

**THE OFFICIAL DINNER IN HONOUR OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JEAN  
CHRETIEN, PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA**

SRI PERDANA, KUALA LUMPUR, 18 JANUARY 1996

It is indeed an honour for me and my wife to welcome you Mr. Prime Minister and Mrs. Chretien on your first official visit to Malaysia. We also feel honoured by the presence of provincial Premiers and top Canadian corporate leaders in your delegation. We hope that this visit will provide you with a better understanding and appreciation of the rich political, economic and cultural diversity in our country as well as the opportunities for greater economic co-operation between Malaysia and Canada.

2. Both of us have had the opportunity to discuss broad areas of co-operation and issues of common concern in our meetings recently in Auckland and Osaka. Your visit provides us with another opportunity to discuss further on ways and means of strengthening the already close and cordial ties that exist between our two countries.

3. Despite the geographical distance that separates our two countries, Canada is always close to the heart of most Malaysians. Thousands of Malaysian students have gone to Canada to pursue their higher education over the years. Those who have returned are today holding important positions in government and business. They form an important link in Malaysia-Canada relationship. The excellent facilities that Canada provides will continue to attract large numbers of Malaysian students in the years to come. On behalf of the Malaysian government, I wish to thank you for the co-operation that Canada has given in providing education and training to so many of our students. We hope we can continue to count on Canada in our efforts to produce sufficient trained professionals to meet our growing manpower requirements.

4. Malaysia needs a large pool of trained and skilful professionals in its quest to become a developed nation by the year 2020. The momentum of economic development and industrialisation is expected to increase as we approach the 21st century, opening up in the process new opportunities for foreign investment and participation. The door for Canadian participation is always wide open. Let me add at this juncture that the developed nation that we aspire to become is not just one that enjoys a high level of economic development and industrialisation and high income for its citizens but also one that upholds strong moral, cultural and religious values. Respect for these values would go a long way towards establishing a durable relationship with Malaysia.

5. Other than co-operating together at the bilateral level, under which Malaysia has benefited considerably from Canadian technical assistance programme, our two countries have also been closely engaged in common endeavours within the United Nations system, the Commonwealth, the ASEAN dialogue process and APEC. It is clear from the interaction that we share many common interests, ranging from the need to strengthen the role of the United Nations as a factor of global peace and stability to the specific need to foster co-operative peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. We have participated in common peace-keeping operations in different parts of the world and we are together deliberating on other measures that would prevent conflict and spare human beings from the kind of tragedies that we have seen in Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda.

6. With the reservoir of goodwill and understanding generated through years of close co-operation, a strong foundation has been built on which Malaysia and Canada could further intensify our relations. The signing of several agreements and Memoranda of Understanding today, covering air services, education and forestry strengthen our optimism in the future of Malaysia-Canada ties.

7. The end of the Cold War has brought many changes to the region as it has to Europe and other parts of the world. Today, Southeast Asia is enjoying peace as never before. A socialist Vietnam is today a member of ASEAN. We are optimistic that very soon ASEAN will become a family of ten. It is a rich market and blessed with abundant resources. With growing prosperity, the ASEAN Ten will be a bigger anchor for peace and stability for the entire region. It speaks highly of Canada for having the foresight to be engaged with ASEAN as a dialogue partner from an early date. Malaysia welcomes Canadian collaboration with ASEAN's development efforts as well as its participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum. Canada has done so on the basis of partnership and full respect for the sensitivities and interest of ASEAN. This is the way we expect of all those who wish to co-operate with ASEAN.

8. In conclusion, may I once again express our deep appreciation for your visit and hope that you will have an enjoyable and memorable stay in our country.