



**COMMONWEALTH FINANCE MINISTERS MEETING  
( C F M M )  
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KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA**

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Ⓟ Profile

**CURRICULUM VITAE  
THE HON. DATO' SERI DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD  
PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA**

Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad became the fourth Prime Minister of Malaysia on 16 July 1981.

Dr. Mahathir was born on 20 December 1925, in Alor Setar, a town in the north of Peninsular Malaysia. He had his early and secondary education in his home town. In 1947 he attended the King Edward VII College of Medicine in Singapore where he subsequently graduated in medicine.

On completion of his housemanship in 1954, he served with the government as a Medical Officer. However he left government service in 1957 to set up his own practice in Alor Setar.

He became active in politics in 1945 and has been a member of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) since its inception in 1946. As Candidate in the 1964 general elections, he won the Kota Setar Selatan parliamentary seat but lost it in the subsequent general elections of 1969.

He was appointed Senator in 1973 but relinquished this post in order to contest the 1974 general elections for the Kubang Pasu parliamentary constituency, which returned him unopposed. Subsequently, he was appointed Minister of Education in 1974.

His keen interest in the country's education made him Chairman of the first Higher Council Education in 1968, Member of the Higher Education Advisory Council in 1972, Member of the University Court and University of Malaya Council, and Chairman of the National University Council in 1974.

Dr. Mahathir was elected as one of the three Vice-Presidents of UMNO in 1975. In 1978 he was elected the party's Deputy President and in 1981 as President.

Dr. Mahathir was appointed the Deputy Prime Minister in 1976 while retaining the Ministry of Education portfolio. He moved from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry

of Trade and industry following a cabinet reshuffle in January 1978. As Minister of Trade and Industry, the post which he retained on his return to Parliament after the July 1978 general elections, he led several investment promotion missions to Europe, the United States, and other countries.

Dr. Mahathir is married to a doctor, Datin Seri Dr. Siti Hasmah, and has four sons and three daughters.

## **Domestic Policy**

Domestically, Dr. Mahathir has pursued an aggressive policy of economic development and industrialisation. Under his leadership Malaysia has made bold advances in heavy industries including steel and the production of motor vehicles. The Malaysian-made car - the Proton Saga - is exported to several countries including the United Kingdom where it has won several international awards. Manufacturing now contributes nearly 27% of GDP. With manufacturing exports projected to account for about 81% of total exports by the year 2000, Malaysia is fast on the way to becoming an industrial-oriented economy.

In early 1991, Dr. Mahathir unveiled a bold new strategy-Vision 2020-that aims to make Malaysia a developed nation by the year 2020.

Under the impact of these policies, Malaysians now enjoy a per capita income of approximately US\$ 2,300, one of the highest in Asia, a literacy rate above 80%, universal primary and secondary education and a national health service.

Dr. Mahathir has also strengthened Malaysia's unique system of multiracial cooperation that has resulted in a united peaceful and stable multiracial, multi-religious society of 17 million people. Dr. Mahathir heads a coalition of 12 parties under the National Front.

## **Foreign Policy**

Dr. Mahathir has been very active in foreign affairs and since assuming office in 1981 has charted a new course for Malaysia's foreign policy. He has placed special emphasis on promoting economic cooperation particularly among developing countries. In pursuit of these objectives, Dr. Mahathir has made several visits to Africa, Latin America and Asia. He was also instrumental in initiating the meeting of Heads of State/Government of the Summit Level Group for South-South Consultation and Cooperation (G-15) which held its first meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 1990 under his chairmanship.

Consistent with its commitment to South-South cooperation, the Malaysian Government under Dr. Mahathir leadership also instituted a small technical cooperation program (known as the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Program or MTCP) to provide Technical assistance to developing countries. 61 countries now benefit from MTCP projects.

Nearer home, Dr. Mahathir is a strong proponent of economic cooperation between Malaysia and its neighbours within the context of ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations which comprises Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand). ASEAN remains the corner-stone of Malaysia's foreign policy.

To further promote economic consultation and cooperation in the wider East Asian region, Dr. Mahathir has called for the formation of an East Asia Economic Grouping (EAEG). The EAEG is intended to be a forum for East Asian countries to defend the free trading system and enhance international trade and economic cooperation. The EAEG proposal is currently being studied by ASEAN.

The Malaysian Government has also been acutely conscious of its international obligations to promote peace and stability. Malaysia served with much distinction in the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member for the period 1989-90 and supported the historic decision of the council to appose the invasion of Kuwait (Resolution 678). Malaysia has also contributed troops to UN peace keeping efforts among others along the Iraq-Iran border, Namibia, Angola and Iraq-Kuwait.