

**THE OFFICIAL LUNCHEON HOSTED BY PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND**  
PARLIAMENT HOUSE, WELLINGTON, 26 MARCH 1996

Let me first of all thank you, Mr. Prime Minister and Mrs. Joan Bolger and the Government of New Zealand for the very warm welcome and hospitality accorded to my wife and I, and members of my delegation since arriving in Wellington this morning.

2. I recall with fondness my last visit to your beautiful country in November to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. I am particularly delighted to meet you again and to exchange views on issues of common concern. Our meeting this morning has been very useful and has enabled us to review the progress made in bilateral relations since your last visit to Kuala Lumpur in May 1994. The discussions we have had revealed yet again how much our views and aspirations coincide. I can assure you, Mr. Prime Minister, that Malaysia is firmly committed to strengthening the close relations that exist between our two countries.

3. I am also glad that we have been able to witness the signing of a number of bilateral instruments in the field of education, defence and information. Of special significance is the signing of the instrument on "The Working Holiday Arrangement" which would allow citizens of both countries to enjoy an extended holiday in each other's country whilst engaging in some form of employment. As you may recall, this was essentially your own idea which we fully support. New Zealand is the only country that Malaysia has entered into such an arrangement. I can confidently say that the scheme is a practical one that would go a long way to generating better understanding and cooperation between the peoples of our two countries. I hope the scheme can be implemented as soon as possible.

4. Bilateral relations between Malaysia and New Zealand have seen encouraging progress over the years. Cooperative efforts in the field of trade, investment, education, tourism, defence and science and technology have been enhanced through regular exchanges of visits at both the ministerial and senior official levels. The establishment of the Malaysia-New Zealand Business Council in 1992 in Kuala Lumpur and its sister organisation, the New Zealand-Malaysia Business Council, in 1993 in Wellington have given added impetus to efforts at promoting greater trade and economic cooperation between our two countries. Malaysia also appreciates the close links that we have established as members of the Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA) and the Commonwealth. Such links have brought us closer together in the pursuit of common objectives.

5. Malaysia sees tremendous potentials for both countries to increase investments in each other's country particularly in the areas of timber processing, food processing and tourism. New Zealand's current level of investment in Malaysia, amounting to a total of 23 projects with an equity of US\$20.8 million and total proposed capital investment already approved of US\$40.54 million, is relatively small considering the opportunities available. More efforts should therefore be made by both sides to promote investments. I hope the presence of key business leaders in my delegation would contribute towards this objective. Malaysian and New Zealand companies could also look into the possibility of undertaking joint venture arrangements in third countries like Vietnam, India, Cambodia and China.

6. In the field of education, Malaysia appreciates New Zealand's continued support and cooperation in the various mutually beneficial programmes between tertiary level institutions of the two countries. These include twinning programmes, teacher education programmes and exchanges of visits and attachments of students and scholars. In 1994 alone, there were 1,306 Malaysian students pursuing various courses in New Zealand. Likewise Malaysia hopes to see New Zealand students taking advantage of the educational facilities available in Malaysia. It is hoped that both our countries will continue to collaborate closely in education in the years ahead.

7. Malaysia is also happy to see New Zealand getting closer to Asia with a view to fostering better understanding and mutually beneficial relations with the various countries concerned. The establishment of the 'ASIA 2000' Foundation is a clear testimony of this. Similarly, the establishment of the 'Chair of Malay Studies' at Victoria University as well as the setting up of the New Zealand Asia Institute at Auckland University for which I have been given the honour to officially open during the visit are positive developments.

8. The economic dynamism of South East Asia, the Asia Pacific and Asia generally provides vast opportunities for all countries in the region. But uncertainties and challenges continue to prevail. We continue to suffer the consequences of decisions made outside our regions. In this context, New Zealand can certainly play a constructive role. We appreciate your active participation in the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference and the ASEAN Regional Forum and will continue to work closely with New Zealand in the interest of peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

9. Before I conclude, may I once again thank you, Mr. Prime Minister and Mrs. Joan Bolger for the gracious hospitality

accorded to my wife and I, and members of my delegation.