

SPEECH BY: DATO' SERI DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD
(PRIME MINISTER)

EVENT: THE OFFICIAL DINNER HOSTED IN HIS HONOUR BY
HIS EXCELLENCY SIR ANEEROOD JUGNAUTH THE PRIME MINISTER OF MAURITIUS

VENUE: GOVERNMENT HOUSE, PORT LOUIS

DATE: 16 AUG 1988

TIME:

Your Excellency Sir Aneerood Jugnauth,
and Lady Jugnauth;
Excellencies;
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great pleasure for me to be here in Port Louis,
a city I am visiting for the first time. In the short while
I have been here I have discovered just how beautiful and
cosmopolitan Mauritius is. I am especially touched, Mr.
Prime Minister, by the warm welcome accorded to me, my wife
and my delegation since our arrival. May I take this
opportunity to express our gratitude for the very warm and
gracious hospitality which you have so kindly shown to us.

Mr. Prime Minister,

2. Allow me at this juncture to extend my heartiest
congratulations to you and your partners in the ruling
alliance for having emerged victorious in three general
elections consecutively. The victory is a clear endorsement
of your leadership that has so ably steered Mauritius on the
path of progress. I sincerely look forward to working with
you and your colleagues to enhance relations between
Mauritius and Malaysia for the benefit of our two countries
and peoples in the years ahead. These contacts are very
much in keeping with the concept of greater South South
relations.

3. We meet, Mr. Prime Minister, at a time of profound
changes within countries and in relations between countries.
Societies in transition pose particular problems of
management to decision-makers. Often solutions require
trans-national adjustments. Yet in a world that only
grudgingly concedes an objective inter-dependence of
nations, adjustment processes are painfully slow. Small
nations such as ours cannot afford to wait for a general
global enlightenment. Our needs are more pressing. We each
have to seize the initiative to forge linkages with the
like-minded, to build to the best of our abilities the
economic safety-net so important for the independent
survival of our countries.

4. I observe with admiration, Mr. Prime Minister, that Mauritius has equipped itself well to meet the challenges of a society in transition. You and your government have wisely guided the affairs of Mauritius both at home and abroad. Your creative policies at home have been matched by constructive initiatives regionally and internationally. I look forward to working closely with you in our endeavours to create a better life for both our peoples.

Mr Prime Minister,

5. Mauritius and Malaysia share a lot of things in common. We are small nations and our economies are export-oriented. Our well-being depend much on the vitality of the global economy and it is therefore important that we endeavour to do our bit to contribute towards the openness of the world economy. We can and should work together to safeguard our vital interests both bilaterally and multilaterally.

6. I am happy, Mr. Prime Minister, that our two countries have already made a beginning in this direction. We established formal diplomatic relations in January last year. Subsequently, Mauritius hosted an official Malaysian delegation and a follow-up business delegation towards the middle of the same year. We have signed today the agreement to establish a Joint Commission for Economic and Technical Cooperation. The establishment of the Joint Commission will enable our two countries not only to facilitate our growing relations but also to take stock of their state from time to time and make running adjustments as and when necessary. I am confident that our economic relations, at present somewhat narrow in scope, could be both expanded and deepened for our mutual benefit. Our mutual progress in recent years offer excellent opportunities to explore new avenues for cooperation even as we seek to entrench previous and present ones. There are elements of complementarity in our economies that we could usefully develop for our mutual benefit.

Mr. Prime Minister,

7. While it is important that relations between two countries are premised on healthy economic interactions, it is also equally essential that political links are cemented at the highest possible level. I hope my visit to Mauritius will soon be followed by your own visit to Malaysia and that many more Mauritian political and business leaders will also take the opportunity to do so.

8. Mauritius and Malaysia share common membership in many international groupings. Our basic perspectives and approaches do not differ much. The great moral and ethical problems confronting us today - racial injustice and political repression under apartheid in South Africa, Israel's illegal occupation of Arab lands and continued opposition to the creation of a Palestinian state, the conflict in Afghanistan and the occupation of Kampuchea by

foreign forces, the ever-widening North-South economic inequities and the ever-escalating arms race - require that we should cooperate more closely to strengthen international solidarity to resolve them. Malaysia, like Mauritius, believes that the United Nations has a primary role to play in ensuring international peace and security.

Mr. Prime Minister,

9. Allow me to express my sincere appreciation for the time you have taken and the effort you and your Government have made to make my brief visit not only useful from the official point of view but also memorable from the personal point of view.

10. May I now invite this distinguished gathering to join me in a toast to the Government and people of Mauritius and to His Excellency Sir Aneerood Jugnauth and Lady Jugnauth and to the ever-expanding relations between Mauritius and Malaysia.

Thank you.