enhancing the quality of life. The responsibility for ensuring a better environment should be equitably shared and the ability of developing countries to respond be taken into account.

6. To achieve sustainable development, economic growth is a compelling necessity. Sustainable development implies the incorporation of environmental concerns into economic planning and policies. Environmental concerns should not be used to introduce a new form of conditionality in aid and development financing, nor as a pretext for creating unjustified barriers to trade.

7. The success of global and national environmental programmes requires mutually reinforcing strategies and the participation and commitment of all levels of society - government, individuals and organisations, industry and the scientific community.

8. Recognising that our shared environment binds all countries to a common future, we, the Heads of Government of the Commonwealth, resolved to act collectively and individually, commit ourselves to the following programme of action: advance policies and programmes which help achieve sustainable development, including the development of new and better techniques in integrating the environmental dimension in economic decision-making; strengthen and support the development of international funding mechanisms and appropriate decision-making procedures to respond to environmental protection needs which will include assisting developing countries to obtain access to and transfer of needed environmental technologies and which should take account of proposals for an international environment fund/Planet Protection Fund; support the work of the UNEP/WMO Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC);

call for the early conclusion of an international convention to protect and conserve the global climate and, in this context, applaud the efforts of member governments to advance the negotiation of a framework convention under UN auspices; support the findings and recommendations of the Commonwealth Expert Group's Report on Climate Change as a basis for achievable action to develop strategies for adapting to climate change and or reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as well as making an important contribution to the work of the IPCC; support measures to improve energy conservation and energy efficiency;

promote the reduction and eventual phase-out of substances depleting the ozone layer; promote afforestation and agricultural practices in developed and developing countries to arrest the increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide and halt the deterioration of land and water resources;

strengthen efforts by developing countries in sustainable forest management and their manufacture and export of higher value-added forest products and, in this regard, support the activities of the International Tropical Timber Organisation and the Food and Agriculture Organisation, as well as take note of the recommendations of the 13th Commonwealth Forestry Conference. Support activities related to the conservation of biological diversity and genetic resources, including the conservation of significant areas of virgin forest and other protected natural habitats;

support low-lying and island countries in their efforts to protect themselves and their vulnerable natural marine ecosystems from the effects of sea level rise;

discourage and restrict non-sustainable fishing practices and seek to ban tangle net and pelagic drift net fishing;

support efforts to prevent marine pollution including

curbing ocean dumping of toxic wastes;

strengthen international action to ensure the safe management and disposal of hazardous wastes and to reduce transboundary movements, particularly to prevent dumping in developing countries;

participate in relevant international agreements relating to the environment and promote new and innovative instruments which will attract widespread support for protecting the global environment; and

strengthen national, regional and international institutions responsible for environmental protection as well as the promotion of active programmes on environmental education to heighten public awareness and support.

9. We, the Heads of Government of the Commonwealth resolve to take immediate and positive actions on the basis of the above programme. In this regard, we pledge our full support for the convening of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development.

10. We call on the international community to join us in the endeavour.

Issued by Commonwealth Heads of Government at Langkawi, Malaysia.

Langkawi, Malaysia
21st October, 1989.

HARI LANDSKAP NEGARA

Saya mengucapkan terima kasih kepada pihak penganjur, Jabatan Landskap Negara, Kementerian Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan kerana menjemput saya untuk merasmikan majlis Pelancaran Hari Landskap Negara pada hari ini.

Hari ini adalah satu lagi hari yang bersejarah bagi rakyat Malaysia. Ini adalah oleh kerana Kerajaan telah bersetuju untuk menjadikan 3 Mac setiap tahun sebagai Hari Landskap Negara. Sambutan Hari Landskap Negara pada hari ini merupakan lanjutan kepada Kempen Menanam Pokok yang telah disempurnakan pada 3 Mac 1997.

Manusia yang bertamadun tidak sahaja makan untuk hidup tetapi memberi keutamaan juga kepada kelazatan dan keindahan hidangan. Lebih tinggi tamadun manusia lebihlah keutamaan yang diberi kepada persekitaran, kepada ketertiban dan kepada ketinggian seni dan budaya. Justeru itu, kita boleh mengukur ketinggian tamadun sesuatu bangsa melalui taraf seni dan budaya dalam segala kegiatan bangsa itu.

Ketinggian seni dan budaya juga mempengaruhi kemajuan bangsa berkenaan. Demikian bangsa yang berjaya membangun seni dan budaya yang tinggi biasanya lebih maju dan gagah daripada bangsa yang tidak dapat membentuk seni dan budaya yang tinggi.

Persekitaran sesuatu bangsa memberi gambaran yang awal akan tamadun bangsa itu. Sebab itu kita dapati bangsa yang bertamadun tinggi hidup dalam persekitaran yang bersih dan indah yang diusahakan oleh bangsa itu. Oleh kerana ini adalah budaya bangsa maka seluruh negara bangsa yang bertamadun tinggi akan dilihat tertib, teratur, bersih dan indah.

Kegagalan sesuatu bangsa memperlihatkan tahap persekitaran yang baik ini bukan sahaja mencerminkan tamadun yang rendah tetapi juga pembangunan dan kejayaan yang rendah. Lebih buruk lagi ialah mereka yang bertamadun rendah ini tidak pun berasa malu dengan budaya

rendah mereka dan tidak dapat membuat penilaian akan perbezaan di antara mereka dengan bangsa yang tinggi tamadun mereka.

Perasaan malu lebih utama daripada kebanggaan dengan diri sendiri. Bangsa yang tahu malu mengambil berat akan kelakuan dan prestasi yang ditunjukkan. Kegagalan atau kelemahan dalam apa-apa bidang tetap akan memalukan orang yang tinggi budayanya. Justeru itu, mereka akan berusaha bersungguh-sungguh untuk mencapai kejayaan dan meningkatkan kebolehan mereka.

Kita tidak ingin kepada perasaan malu yang keterlaluan sehingga sanggup mengambil nyawa sendiri untuk menebus maruah. Tetapi kita harus tahu malu apabila tamadun bangsa kita begitu rendah sehingga kita tidak pun tahu perbezaan di antara yang bersih dan indah dengan yang kotor dan hodoh. Apabila kita tidak tahu maka kita tidak dapat mengubah keadaan seni dan budaya kita dan kita akan kekal sebagai bangsa yang bertamadun rendah yang tidak boleh berjaya.

