

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

EVENT: THE OPENING OF OFFICIAL TALKS WITH HIS EXCELLENCY
SIR ANEROOD JUGNAUTH THE PRIME MINISTER OF MAURITIUS

VENUE: GOVERNMENT HOUSE PORT LOUIS

DATE: 16 AUG 1988

TIME:

Your Excellency;
Honourable Ministers;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to visit your beautiful country. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Your Excellency for your kind invitation to me to visit Mauritius. I must say I have been looking forward to making this visit which I regret could not be made at an earlier time. Now that I am here it is my hope that during our stay here members of the Malaysian Delegation and I will be able to see as much of your country as possible. I also hope that in the course of our deliberations, we will be able to identify and explore possibilities for enhancing political, economic and cultural co-operation between our two countries.

2. Although our countries are separated by a vast ocean, the distance between us have now been bridged by the launching of the joint service between Air Mauritius and Malaysian Airlines. I hope with the launching of this air service between our countries it will facilitate communication between our peoples and lead to closer and enhanced relations between us.

Your Excellency,

3. Our two countries share common colonial experiences. Both Mauritius and Malaysia are made up of plural societies in a racial, linguistic and religious sense. Our Governments are equally committed to achieving national unity, rapid economic growth and a better quality of life for our peoples.

4. Our peoples' livelihood is dependent, to a large extent, on the export of our primary commodities which is constantly affected by fluctuations in price and uncertainty in market access. We are often at the receiving end and naturally feel being short-changed by the industrialised countries.

5. Both our countries wish to be less susceptible or vulnerable to such sharp practices. The obvious thing to do is to diversify our economies by venturing into

manufacturing and at the same time strengthening our services industry. Malaysia on her part has sought, like Mauritius, to build up her tourism, shipping, aviation, insurance and banking and financial sectors. I am confident that we can share and pool our expertise in these fields for our mutual benefit.

6. Having said all this, I wish to assure you, Mr. Prime Minister, that we come here with an open mind to listen, to candidly discuss and conclude such understandings as may be mutually beneficial to our two countries. I trust that we can proceed with our deliberations in a spirit of friendship, trust and sincerity.