

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

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SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR LAW AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
MR. E. W. BARKER, AT THE WORKING PARTY MEETING ON THE
SOUTHEAST ASIAN FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT CENTRE - 31ST
JULY TO 5TH AUGUST, 1967

First I would like to welcome all delegates to this Meeting of the Working Party on the establishment of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre. We are honoured that Singapore has been chosen as the venue for this Meeting, and hope that during the next few days will not only achieve success in your deliberations but also see a little of our country and enjoy your stay here.

This Meeting is the outcome of the Second Ministerial Conference on the Economic Development of Southeast Asia held in Manila in April this year. The theme of that Conference was regional co-operation and to-day, a further step is being taken in that direction, as representatives of Southeast Asian countries meet to discuss the establishment of a regional institution - the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre.

Singapore has always subscribed to the concept of regional co-operation. We realize that rapid development in Southeast Asia can best be achieved through close co-operation and mutual understanding among the countries in this region. We are aware that our economic prosperity is intimately linked with the economic well-being of our neighbours. Modern sciences and technology have become so complex and sophisticated that it is difficult for any country, especially a developing country, to achieve much economic progress all on its own.

The region of Southeast Asia possesses abundant natural resources but full use has not been made of these resources. However, economic development in the region can be accelerated by countries acting together to modernise and expand their economies and through sympathetic aid and assistance from the more advanced and affluent countries.

Singapore has hardly any natural resources but is fortunate to be in a strategic position at the cross-roads of Southeast Asia. Our geographical position has helped to make our port become the fifth largest in the world. Being an island nation, we naturally look to the sea to provide additional sources of employment and income for our people. In recent years the Government has embarked on a programme to promote marine industries and to encourage young people to take up careers at sea.

In the field of fisheries, various steps are now being taken to provide the necessary infrastructure to accelerate the development of the industry, especially in the direction of offshore and deep-sea fishing. All aspects of the industry are now being looked into: these include the training of a new generation of modern fishermen, re-training of existing fisherman, development of a fishing fleet, provision of fishing port facilities, improvement in fish marketing and the establishment of secondary fishing industries.

As regards fisheries research, Singapore has offered facilities for the site of the Research Department of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre. This Centre will be the subject of your deliberations during the next few days, and we hope that with its establishment, all countries in this region will benefit from it through co-operation.

As you all know, it was the Japanese Government which organised this Meeting and took the initiative with regard to the proposed Regional Fisheries Centre. Through hard work, enterprise and long experience Japan has today a highly developed fishing industry and a large fishing fleet which uses highly modern techniques of fishing. Such techniques and knowledge from the Japanese can now be imparted to other countries in the region through the medium of this Centre. I am sure that all of you will join me in saying a big "Thank You" to the Japanese Government and its people.

JULY 31, 1967.

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