Sesuatu yang membuktikan tahap tamadun bangsa ialah kebolehan membentuk persekitaran yang indah dan menarik. Seperti juga dengan kebolehan yang lain, pada mulanya kecekapan mengindahkan alam sekeliling adalah rendah. Tetapi pengamalan yang berterusan dan berpanjangan tetap akan meningkatkan hasil usaha pengindahan yang dibuat.

Alhamdulillah, sejak kita merdeka rakyat Malaysia lebih prihatin dengan persekitaran mereka. Bukan sahaja mereka lebih gigih dalam menjaga kebersihan tetapi juga kecekapan memperelokkan persekitaran meningkat sepanjang masa. Hari ini bukan sahaja pokok-pokok dan pokok bunga ditanam dengan banyaknya tetapi di landskap pula taman di sekeliling rumah. Mungkin rumah yang tidak ada halaman sama sekali, umpamanya tingkat atas rumah pangsa sukar dihias dengan landskap. Tetapi pengindahan masih boleh dibuat dengan menanam pokok bunga yang sesuai di luar tingkap. Arkitek Malaysia belum tahu bagaimana menyediakan 'window flower boxes' untuk rumah-rumah

bertingkat ini. Sebaliknya jurutera yang merekabentuk jalan bertingkat lebih cepak mengadakan 'planter boxes' di bahagian luar sisi jalan-jalan ini. Saya yakin arkitek Malaysia akan belajar bagaimana cara penduduk tingkat atas rumah bertingkat dapat mengindahkan bangunan-bangunan ini dengan tanaman pokok-pokok bunga.

Di mana terdapat kawasan lapang, bukan sahaja perlu ada tanaman pokok dan pokok bunga secara teratur, tetapi hendaklah diadakan landskap yang menarik, dengan adanya bahagian yang tinggi dan rendah, kolam air dengan pancutan air serta ikan hiasan. Air terjun tiruan boleh diadakan kerana bunyi airnya dapat menenangkan hati. Dan banyaklah lagi rekaan dan inisiatif yang boleh menjadikan satu-satu taman kecil itu unik dan menarik.

Pengindahan taman tidak harus terhad kepada kawasan dalam pagar tetapi kawasan di pinggir jalan juga harus ditanam dengan pokok dan dihias dengan baik. Amatlah tidak menarik jika di luar pagar terdapat talang yang tinggi yang melindungi keindahan taman di dalam pagar. Mungkin ini adalah tugas majlis tempatan atau dewan perbandaran, tetapi mereka mungkin tidak mempunyai cukup tenaga dan kewangan untuk memotong rumput sekalipun. Dan tidak ramai yang sanggup bayar cukai yang lebih tinggi untuk menambah kakitangan dan khidmat pihak berkuasa tempatan.

Landskap yang cantik mencerminkan tahap kesenian yang tinggi. Dahulu kesenian ini tidak terlihat di Malaysia. Tetapi kecekapan seni landskap sudah meningkat dengan tingginya tahun demi tahun. Walaupun sudah ada ahli profesional yang berkelulusan dalam bidang landskap dan mereka pula mempunyai syarikat landskap yang dapat memberi khidmat yang baik, tetapi tiap seorang yang mempunyai kawasan di sekeliling yang tidak terlalu besar boleh membuat landskap sendiri. Percayalah mereka yang membuat landskap sendiri dan merawatnya sepanjang masa tidak dapat tidak akan meningkatkan kualiti dan keindahan hasil kerja mereka.

Keindahan alam sekeliling memberi ketenangan kepada jiwa

manusia. Ia juga boleh mendatangkan inspirasi yang boleh menghasilkan idea dan meningkatkan kreativiti atau pembentukan pemikiran yang unik dan istimewa yang mana ini bukan sahaja akan menyumbang kepada pencapaian diri sendiri tetapi juga masyarakat. Jiwa yang tenang di kalangan anggota masyarakat juga akan menjadi masyarakat lebih stabil dan lebih berdaya maju.

Atas kesedaran ini maka awal-awal lagi Kerajaan telah memberi perhatian kepada landskap dan pengindahan ibu kota pentadbiran kita yang baru, Putrajaya. Oleh kerana pembangunan Putrajaya dibuat di atas kawasan yang tidak mempunyai bangunan-bangunan yang lama, rekabentuk pelannya tidak terganggu. Dengan itu tumpuan boleh diberi sepenuhnya kepada segala aspek keindahan yang sesuai bukan sahaja untuk penghuni semasa tetapi untuk dekad-dekad, bahkan abad-abad yang akan datang.

Landskap menjadi unsur yang penting bagi pembangunan Putrajaya. Keadaan bukit-bukau dan lembah-lembah yang sedia ada telah dijadikan asas landskap bagi Putrajaya.

Biasanya pemaju akan meratakan bukit dan mengambus lembah-lembah antara bukit-bukit kecil ini. Lembah-lembah ini mengumpul air hujan yang dibawa melalui alur-alur kecil ke sungai yang akhirnya mengalir ke laut atau tasik. Apabila lembah kecil ini dikambus dengan tanah dari bukit untuk mengadakan tanah rata untuk perumahan, air akan menakung di hulu lembah di tanah jiran. Dengan ini air hujan akan bertakung dan apabila terlalu tinggi paras air akan melimpah semula ke kawasan yang telah diratakan. Kadang-kadang air yang menakung menggali saluran bawah tanah dan 'foundation' rumah di sekeliling terutama rumah bertingkat menjadi tidak kuat. Rumah boleh runtuh kerana tanah 'foundation' terhakis dengan teruknya.

Sepatutnya semasa membuat pelan pembangunan topografi kawasan bukan sahaja di tapak tetapi di kawasan sekeliling perlu diambil perhatian dan arah pengaliran air hujan ditentukan. Dalam pelan pembangunan air dari kawasan di luar kawasan hendaklah diberi

laluan supaya tidak ada takungan di kawasan jiran sama ada yang telah dibangun atau belum

Saya tidak faham kenapa kawasan pembangunan rumah perlu diratakan sehingga hilang bukan sahaja bukit kecil dan lembah tetapi juga alur-alur yang kecil yang membawa air semasa hujan. Tabiat membangunkan rumah berderet dan lurus amatlah tidak menarik. Sebaliknya rumah-rumah patut dibangun mengikut topografi asal walaupun ini akan meningkatkan kos kerana jumlah bangunan terpaksa dikurangkan dan 'foundation' yang dalam diperlukan. Saya percaya nilai rumah akan meningkat dan ini dapat menampung kekurangan pendapatan kerana jumlah rumah yang kurang.

