

A DINNER IN HONOUR OF H.R.H. PRINCE NORODOM RANARIDDH FIRST PRIME MINISTER, KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

SRI PERDANA, KUALA LUMPUR, 17 AUGUST 1994

Please allow me to extend a very warm welcome to Your Royal Highness and members of your delegation to Malaysia. Your visit provides the opportunity for me and the government and people of Malaysia to reciprocate the warm reception and kind hospitality accorded to me and my delegation during my official visit to Cambodia last April. I hope that your brief stay in our country will be an enjoyable one.

2. We are most honoured that you have been able to take time off to visit our country. I very much welcome this opportunity to meet with you again and to continue the most fruitful discussions which we had last April. The exchange of visits between us, our ministers and the peoples of our two countries will certainly contribute to the enhancement of bilateral relations and cooperation between Malaysia and Cambodia.

3. The discussions which we had in Phnom Penh last April as well as our meeting this afternoon have helped to reinforce and further strengthen the new era in Cambodia- Malaysia relations. We have been able to achieve a clearer understanding of each other's concerns and needs. We have also been able to exchange views on issues of mutual interest affecting this region.

4. Southeast Asian countries are today blessed with a rare opportunity to deepen and widen cooperation among themselves. Upheaval, war and human suffering should effectively be confined to the bins of history in our part of the world. The bitter history of distrust and fear must, therefore, be firmly relegated to the past. They should not affect our thinking or action. We are now at the dawn of a new history of Southeast Asia. We must, therefore, continue to cast our eyes firmly on the future so as to chart a common destiny for all the countries of this region through increased cooperation among ourselves as well as with other countries outside the region.

5. The talents and resources of the countries of Southeast Asia should be collectively mobilised to enhance regional stability, security and prosperity. They should be directed towards increasing the level and intensity of cooperation among all of us. Our two countries can make important contributions through our bilateral cooperation as well as through our active participation in regional cooperative efforts.

6. Malaysia is most delighted to learn that Cambodia has expressed the clear intention to join ASEAN. This is indeed a

very positive move on your part which will bring us closer to the objective of making ASEAN truly an association embracing all ten Southeast Asian nations. ASEAN was conceived to strengthen each of the member countries by allowing them to pursue their domestic priorities within a larger environment of peace and stability. ASEAN has now achieved sufficient maturity. This has not only helped to strengthen relations among countries in Southeast Asia, but has also helped to contribute to the development of individual member countries. Malaysia welcomes and fully supports Cambodia's desire to become a member of ASEAN.

7. I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate your Royal Highness and Mr. Hun Sen for your strong commitment towards ensuring stability and promoting development in your country. I also salute your commitment to democracy which the Cambodian people bravely won for your country. Despite the many odds, you have shown your determination to preserve the Cambodian people's trust and confidence in your Government's efforts to build a foundation for peace, stability, economic development and social progress in Cambodia.

8. I wish to reiterate that Malaysia remains committed to helping in the reconstruction and development of Cambodia. Malaysia is prepared to cooperate and assist in any way we can to help Cambodia through this crucial period. We appreciate the fact that you have made remarkable strides in the brief period since the establishment of the Royal Government.

9. Changes and reforms, usually require great sacrifice, painful adjustments and, very often, great patience and discipline. Malaysia and other countries in our region have also gone through such a difficult process of adjustment at various times in our development. We are ever-ready to share with Cambodia our experience.

10. We note your serious efforts to reconstruct Cambodia. The passage of the new Cambodian investment law is a step in the right direction. We hope that Cambodia will persevere in its efforts to further liberalise and develop the economy. This is important to ensure the continued improvement of the well-being of the Cambodian people. Malaysia remains committed to increasing trade with Cambodia and enhancing our relations and cooperation in various fields.

11. The Malaysian private sector is also keen to assist Cambodia. Malaysian industrialists and entrepreneurs have, over the years, gained both experience and expertise which could be of mutual benefit to our two countries. We are indeed pleased that in the past two years, the pace and variety of trade and investment cooperation between our two countries

have expanded. We are also equally pleased to see Cambodians and Malaysians already responding to emerging economic opportunities, thereby contributing to the effort to enhance bilateral relations between the two countries.

12. The deep bond and enduring friendship between Cambodia and Malaysia has clearly been evident in our meetings both in Phnom Penh and today in Kuala Lumpur. Our discussions have been most fruitful, and I look forward to closer cooperation between our two countries.