

28/11/78.

OPENING ADDRESS BY YAB DATO  
 HUSSEIN ONN, PRIME MINISTER  
 OF MALAYSIA AT THE COMMONWEALTH  
SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING, AT  
 NIRWANA BALLROOM, HILTON HOTEL,  
 KUALA LUMPUR, ON TUESDAY, 28TH  
NOVEMBER, 1978 AT 10.00 A. M.

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*Mr. Chaumian.*

1. Mr. Secretary General,
  2. Distinguished Delegates,
  3. Members of the Diplomatic Corps.,
  4. Distinguished Guests..
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I wish to thank you, Mr. Secretary General, for inviting me to open this Meeting of Commonwealth Senior Officials. It gives me great pleasure to welcome our Commonwealth friends to Kuala Lumpur, and to open this meeting.

2. I am happy to know that as you meet today, our number has increased by three, with the admission of Dominica, Soloman Islands and Tuvalu. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome them into the family of Commonwealth Nations.

3. During your meeting here, you will be taking stock of the progress made since the last Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London, <sup>you</sup> and will be preparing the ground for the next Commonwealth Summit in Lusaka, next year. This meeting will provide an excellent opportunity to assess our performance, and identify the areas which need attention and action. I would urge that in your deliberations, you should make innovation and positive action as your objectives. It is only through concrete achievements that the Commonwealth will be seen as an effective, viable and meaningful Organisation.

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4. At the last meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government, we predicted optimistically that the world economic situations would improve in 1978 and 1979. However, it is becoming increasingly clear, that this is not happening. The industrialised countries are not providing the necessary boost required for economic growth and expansion in international trade. Recent policy decisions by the United States to deal with inflation and the declining value of the dollar, will result in continuing slow growth. Protectionist trends continue unabated. All these pose a crippling constraint on the economic growth of the developing countries.

5. Malaysia, in many ways, has been fortunate. Despite the depressing international economic climate, we have managed to maintain economic growth at a comparatively high level ----- about 7--8% in real terms. We have also managed to contain inflation. We are determined to improve on our performance, so as to achieve a New Society which is strong and stable --- with fairness, justice and equity for all. However, like other developing countries, Malaysia's development depends on the healthy state of international economic situation.

6. The Commonwealth comprises both develop and developing countries. It can play a significant role in fostering the desired

economic climate. It is unfortunate that we have not exploited this potential and met the challenge with greater courage. Part of the encumbrances to the efforts, to establish the Common Fund and liberalise trade, stem from some members of the Commonwealth. It is evident that the industrialised countries, including some within the Commonwealth, have not been positive enough in their support for the establishment of the New International Economic Order.

7. In the political field, the Commonwealth has decided to play a complimentary role to the United Nations in the efforts to resolve the questions of Namibia, Zimbabwe,

Cyprus and Belize. We are anxious that the peoples of Namibia and Zimbabwe are not denied the independence and sovereignty that are their rights. Recent developments in these two countries, have not at all been encouraging. The situation may easily <sup>di-tir-ri-or-ate</sup> deteriorate, and threaten the peace and security, not only in the areas concerned, but also of the world. We are equally concerned ~~that there should be a just settlement of the problem in Cyprus and Belize.~~

8. I have mentioned a few of the major problems requiring urgent solution. Food production, education, health, population growth, and general economic development in the developing nations, which form the

majority of the members of the Commonwealth, are other problems which require our concerted and joint attention.

9. I believe that with sincerity and ingenuity, you should be able to come up with appropriate recommendations, at least to <sup>al-li-viate</sup> alleviate, if not to resolve these problems.

This meeting provides an opportunity to pool your expertise.

10. As senior officials, you hold a special position to influence the policies of your respective Governments. I hope you will make use of this privileged position for the good of the Commonwealth and the world.

*Kuala Lumpur,*

11. During your stay in ~~Malaysia~~, *here,*  
*hope would take the opportunity*  
 I would like to ~~urge you to take the opportunity~~  
 to see the country and know the people.

*I now have great pleasure in declaring  
 the meeting open and*  
 12. I wish you all every success in  
 your deliberations.

Thank you.

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