Pengekalan bentuk topografi tanah yang sedia ada dengan sendirinya menjadikan landskap semulajadi. Arkitek dan jurutera kita harus tahu bagaimana membangunkan kawasan berbukit-bukau dan lembah tanpa meratakan kawasan dan mengekal pengaliran air semasa hujan.

Di Putrajaya pengaliran air dari lembah-lembah yang cantik diambilkira semasa membuat plan keseluruhannya. Terdapat lebih sepuluh buah sungai kecil, yang kering semasa tidak ada hujan, yang menuju ke arah lembah Putrajaya. 'Wetland' buatan diadakan untuk menapis air dari lembah dan alur supaya air di tasik menjadi bersih. Walaupun ini bermakna kawasan yang luas dikorbankan tetapi nilai tanah dan rumah meningkat dengan tingginya. Pendapatan daripada memajukan tanah tidaklah terhakis terlalu sangat. Sebenarnya harga tanah yang dibangun dengan cermat seperti ini meningkat hingga 2000 peratus. Namun rumah kos rendah masih boleh dibangun tanpa kerugian. Lagipun penjualan tanah mengambil masa yang panjang dan harga tanah tetap meningkat dengan sendirinya. Pemaju tidak akan rugi kerana memelihara keadaan alam semulajadi.

Pembangunan negara kita sudah sampai ke tahap yang memerlukan kita mengubah sedikit cara hidup kita. Persekitaran kita perlu mencerminkan tahap ini. Kita bukan sahaja perlu mengindahkan

kawasan sekeliling kita tetapi ia hendaklah setaraf dengan kemajuan yang telah kita capai. Ia juga akan membuktikan tahap tamadun kita.

Selain daripada keselesaan hidup, persekitaran yang indah kerana landskap dan pokok serta pokok bunga akan menjadi daya penarik kepada pelbagai kegiatan sosial dan ekonomi.

Pertumbuhan industri pelancongan juga banyak bergantung kepada keadaan landskap yang dapat diperlihatkan di setengah-setengah tempat. Para pelancong tertarik untuk melihat keadaan yang unik, indah dan bersih. Salah satu aspek pelancongan yang menarik pelancong antarabangsa dan tempatan adalah yang berkonsepkan mesra alam. Pemeliharaan landskap semulajadi dan kerosakan yang minima merupakan teras pembangunan kawasan pelancongan di masa hadapan. Pembangunan resort dan hotel di atas bukit tanpa perlu memotong dan meratakan bukit, pembangunan di atas tasik atau air tanpa mencemarkan keadaan asal merupakan cabaran yang perlu diambil oleh pengusaha-pengusaha tempatan untuk mengekalkan ciri-ciri landskap semulajadi yang kita miliki.

Kepentingan penanaman pokok tidak dapat dipisahkan daripada aktiviti landskap. Penanaman pokok perlu diteruskan oleh setiap lapisan masyarakat. Ini adalah kerana selain daripada berfungsi membekalkan oksigen dan menyerap karbon dioksida, penanaman pokok boleh menyumbangkan kepada corak perdagangan untuk negara dalam bentuk 'carbon credit'. Kajian mendapati setiap kawasan seluas 40 meter persegi yang ditanam dengan pokok rendang mampu menghasilkan oksigen untuk keperluan seorang manusia sehari. Ini bererti jika negara kita memberi tumpuan yang serius terhadap penanaman pokok, kita mampu menyumbang kepada bekalan oksigen untuk kegunaan negara maju di dunia yang menghadapi masalah pencemaran yang serius. Adalah menjadi harapan kerajaan setiap warganegara dapat menanam sekurang-kurangnya satu pokok seumur hidup. Dengan sebab itu kerajaan menyokong kempen menanam pokok untuk menghijaukan negara perlu diteruskan dengan sasaran 20 juta pokok sehingga tahun 2020.

Penjagaan dan penyelenggaraan kawasan yang telah dimajukan supaya sentiasa kemas, bersih dan berkualiti adalah tanggungjawab semua pihak. Selain daripada Kerajaan Persekutuan, pihak Kerajaan Negeri perlu memberi tumpuan untuk memelihara aset landskap semulajadi yang dimiliki di setiap negeri di samping memberi tumpuan kepada tahap penyelenggaraan yang berkualiti khususnya di bandar-bandar. Pembentukan bandaraya-bandaraya taman di seluruh negara akan menentukan kejayaan Malaysia menjadi Negara Taman menjelang tahun 2005.

Komitmen dan kesungguhan Kerajaan Negeri melaksanakan program landskap harus disokong dengan penyediaan peruntukan kewangan yang mencukupi, tenaga profesional yang terlatih, organisasi yang berkesan bagi pembangunan landskap di negeri masing-masing. Industri landskap tidak dapat berkembang jauh jika semata-mata bergantung kepada peruntukan Kerajaan Persekutuan dan inisiatif pihak swasta. Kerjasama daripada Kerajaan Negeri untuk menterjemahkan dasar pembentukan bandar taman dengan tahap penyelenggaraan dan taraf kebersihan yang tinggi adalah amat penting supaya rakyat keseluruhannya dapat menilai kepentingan landskap sebagai satu budaya masyarakat Malaysia di alaf ke-21.

Tugas mengindahkan negara haruslah dikongsi bersama di antara agensi kerajaan, swasta dan NGO. Dengan sokongan padu semua pihak sahajalah impian kita menjadikan Malaysia Negara Taman Tercantik di dunia menjelang tahun 2020 akan menjadi kenyataan.

Berpaksikan tema hari Landskap negara kali ini, iaitu 'Cintailah Landskap Kita', saya menyeru semua pihak yang terlibat di dalam pembangunan negara sama ada Kerajaan, swasta, ahli profesional, penggubal dasar dan pemaju perumahan untuk memberi keutamaan kepada pembangunan landskap serta pengekaln landskap semulajadi yang kita warisi kerana ia merupakan warisan yang akan kita tinggalkan untuk dinikmati oleh generasi akan datang.

