

**THE OFFICIAL DINNER HOSTED BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. ROBERT MUGABE
THE PRESIDENT OF ZIMBABWE**

THE SHERATON HOTEL, HARARE, ZIMBABWE, 27 April 1994

Your Excellency President Robert Mugabe; Excellencies;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My wife and I are very happy to be back here in Zimbabwe. Indeed we have been looking forward to this third visit in order to renew our acquaintance and to further strengthen existing ties of friendship and cooperation between our two countries.

2. On behalf of my wife and my delegation, I would like to express our gratitude to you Mr. President, the government and the people of Zimbabwe, for the gracious hospitality accorded to us since our arrival. Mr. President,

3. I am happy to note that bilateral relations between Malaysia and Zimbabwe continue to grow from strength to strength. Indeed, we have been able to cooperate closely in a wide variety of fields. Internationally, both our countries share similar views and perspectives on many issues. As members of the U.N., Commonwealth, NAM, G-77 and G-15, we have both sought to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the promotion of economic and social development worldwide. Our shared aspirations are reflected in our common approaches in the search for an end to the tragic conflicts in many regions of the world. Malaysia, like Zimbabwe, is a fervent supporter of UN in its role to maintain international peace and security. We have and continue to support UN peace-keeping efforts. While we firmly support the centrality of the UN's role in international affairs, we believe that the process of democratisation of international relations and institutions must not stop short of a restructuring of the U.N. Security Council to better reflect the changing circumstances of the world today.

4. As regards the exchange of visits between our two countries, I am happy to note the increasing momentum that have brought about more intensive contacts and interactions between our peoples. These exchanges have not only broadened and deepened the areas of cooperation in education and training between us but have also showed positive results in our economic relations. Malaysia is firmly committed to further enhancing its economic and trading ties with Zimbabwe. We are therefore equally serious in wanting to share technical expertise with each other. This is consistent with our commitment towards realising the full potentials of South-South Cooperation.

5. The fourth G-15 Summit held in New Delhi last month further underlined the need for countries of the South to cooperate in order to safeguard their interests. While the pattern of global trade and financial flow is still heavily inclined in the North- South direction, our ability and readiness to effect South-South Cooperation will contribute significantly not only to our economic growth but will strengthen our positions in dealing with the North.

6. I am honoured to have been invited to officiate at the opening of the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair at Bulawayo. I have also brought with me a delegation of leading Malaysian businessmen who are eager to explore business and commercial potentials in Zimbabwe. Mr. President,

7. Tomorrow we will have the honour of witnessing the signing of Bilateral Agreements on Avoidance of Double Taxation, Investment Guarantee, and Air Services. While these Agreements aim to set the framework for further cooperation, the real impetus to a more intensive and meaningful relations must come from the respective private sectors. There are opportunities for investment and joint-venture collaboration in such areas as construction, building materials, transport, mining, tourism, pharmaceutical and energy. With Policy Reforms being introduced by the Zimbabwean government in order to attract foreign investment, I am confident that Zimbabwe will become increasingly attractive to Malaysian investors, many of whom are actively seeking market niches the world over.

8. The opportunities for greater economic interaction between Malaysia and Zimbabwe are vast. The Malaysian economy which is fast expanding offers good markets for export and a source of supply for Zimbabwe for a broad range of primary and manufactured products. In addition, Malaysia can offer Zimbabwe a gateway to the regional market in Southeast Asia and East Asia which is experiencing rapid expansion as a result of buoyant economic conditions there - a region which has recorded one of the fastest growth rates in the world. The area's foremost regional organisation, ASEAN, is also making real strides towards the realisation of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) which will further enhance economic development of its member states.

9. Peace and stability is a necessary prerequisite for national growth and development. We would like to applaud the contributions of Zimbabwe in fostering peace and security in this region. You have personally, Mr. President, played and continue to play a major role in this regard. The Rome Accord that ushered in a new era of peace and political changes in Mozambique owes its success to you for your dedication, relentless efforts and selfless contribution. Mr. President,

10. Before concluding, may I once again express my sincere appreciation to you and your government for the warm hospitality and the excellent arrangement made for our visit.