

BANQUET HOSTED BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF PAKISTAN MUHAMMAD NAWAZ SHARIF

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN, 15 February 1993

Your Excellency Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of Pakistan; Begum Kalsoom, Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of my wife, the members of my delegation and on my own behalf I wish to thank you and the Government of Pakistan for the warm welcome and hospitality that we have received since our arrival in your great country.

Honourable Prime Minister,

2. But for a short spell, the relationship between our two brotherly countries has always been warm and friendly. I am happy to note, in particular, that, in recent years, our economic relations have been developing steadily. Malaysia's overall trade with Pakistan has expanded in the last two years, averaging US\$440 million in volume. Of special importance is the fact that Pakistan is Malaysia's largest single buyer of palm oil in this region. This is a recent phenomenon following the decrease of soyabean oil imports by Pakistan.

3. In 1992, a Memorandum of Understanding was concluded with Pakistan to provide US\$100 million credit to buy 300,000 tonnes of palm oil from Malaysia. The Malaysian Palm Oil Promotion Council has agreed to provide 2,200 square feet of exhibition space to exhibit products from Pakistan in Kuala Lumpur for a period of two years. Following the successful visits of Ministerial and business delegations from Malaysia last year, joint ventures with Pakistani partners are being proposed to establish integrated palm oil storage and refining complexes in the port cities of Pakistan. In the long term, we are looking to Pakistan as a potential gateway to the palm oil markets in Afghanistan and the Central Asian Republics, using Pakistan's air, sea and road links with these states. Meanwhile, we are also studying the possibility of our national airline, MAS, operating additional frequencies into Pakistan and beyond to strengthen the air links between our two countries.

4. We have a modest technical cooperation programme which enables developing countries to avail themselves of assistance in areas where we have some expertise. There is much our two countries can do for each other in sharing what we do best. An important area of our cooperation, in this respect, is the training received by students under Pakistan's technical assistance programme and we hope to see this

programme expanded, especially to accommodate our requirement for medical training.

5. Due to the rapid development of our industrial and plantation sectors, Malaysia has been experiencing labour shortages. As a result a small number of Pakistanis have come to Malaysia to work. We will continue to look to Pakistan as an important source of human resources.

Honourable Prime Minister,

6. Malaysia and Pakistan have worked together in support of each other on many issues of common concern. In the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organisation of Islamic Conference, we have shared common positions on such issues as the Environment and Development, the Palestinian problem, the Iran-Iraq war, Apartheid, Disarmament and Antarctica. On regional issues like Cambodia and Afghanistan, we have been supportive of each other's position. Malaysia was also especially pleased to host the CHOGM in which Pakistan returned to the Commonwealth in 1989. I would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the very effective leadership demonstrated by Pakistan as the Chairman of the G-77.

7. Pakistan has always played an important role in world affairs. As a member of the UN Security Council at this critical time in world affairs, Pakistan can do much to address the new challenges that are being faced by the world as a result of the end of the Cold War. We share the concern over actions taken by a few powerful countries to promote their own interests without taking into account the views of the international community. Instead of even-handed initiatives, we see UN mandates exploited for narrow self-interest as in the case of the recent unjustifiable attacks on Iraq, while the horrors of the situation in Bosnia remain unaddressed.

8. Malaysia appreciates Pakistan's role in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan. We sincerely hope that that war-ravaged country will soon be able to get down to the enormous tasks of reconstruction and development that it is faced with.

9. We hope that the problem of Kashmir, which has bedevilled the relationship between Pakistan and India for over four decades, can be resolved amicably through peaceful negotiations in accordance with United Nations Resolutions and the Simla Accord. Pakistan and India, working in tandem, would be a catalyst for the advancement of the whole of South Asia.

Honourable Prime Minister,

10. We have followed with interest the development of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) in the South Asia region. With the inclusion of seven more countries of Central Asia, an important economic nexus has emerged which will be crucial in guaranteeing the development and stability of this region. We welcome closer collaboration between ECO and SAARC (South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation) with ASEAN. To strive for greater unity and cooperation among developing countries, we need to maintain a dialogue among ourselves in order to promote solidarity, to strengthen each other's efforts to advance ourselves and to have a common response to the critical economic developments that are taking place in the world, especially the emergence of powerful trade blocs.

Honourable Prime Minister,

11. Our two countries have always enjoyed close and brotherly relations. We look forward to working closely with you to further strengthen our political and economic relations, as well as enhancing our mutual efforts for world peace and equality in international relations.