Dengan ini saya dengan sukacitanya merasmikan Hari Landskap Negara

Tahun 2001 dengan tema "CINTAILAH LANDSKAP KITA".

Pelancaran oleh Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, Perdana Menteri Malaysia Sempena Hari Landskap Negara , 04 Mac 2001, Dataran Putra, Putra Jaya.

SAMBUTAN JUBLI PERAK KEMENTERIAN SAINS TEKNOLOGI DAN ALAM SEKITAR

Saya mengucapkan terima kasih kepada Yang Berhormat Menteri dan Kementerian Sains, Teknologi dan Alam Sekitar kerana menjemput saya untuk merasmikan Majlis Sambutan Jubli Perak Kementerian Sains pagi ini.

Peranan Kementerian ini kini menjadi semakin penting di alaf baru ini memandangkan bidang sains dan teknologi adalah pemangkin pembangunan negara. Demikian juga kesedaran akan pentingnya keadaan alam sekitar bagi kehidupan manusia. Sambutan Jubli Perak ini adalah tepat pada waktunya untuk kita mengimbas kembali kejayaan-kejayaan yang telah dicapai untuk membantu kita mempertingkatkan lagi usaha ke arah pencapaian wawasan negara.

Sumbangan sains dan teknologi ke arah perkembangan ekonomi tidak dapat dipertikaikan. Bangsa yang maju dalam bidang sains dan teknologi ialah bangsa yang bersifat ingin tahu atau 'curiosity' dan tidak ortodoks dan tradisional, iaitu tidak terikat dengan cara-cara lama sehingga tidak sanggup menerima cara-cara baru dalam membuat atau menangani sesuatu. Masyarakat tidak mungkin bergerak ke hadapan jika kita hanya mengulangi apa yang telah diamalkan oleh nenek moyang kita. Sebaliknya masyarakat yang ingin tahu dan ingin cuba yang baru akan sentiasa memeriksa dengan halus apa sahaja yang sedang dibuat untuk mencari jalan supaya bahan atau cara membuat sesuatu dapat diperbaiki lagi dan hasil yang lebih baik diperolehi.

Kemajuan bangsa yang maju berpunca kepada penyelidikan yang tidak berhenti-henti akan bahan atau cara sesuatu dilakukan untuk mendapat pengetahuan yang lebih mendalam. Daripada pengetahuan ini cara-cara baru yang lebih baik dan lebih produktif dapat dicipta. Cara yang baru ini terus diperbaharui sepanjang masa supaya menjadi lebih baik lagi atau lebih produktif lagi.

Demikian kain yang dipakai oleh manusia bermula dengan kulit binatang atau kulit kayu. Tetapi manusia yang berakal memikirkan berkenaan dengan anyaman benang yang diperbuat daripada jenis-jenis tumbuhan. Ini diikuti dengan menenun dengan menggunakan alat yang agak primitif. Kemudian kapas dipintal sehingga menjadi benang dan ditunen menjadi kain. Kemudian proses tenunan yang lebih canggih dicipta supaya kain kapas dapat ditunen dengan lebih cepat. Mesin tenun ditingkatkan kecanggihannya sepanjang masa supaya tenunan kain menjadi lebih cepat dan lebih berkualiti lagi. Bahan-bahan lain diguna untuk menambahkan jenis, warna dan 'design'. Ini menjadi penting kerana masyarakat manusia bertambah dengan banyaknya dan cara pengeluaran yang lebih besar perlu dicipta. Tanpa ciptaan cara-cara 'mass production' maka keperluan masyarakat tidak dapat dipenuhi.

Hari ini kita tidak fikir lagi tentang bekalan kain untuk kita. Bermacam-macam jenis kain dengan berwarna-warni dapat kita beli di kedai-kedai seberapa banyak yang kita kehendaki dengan harga yang murah. Tetapi kita harus ingat bahawa kemudahan ini bermula dengan cara yang begitu primitif. Orang yang suka mengkaji dan meneliti untuk mendapat ilmu pengetahuan dan kemudian mencipta cara-cara baru untuk mengeluarkan barangan yang semakin diperlukan oleh masyarakat manusia yang bertambah adalah orang yang kian maju dan berjaya serta kehidupan mereka menjadi lebih selesa. Sebaliknya masyarakat manusia yang terlalu kuat berpegang kepada cara-cara dan barangan lama akan menjadi mundur dan miskin.

Demikian juga dalam bidang telekomunikasi. Daripada hanya berkebolehan bercakap dengan jarak yang dekat sahaja, hari ini kita boleh berhubung dengan seorang di sebelah sana dunia, 12,000 batu, seolah-olah ia berada di hadapan kita. Pertumbuhan kecanggihan dalam bidang telekomunikasi amat mengagumkan dan ianya masih dimajukan lagi sehingga jarak seberapa jauh pun tidak menjadi masalah untuk kita berhubung, bercakap dan melihat rakan kita atau apa-apa juga.

Semua ini adalah hasil daripada budaya yang menekankan ilmu pengetahuan, 'curiosity' atau sifat ingin tahu, dan sikap tidak puas hati dengan apa yang sedia ada tetapi sebaliknya ingin memperbaiki lagi apa sahaja barangan atau kemudahan yang sedang digunakan. Bangsa yang mempunyai sikap dan budaya ini, yang suka memeriksa dan mengkaji semua kurniaan Tuhan, bangsa ini tetap akan maju. Justeru itu, kita bangsa Malaysia mestilah menerapkan budaya ini supaya kita juga akan maju dan tidak hanya bergantung kepada hasil penyelidikan dan ciptaan orang lain.

Saya amat berbangga dengan kejayaan rakyat Malaysia merekacipta berbagai-bagai jenis alatan dan barangan yang telah pun memenangi anugerah kecemerlangan dalam pertandingan Geneva International Inventions Exhibition. Saya yakin jika sikap ingin tahu dan kesanggupan untuk memperbaiki lagi tiap sesuatu yang ada pada kita, atau mencipta barangan atau alat yang baru, bangsa Malaysia tidak akan ketinggalan dalam bidang merekacipta barangan dan khidmat yang baru dan canggih yang akan menjadikan kehidupan kita lebih selesa dan bahagia. Saya yakin kebolehan rakyat Malaysia merekacipta akan meningkat sepanjang masa dan kita juga akan dapat menyumbang kepada jumlah kecanggihan yang diperlihatkan di dunia.

