

A STATE DINNER HOSTED BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA
THE RT. HON. MICHAEL SOMARE
PORT MORESBY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

19 OCTOBER 1982

The Rt. Hon. Michael Somare;
Mrs. Somare;
Your Excellencies;
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank you very much, Mr. Prime Minister, for your kind and generous words of welcome. My wife and I, and members of my delegation are particularly delighted to have this opportunity to visit Papua New Guinea. Earlier this year, we had only briefly touched down at Jackson Airport.

Mr. Prime Minister,

2. My visit here today is to reaffirm the friendship between our two countries and to bring to the Government and people of Papua New Guinea the warmest greetings from the Government and people of Malaysia.

3. Papua New Guinea is Malaysia's close neighbour immediately after the ASEAN circle. You are also a special link to the wider South Pacific region for us, helping to develop a meaningful communication between members of the South Pacific Forum and ASEAN. Undoubtedly great potential exists for us to cooperate together in a variety of ways for our mutual benefit. The establishment of a resident Malaysian diplomatic mission in Port Moresby earlier this year bears testimony to the importance which we attach to our relations with Papua New Guinea and the desire to intensify our bilateral interaction. Naturally during this visit, I hope to get to know you better at first hand and to be more aware of your interests.

4. Recently our two countries happily celebrated our respective independence anniversary. Yours was held last month while ours in August. Looking back, both Papua New Guinea and Malaysia have been fortunate to achieve independence in an orderly and peaceful way. Indeed we share many similar ideals and aspirations in meeting the challenges of national development and in looking after our own affairs.

5. Over the years, Malaysia has gradually acquired experience and expertise in certain developmental fields. These include agricultural research to increase productivity, and land development and management both for smallholdings as well as large plantations. Some of these experiences might be relevant to Papua New Guinea's requirements. In our talks this afternoon, Mr. Prime Minister, we have already identified several areas of possible cooperation. I am confident there is considerable scope for us to explore further areas that can bring mutual benefit to our two countries.

6. The Government of Malaysia fully subscribes to the concept of economic and technical cooperation among developing countries. Malaysians are ready to participate in practical economic and technical programmes with Papua New Guinea. We are your 'wantoks' and we look forward to sharing our modest skills and know-how with you. The spinoffs of better understanding and goodwill from increased contact and cooperation between our peoples will surely strengthen our friendship.

7. Like Papua New Guinea, Malaysia is a producer of primary commodities. Commodity prices are depressingly low. Naturally we in Malaysia are feeling the pinch. The slump in prices is attributed to the current world economic recession and everyone is impatient for its recovery. At the same time, Malaysia is extremely unhappy at the manipulation of commodity prices by the various exchanges located in the developed countries. Scant regard is paid to the producers. To ensure reasonable prices, such an unhealthy system has to be dismantled. This conviction has led Malaysia to participate in the formation of tin and rubber producers associations to ensure fair and stable prices.

Mr. Prime Minister,

8. You and I have just left Suva where, for the last several days, we had met with our other Commonwealth colleagues from the Asia-Pacific region. We had talked on a range of international and regional issues and listened to each other. As you are aware, for Malaysia, the unresolved Kampuchean question continues to be of serious concern. It is a threat to regional peace and security and it only encourages big power rivalry to brew in our midst. Furthermore, the Kampuchean question impedes efforts by the ASEAN members to realise their goal of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in Southeast Asia.

9. Together with our ASEAN partners, Malaysia has actively pursued, particularly at the United Nations, efforts for a comprehensive political solution to the question of Kampuchea. In this regard, we are deeply appreciative of the support and understanding rendered by Papua New Guinea. The recent successful formation of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea under the leadership of Prince Sihanouk is heartening. Malaysia earnestly hopes that peace, freedom and dignity would soon be restored to the Kampuchean people.

Mr. Prime Minister,

10. I am honoured and overwhelmed by the warmth and gracious hospitality extended to my wife and I, and members of my delegation, in the short time that we have been in Port Moresby. May I express our most sincere appreciation to the Government and people of Papua New Guinea. I look forward to having the opportunity to reciprocate your generosity in the near future.

Thank you.