

The “Spender Plan” for Africa (A Colombo Plan Type Initiative)
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The United Nations Millennium General Assembly 2000, adopted the UN Millennium Declaration, committing member nations to alleviate poverty, improve health and environmental sustainability through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Sub-Saharan Africa has been identified as the region of the greatest needs and indigenous human resources professional and sub-professional capacity building as the foundation for satisfying the needs.

The author as Co-Chair of the UN Millennium Project Science, Technology and Innovation Task Force has vigorously advocated a Colombo Plan type initiative for Africa, as the Colombo Plan played an important role in supporting the human resources development of Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. The Colombo Plan also contributed significantly to the stable administrative transition from colonial rule in Southeast Asia.

The Colombo Plan was the great initiative of Sir Percy Spender, the Australian Foreign Minister. He fought against the strong opposition from Great Britain to get the Colombo Plan accepted as a Commonwealth programme.

The paper will outline a proposal for the Spender Plan for Africa, led by Australia and supported by beneficiary nations of the Colombo Plan in South Asia and South East Asia.

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Academician Dato’ Ir. Lee Yee Cheong, 70, is Malaysian. He studied in the University of Adelaide under the Colombo Plan, graduating with the degree of B.E.(Electrical) with first class Honours in 1961.

He served with the National Electricity Board Malaysia until 1980. He then joined Tenaga Ewbank Preece (M) Sdn Bhd as a Director and then Managing Director. He eventually became a partner in the U.K. holding company, Ewbank Preece, overseeing its Far East operations. He retired from professional practice in 2002.

He is a director of UMW Holdings Berhad, a commissioner of the Energy Commission of Malaysia and an advisor to the Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation Malaysia. Academician Dato’ Ir. Lee was, at various times, President, the Institution of Engineers Malaysia (IEM), Chairman and currently Honorary President of Commonwealth Engineers Council (CEC) and President of the ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organizations (AFEO). He is an Honorary Fellow of IEM, the Institution of Electrical Engineers, UK, the Institution of Civil Engineers, UK, the Institution of Engineers, Australia and the Institution of Engineers, Mauritius; and a Fellow of the Institution of Engineers Singapore.

He is the patron of the International Young Professionals Foundation and member of the International Advisory Board of "Engineers Without Borders", Canada; and a member of the Board of Trustees of Engineers Against Poverty, U.K. He is a member of the National Economic and Social Council Kenya, chaired by the President of Kenya.

He was the President 2003-2005 of the World Federation of Engineering Organisations and the Co-Chair of Task Force "Science, Technology and Innovation" of the UN Millennium Project, 2002-2005. He is a member of the Senior Advisor Panel of the UN Global Alliance for ICT and Development (UN G@ID) and a member of the Commission on Education for International Development Professionals of the Earth Institute, Columbia University.

Academician Dato' Ir. Lee was a Senior Fellow of the Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM); a founding member (2001-05) of the Board of the Inter-Academy Council of World Science Academies; and a member of the Academic Council of the World Economic Forum, Davos. He is the founder president of the ASEAN Academy of Engineering and Technology (AAET); a Foreign Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering; and a Corresponding Member of the Pan-American Academy of Engineering.

Academician Dato' Ir. Lee was conferred the Malaysian state awards of DPMP and KMN for services to engineering. He was conferred the Honorary Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for his efforts in strengthening people-to-people relations between Malaysia and Australia.
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