Hari ini 'research' dan 'development' atau penyelidikan dan pembangunan berjalan dengan lebih pesat dari dahulu. Kadang-kadang kita dapati sesuatu yang baru akan menjadi usang dalam jangka masa yang pendek sahaja. 'Shelf-life' sesuatu ciptaan baru mungkin hanya beberapa bulan sahaja. Justeru itu, kita tidak boleh berhenti kajian dan ciptaan yang dibuat oleh kita kerana produk kita mungkin menjadi usang dalam jangka masa yang pendek dan tidak diterima lagi. Kita tidak harus kecewa dengan ini tetapi sebaliknya kita hendaklah menganggap ini sebagai cabaran dan kita mempertingkatkan lagi proses penyelidikan dan pembangunan yang kita buat.

Kerajaan amat menghargai kesanggupan rakyat Malaysia mencipta barangan-barangan yang lebih canggih sepanjang masa. Bantuan

dalam bidang 'research' dan 'development' sudah pun diadakan. Mereka yang berminat dan menunjukkan kebolehan mereka akan dibantu oleh Kerajaan. Yang harus diingat ialah kecekapan merekacipta sesuatu tidak bermakna kita memiliki kecekapan untuk memasarkan hasil rekacipta kita. 'Commercialisation' memerlukan kecekapan dalam bidang lain, iaitu bidang pengurusan perniagaan. Justeru itu, perekacipta atau 'inventors' hendaklah cuba mencari pihak yang berkebolehan dalam bidang perusahaan dan pemasaran. Kita tahu hari ini banyaklah hasil penyelidikan yang dibuat oleh rakyat Malaysia dan institusi-institusi seperti MARDI umpamanya yang tidak dapat dipasarkan. Tetapi ini tidak harus mengecewakan kita. Sebaliknya usaha perlu diteruskan untuk memperbaiki lagi hasil rekacipta kita.

Satu lagi perkara yang menjadi amat penting bagi kesejahteraan hidup manusia ialah kebersihan alam sekitar. Di waktu penduduk setempat tidak ramai, pencemaran yang dibuat oleh bilangan yang kecil ini tidak menimbulkan banyak masalah. Tetapi hari ini penduduk sudah bertambah di seluruh dunia sehingga sedikit pencemaran oleh tiap seorang akan menjadi masalah yang besar kepada masyarakat. Demikian daripada sedikit sampah yang dibuang oleh seseorang anggota masyarakat, beribu tan sampah mencemarkan alam sekeliling kita. Perbelanjaan yang banyak diperlukan untuk menangani sampah-sarap yang dihasilkan daripada segala kegiatan harian masyarakat bandar umpamanya. Masyarakat yang tidak berusaha mengurangkan sampah yang dihasilkan akan menghadapi masalah besar daripada persekitaran yang bukan sahaja tidak selesa tetapi juga tidak sihat.

Pengekalan alam sekitar yang semulajadi, terutama pokok-pokok hutan menjadi cabaran kepada masyarakat manusia. Sementara pertambahan yang tinggi bilangan anggota masyarakat memerlukan kawasan perumahan, perusahaan dan perniagaan yang lebih luas, kawasan-kawasan dengan pertumbuhan sedia ada seperti hutan perlu dikekalkan. Jika kita ingin alam sekitar semulajadi dikekalkan dan tidak terus dimusnahkan, pengurusan pembangunan untuk

masyarakat yang kian membesar mestilah diurus dengan bijak. Jika tidak kita akan hilang sama sekali hutan dan 'biodiversity' kita buat selama-lamanya.

Dalam pada itu segala pencemaran perlu diawasi dan ditangani supaya kualiti alam tidak menjadi terlalu buruk sehingga menjadi kehidupan kita tidak sihat. Demikian pelupusan sampah perlu dibuat dengan berhati-hati. Membakar sampah secara terbuka tetap akan mencemarkan udara dan mengganggu kesihatan dan kualiti hidup kita.

Malaysia adalah negara membangun yang terawal menubuhkan Kementerian Alam Sekitar. Dua puluh lima tahun dahulu semasa alam sekitar tidak begitu diutamakan di negara-negara membangun kita sudah pun sedar akan pentingnya pemeliharaan alam sekitar. Kualiti hidup telah pun diberi keutamaan oleh Kerajaan dan peruntukan yang semakin bertambah telah dibuat. Namun kita sering dituduh tidak prihatin akan keadaan alam sekeliling kita. Sebenarnya kita begitu sedar akan masalah persekitaran sehingga kita mengawal hutan kita dengan rapi.

Hutan adalah punca kekayaan bagi negara kita. Dan kita bukanlah negara yang kaya. Kita perlu mengeluarkan hasil hutan terutama balak untuk membangunkan ekonomi negara kita dan juga untuk ruang bagi penduduk negara kita yang semakin bertambah. Kita juga perlu kawasan hutan untuk takungan air bagi menjana kuasa elektrik dan untuk pertanian. Kita tidak boleh ikut desakan orang asing terutama NGO mereka yang mahukan kita kekalkan hutan kita sebagai 'carbon sink' mereka, untuk menyerap karbon dioksida yang dikeluarkan dengan banyaknya oleh mereka, tanpa mengambilkira keperluan kehidupan rakyat kita. Sementara kita perlu menyelamatkan hutan kita, hasil dari hutan hendaklah kita keluarkan dengan cermat di samping kawasan yang berpatutan dibersihkan untuk keperluan hidup kita.

Kita berhak mendapat hasil dari hutan kita secara yang tersusun. Sementara negara yang kaya telah memusnahkan hutan mereka,

adalah tidak adil bagi mereka memaksa kita mengurangkan pendapatan kita supaya kehidupan mereka menjadi selesa. Rakyat Malaysia dan NGO Malaysia janganlah terbawa-bawa dengan kononnya keperhatian terhadap alam sekitar sehingga memaksa kita mengorbankan kepentingan ekonomi kita untuk keselesaan hidup orang yang sudah kaya.

Hari ini hutan kita adalah antara hutan-hutan yang tertua dalam dunia dan mempunyai banyak potensi untuk industri berasas kepada 'genome' tumbuh-tumbuhan dan kehidupan lain yang berada dalam hutan kita. Potensi untuk industri berasas kepada 'genome' amatlah besar dan boleh menghasilkan kekayaan bagi negara kita. Untuk ini kita perlu kawal kekayaan hutan kita supaya tidak ada sesiapa yang membawa keluar tumbuh-tumbuhan dan kehidupan lain dari hutan kita untuk dibuat kajian bagi mendapatkan hasil yang lumayan bagi mereka. Sebaliknya kita perlu bekerjasama dengan penyelidik dari negara lain untuk mengutip dan menyimpan segala data dan 'sample' berkenaan dengan 'genome' yang terdapat di negara kita. Saya yakin dengan kekayaan jumlah 'genome' kita, banyaklah industri bioteknologi akan dapat dihasilkan.

Sebab itu Kerajaan telah bersetuju untuk mengadakan Lembah Biotek dalam Koridor Raya Multimedia (MSC). Ia akan dapat menaikkan lagi potensi pembangunan MSC. Usaha akan dibuat untuk mengumpul data dan menyusunnya supaya kaji selidik dapat dibuat berkenaan 'genome' yang boleh menghasilkan berbagai-bagai jenis perubatan dan sebagainya. Adalah diharapkan para saintis Malaysia akan melibatkan diri secara serius dalam bidang bioteknologi yang dipercayai boleh menyumbang kepada pembangunan industri yang canggih yang akan membantu pertumbuhan ekonomi negara.

Daripada apa yang telah saya sebutkan adalah jelas bahawa Kementerian Sains, Teknologi dan Alam Sekitar akan memainkan peranan yang semakin penting dalam pembangunan negara kita. Pegawai-pegawai Kementerian hendaklah memiliki sikap yang positif

terhadap tugas dan tanggungjawab mereka. Mereka perlu memberi kerjasama yang erat kepada saintis-saintis kita, terutama mereka yang membuat kajian dan cuba mencipta sesuatu yang berguna hasil daripada kajian mereka.

Kementerian telah diberi tugas mengurus dana untuk membuat kajian dan pembangunan dan pegawai-pegawai Kementerian perlu bersikap positif terhadap permohonan daripada saintis yang membuat kajian dan pembangunan. Memang pun sukar untuk menilai idea dan tujuan kajian yang hendak dibuat. Mungkin kebanyakan daripada kajian ini tidak akan membawa apa-apa hasil. Mungkin peruntukan ternampak sebagai satu pembaziran. Tetapi amatlah sukar untuk penyelidik menerangkan kajian yang ingin dibuat olehnya dan hasil yang diharapkan. Saya percaya kebanyakan daripada kajian tidak akan mendatangkan apa-apa hasil. Tetapi apabila terdapat kajian yang mendatangkan hasil yang baik, pulangan daripada sumbangan wang daripada dana amatlah besar. Justeru itu dana untuk kaji selidik dan pembangunan hendaklah diurus dengan lebih bersimpati kepada saintis-saintis yang melakukan penyelidikan.

Saya telah menggariskan secara ringkas tanggungjawab dan peranan Kementerian Sains, Teknologi dan Alam Sekitar sejak penubuhannya 25 tahun yang lalu dan sebahagian daripada faktor-faktor utama yang kritikal untuk negara ini terus maju dalam ekonomi yang berasaskan pengetahuan. Faktor-faktor ini merangkumi pembangunan sumber manusia, menggalakkan inovasi, sensitif kepada keperluan masyarakat dan pemeliharaan serta perlindungan alam sekitar. Kejayaan kita akan memperkukuhkan lagi pembangunan negara dalam menghadapi cabaran masa hadapan. Tidak ada rumusan ajaib untuk berjaya kecuali menghadapi cabaran-cabaran ini dengan keyakinan tinggi bahawa kita boleh melaksanakannya. Saya penuh yakin Kementerian Sains, Teknologi dan Alam Sekitar akan terus menyumbang ke arah menjadikan Malaysia sebuah pusat kecemerlangan sains dan teknologi di samping mempunyai alam sekitar yang bersih, selamat, indah dan produktif sesuai dengan aspirasi Wawasan 2020.

Dengan ini, saya dengan sukacitanya merasmikan Majlis Sambutan Jubli Perak Kementerian Sains, Teknologi dan Alam Sekitar.

Perasmian oleh Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, Perdana Menteri Malaysia Sempena Kementerian Sains Teknologi Dan Alam Sekitar, 02 July 2001, Pusat Dagangan Dunia Putra, Kuala Lumpur

SAMBUTAN ULANG TAHUN KE-100 JABATAN PERHUTANAN SEMENANJUNG MALAYSIA

BISMILLAHIRAHMANIRAHIM

Saya ucapkan terima kasih kepada pihak Jabatan Perhutanan Semenanjung Malaysia (JPSM) kerana telah sudi menjemput saya untuk merasmikan Sambutan Ulang Tahun Ke-100 Jabatan Perhutanan Semenanjung Malaysia pada malam yang penuh gemilang ini. Saya juga ingin mengucapkan tahniah dan syabas kepada seluruh warga Jabatan Perhutanan di atas segala sumbangan dan jasa bakti dalam mengurus, memelihara dan membangunkan khazanah hutan sepanjang 100 tahun yang lalu.

Sambutan ini tiba di tengah-tengah kerancakan arus globalisasi yang merubah corak sosio-ekonomi dunia. Sambutan ini juga membolehkan kita mengimbas kejayaan, cabaran dan kelemahan yang lepas bagi mengatur langkah serta menyusun strategi dalam meningkatkan dan memperkemaskan lagi keberkesanan pengurusan sumber hutan negara. Sambutan ini juga perlu dilihat dari perspektif kesedaran yang meningkat terhadap betapa pentingnya sumber hutan dalam menstabilkan alam sekitar dan menyumbang pelbagai keperluan demi kesejahteraan hidup.

Saya sendiri melihat sambutan ini sebagai satu kempen pendidikan dan kesedaran dalam menggariskan pengalaman negara muda memulihara khazanah hutan yang tua serta amat berbagai dan bernilai. Sambutan ini diharap meningkatkan lagi kefahaman kepada mereka yang hanya mengikuti perkembangan perhutanan dari jauh.

Malaysia tidak pernah alpa dalam melaksanakan tanggungjawabnya untuk menguruskan sumber hutan secara berkekalan. Kita masih mengekalkan ciri kehijauan walaupun telah menyaksikan pertumbuhan ekonomi yang sangat pesat dalam masa yang begitu singkat. Namun, jumlah kawasan hutan kita masih melebihi enam puluh peratus dari keluasan tanah. Apabila di ambilkira tanaman getah, kelapa sawit

dan koko, litupan hijau atau 'green cover' negara meningkat sehingga melebihi tujuh puluh lima peratus.

Mengikut statistik, penubuhan kawasan Hutan Simpanan Kekal di Semenanjung Malaysia telah meningkat dari 3.2 juta hektar pada tahun 1958 sehingga 4.85 juta hektar pada masa ini. Jika diambilkira keluasan di Sabah dan Sarawak, jumlah keluasan hutan simpanan kekal adalah seluas sebanyak 14.45 juta hektar. Ianya adalah hasil kerjasama padu di antara Kerajaan Persekutuan dan Kerajaan-Kerajaan Negeri. Tambahan kepada keluasan ini, terdapat seluas 2.12 juta hektar lagi kawasan yang turut diwartakan sebagai kawasan perlindungan yang terdiri daripada Taman Negara, Rizab Hidupan Liar dan Taman Negeri. Dalam masa yang sama, kita juga telah menghijaukan bandar-bandar, kawasan-kawasan perumahan serta juga di kiri kanan jalanraya.

Walaupun kita berada dalam alaf ke 21, isu-isu mengenai perhutanan masih dan terus akan hangat dibincangkan di forum-forum antarabangsa. Sehubungan ini, kita perlu menyedari bahawa pemeliharaan hutan dalam memastikan kestabilan alam sekitar dan kepelbagaian hayat, merupakan tanggungjawab bersama oleh negara-negara maju dan negara membangun. Walaupun usaha-usaha diambil oleh kalangan negara-negara selatan, termasuk Malaysia, dalam menangani isu-isu mengenai hutan secara seimbang, bijaksana dan bersepadu; pandangan yang tidak adil masih terus difokuskan kepada hutan tropika masih terus dibebani dengan pelbagai syarat. Pada masa yang sama tekanan kepada keperluan 'Eco-Labeling' dan pensijilan kayu tropika terus meningkat. Pendekatan ini adalah tidak seimbang dan tidak adil jika mengambilkira perdagangan kayu tropika yang kecil berbanding dengan jumlah keseluruhan perdagangan kayu dunia. Tambahan pula faktor-faktor yang menyumbang kepada peningkatan suhu dunia dan pencemaran alam sekitar bukan hanya disebabkan oleh aktiviti penebangan hutan, tetapi juga disebabkan oleh aktiviti-aktiviti yang dilaksanakan oleh negara-negara utara serta peningkatan suhu dunia keseluruhanya.

Hutan, sama ada ianya tropika, 'temperate' (sederhana) atau 'boreal' adalah merupakan warisan kepada kehidupan sejagat. Sehubungan dengan

itu, ianya mestilah diurus dengan mampan dengan pengawasan yang teliti. Ianya juga juga perlu diurus secara mampan berdasarkan kepada kriteria dan petunjuk yang ditetapkan. Kita sedar bahawa penebangan hutan bukanlah berdasarkan kepada kepentingan perdagangan semata-mata, memandangkan faktor sosial dan bukan-ekonomi turut menyumbang kepada keadaan ini. Kita juga harus ingat bahawa penebangan hutan tidak hanya berlaku di negara-negara tropika, malahan turut meliputi negara-negara hutan 'temperate' dan 'boreal'. Sehubungan dengan itu, dalam menangani isu-isu mengenai perhutanan, negara-negara maju perlu mengambil tanggungjawab bersama dengan memenuhi komitmen pemberian bantuan kewangan dan teknologi yang telah dijanjikan kepada negara-negara membangun. Pendekatan yang lebih seimbang serta kesediaan mengambil tanggungjawab bersama oleh negara maju dan negara membangun, adalah perlu supaya isu-isu mengenai perhutanan dapat ditangani dengan sebaik mungkin.

Malangnya terdapat pihak-pihak tertentu, termasuk NGO asing yang sentiasa mendesak supaya hutan kita dikekalkan sepenuhnya sebagai 'carbon sink' bagi menyerap karbon dioksida yang dicurahkan ke atmosfera oleh negara-negara maju. Tekanan berupa kempen besar-besaran terhadap sumber hutan tropika menjadi satu amalan hidup mereka. Mereka boikot dan kecam sumber hutan tropika serta mengenakan pelbagai syarat baru bagi tujuan menghalang pengeksportan produk kayu-kayan tropika. Pendirian Malaysia ialah memanfaatkan hasil perhutanan secara berkekalan dan 'sustainable' bagi menyumbang kepada pertumbuhan ekonomi serta meningkatkan taraf hidup rakyat. Kita juga peka tentang pentingnya peranan hutan kepada alam sekitar dan ekosistem. Industri perhutanan di Malaysia misalnya, berkembang dengan begitu pesat. Ia memberi pekerjaan kepada lebih kurang 250,000 orang dan dengan itu juga memberi perlindungan dan nafkah kepada kira-kira 1 juta rakyat jika di ambilkira ahli keluarga mereka. Bagi tahun 2000 sahaja, jumlah eksport barangan berasas kayu telah mencapai RM17.7 billion. Ini merupakan lima peratus daripada pendapatan eksport negara. Tentulah amat tidak adil sekiranya kita dipaksa menghentikan sahaja satu industri yang begitu besar dalam masa sumber hutan negara diurus dengan begitu teliti.

Selain daripada sumbangannya ke atas sektor ekonomi, hutan juga memainkan peranan yang sukar dinilai dengan wang ringgit. Penghasilan sumber air bersih yang penting dalam menjamin kelangsungan kehidupan diperolehi dari kawasan hutan. Hutan juga memainkan peranan penting dalam mengimbangi kestabilan ekosistem. Hutan kita adalah merupakan antara yang tertua serta paling kompleks di dunia serta amat kaya dengan 'biodiversity' yang terdiri dari pelbagai spesies flora dan fauna. Justeru itu, wujud potensi yang besar dalam industri bioteknologi berasaskan kepada sumber genetik flora dan fauna. Untuk ini, kita perlu menggembelng tenaga dan kepakaran di kalangan para penyelidik tempatan untuk menghasilkan pelbagai produk yang boleh dikomersilkan untuk manfaat masyarakat sejagat. Sebagai contoh, terdapat spesies tumbuhan yang dikenali sebagai *Calophyllum lanigerum* (Bintangor) yang mana ekstraknya mempunyai komponen-komponen aktif yang berpotensi sebagai penawar kepada penyakit Sindrom Kurang Daya Tahan (AIDS). Spesies istimewa ini wujud di hutan kita iaitu di Sabah, Sarawak dan juga di beberapa buah negeri di Semenanjung Malaysia. Dengan kekayaan sumber genetik negara saya amat pasti potensi industri bioteknologi akan berkembang maju serta mampu menjanakan pendapatan lumayan kepada negara.

Desakan arus globalisasi membawa cabaran baru menuntut kita menguasai bidang-bidang baru, kepakaran baru dan terus menambah ilmu dan pengetahuan. Usaha-usaha ini perlu dibuat berterusan demi untuk menghadapi cabaran serta persaingan di masa akan datang. Kita bertanggungjawab membangkitkan kesedaran dan minat semua pihak semua pihak yang terlibat. Pada hemat saya bidang perhutanan merangkumi skop yang amat luas yang perlu diterokai oleh semua warga perhutanan bagi menghadapi cabaran yang mendatang. Oleh yang demikian kita perlulah menerokai bidang-bidang baru bagi melahirkan para pengurus hutan yang serba berkebolehan. Hanya dengan berbekalkan ilmu pengetahuan yang cukup barulah kita mampu mengurus sumber hutan negara dengan lebih cekap dan berkesan. Kita amat memerlukan tenaga kerja yang meminati profesyen mereka, yang sanggup bekerja keras, rajin membaca, inovatif dan yang yakin kepada kebolehan masing-masing.

Negara telah menguruskan sumber hutan dengan cekap, berhemat dan bertanggungjawab. Kita sedar kita memerlukan hasil hutan bagi menjana pertumbuhan ekonomi, kita sedar peri pentingnya mengurus sumber hutan secara berkekalan bagi memenuhi kehendak serta keperluan dan tuntutan generasi masa kini dan akan datang. Justeru, kita perlu memperhebatkan kempen-kempen penerangan di dalam dan di luar negara bagi meningkatkan kesedaran dan mengatasi masalah tanggapan negatif. Tanggapan negatif ini merupakan gejala zaman globalisasi dan teknologi maklumat yang perlu ditangani bersama. Tulisan-tulisan serta hujah-hujah bernas perlu dikumpul dan disebar seluas-luasnya. Kita juga memerlukan bahan rujukan yang lebih berkesan serta telus. Ini termasuklah menggunakan internet dalam memberi penerangan ke seluruh dunia. Saya suka mengingatkan, dalam era dunia tanpa sempadan dan kemunculan teknologi maklumat dan komunikasi yang serba canggih, kita tidak sepatutnya tertumpu kepada persoalan dan isu yang bersifat tempatan sahaja tetapi juga bersifat sejagat atau global. Wujudnya prasarana teknologi maklumat yang semakin canggih telah memberi satu dimensi baru dalam mengurus sumber hutan negara.

Dalam konteks ini, setiap warga perhutanan perlu sensitif dan responsif terhadap perubahan-perubahan ini. Ianya menuntut kepada anjakan paradigma setiap anggota supaya lebih bersedia dan melengkapkan diri bagi menghadapi era globalisasi yang sangat mencabar ini. Saya difahamkan semasa darurat para pegawai hutan di waktu itu tidak hanya berpeluk tubuh. Komitmen kakitangan Jabatan terhadap tugas tetap tinggi walaupun terpaksa menggadai nyawa sendiri. Mereka telah menghadapi cabaran tersebut dengan hati yang cekal dan tabah sehingga dapat melaksanakan tugas yang diamanahkan. Malahan terdapat ramai juga di kalangan mereka telah turut terkorban semasa menjalankan tugas. Sikap seperti inilah yang perlu dicontohi oleh kita semua. Oleh itu, kita harus sentiasa berusaha melaksanakan perubahan dalam mencapai kemajuan melalui kesanggupan berfikir secara berani, terbuka dan luas serta berani pula mengubah tradisi lapuk sekiranya perlu.

Saya yakin rakyat Malaysia yang semakin berilmu serta berpengetahuan bakal membantu usaha memberi penerangan serta

memperkuatkan hujah negara-negara pengeluar hasil hutan tropika. Rakyat Malaysia telah menikmati tahap ekonomi dan kehidupan yang lebih baik di samping persekitaran alam semulajadi yang bersih dan menarik. Kita haruslah bersyukur di atas kurniaan ini. Warisan yang menjadi kebanggaan ini perlu dihebah dan dipromosikan seluas-luasnya. Eko-pelancongan merupakan sumber pendapatan baru, begitu juga melalui kem-kem pendidikan untuk pelajar Malaysia dan pelajar-pelajar dari negara lain. Warisan hutan kita merupakan gedung ilmu yang tidak ternilai harganya.

Akhir sekali saya mengucapkan tahniah dan syabas kepada segenap warga perhutanan yang telah sama-sama memelihara dan mengurus khazanah hutan negara. Perjuangan mengekal dan memperkayakan sumber hutan merupakan tanggungjawab bersama yang perlu dipikul oleh segenap lapisan rakyat, NGO, media dan pemimpin masyarakat serta pendidik. Usaha murni ini perlulah terus diterajui oleh Jabatan Perhutanan. Pemilihan tema sambutan **Warisan Hutan Kekal Berzaman** amat tepat sekali memandangkan sumber hutan adalah merupakan khazanah negara yang perlu dipelihara untuk selama-lamanya demi kesejahteraan rakyat.

Dengan lafaz **Bismillahirrahmanirahim** saya dengan segala sukacitanya merasmikan Majlis Sambutan Ulang Tahun Ke-100 Jabatan Perhutanan Semenanjung Malaysia.

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Ucapan Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, Perdana Menteri Malaysia Sempena Sambutan Ulang Tahun Ke-100 Jabatan Perhutanan Semenanjung Malaysia, 17 Oktober 2001, Mandarin Oriental, Kuala Lumpur telah disampaikan oleh Dato' Seri Abdullah bin Ahmad Badawi Timbalan Perdana Menteri Malaysia.