

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

EVENT: THE OFFICIAL DINNER IN HONOUR OF HIS EXCELLENCY DR. SAM NUJOMA
A THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

VENUE: SRI PERDANA, KUALA LUMPUR (K.L)

DATE: 14 SEP 1992

TIME:

It gives me great pleasure to extend a warm welcome to you and your delegation on your first official visit to Malaysia as the President of an independent Namibia. Although this is your first official visit, our friendship goes back to the days of your liberation struggle. The first time I had the pleasure of meeting you as the President of the Republic of Namibia was at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Harare in 1991 and again recently at the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Jakarta.

2. Even though our countries are separated by vast distance, Malaysians have followed closely the struggle of the people of Namibia, under your wise leadership, to free your country from the clutches of colonialism. For over a century your people suffered the indignities of persecution and discrimination. Yet for all the single-minded determination to force your people into meek submission, their spirit remained fiercely defiant. The price they had to pay in their resistance struggle was costly and painful and the scars of the system still remain today. Your liberation struggle therefore stands as an enduring inspiration to all because you fought not only to achieve political independence but also for the triumph of the high moral principles - the right of man to stand as equals.

3. With the attainment of independence two years ago your country has entered a new stage in its history. It is, I am sure, an exciting and challenging time for the leaders and people of Namibia as you seek to consolidate and give meaning to your independence. As we have found out through our own experience the task is indeed daunting. But we note with much satisfaction the enormous efforts being made by your government in bringing about economic and social development of Namibia. Because of your colonial legacy you have to face up to the need to redress the stark inequities and inequalities in income, educational and economic opportunities, ownership of land and access to basic amenities and services amongst your people. Your approach to these problems is very wise and worthy of emulation. The proof of this is the absence of protest and violence which often fol-

lows transfers of power. The restructuring of society need not be influenced unduly by the bitterness of the past.

4. Namibia is a country richly endowed with natural resources and therefore has the necessary ingredients to succeed economically. There is enough for everyone to share fairly. We have no doubt that through the prudent policies initiated by your government, Namibia will successfully surmount its present difficulties brought about by the worst drought to have hit the country.

5. Malaysia will continue to contribute within our modest means, to the task of nation-building which you have embarked upon. There are indeed parallels between our situation and that of Namibia. We are both multi-racial developing countries driven by the urgency to achieve economic growth with equity. Achieving unity within our population of diverse racial origin is of singular importance to the success of our development efforts, for there-in lies the foundation upon which we can hope to build a thriving and prosperous nation.

6. As developing countries we are vulnerable to the changes in the global, political and economic scene. The end of the cold war was initially greeted with jubilation. After decades of disruptive super power rivalry, the international community has been afforded the best chance to work for an equitable and just world order. However the exultation was shortlived. Recent developments have called into question the fundamentals upon which this new world order rests. Instead of seeing the evolution of fair play and a scrupulous respect for the principles of international relations, some countries have resorted to arbitrary and unilateral actions to impose their values and will on other states.

7. In the economic field, the various forms of non-tariff barriers which have been erected in the way of free trade and the introduction of new elements such as intellectual property, local contents and discriminatory taxes have seriously impeded world trade. This could result in the slowing down of the world economy which in turn would seriously affect our economies, which are both open and very much dependent upon external trade.

8. Such a development to say the least is worrisome. The dividend of peace and security from the end of the cold war remains a mere hope. The weaker countries are now increasingly finding themselves in a difficult situation having to submit themselves to this version of the new world order and economic and trade system as advocated and practised by certain leaders in the West.

9. You and I, Mr. President, have just returned from the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit in Jakarta where we had the opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues of immedi-

ate concern to our Movement. We share the views on the necessity for NAM to redefine its role in a unipolar world. We need to ensure that NAM will be a united and vibrant organisation in order to contribute to a just world order. NAM must strive to forge a new global consensus and commitment to strengthen international economic cooperation.

10. Namibia and Malaysia share similar views on many other international issues, in particular with regard to the struggle of the majority population of South Africa for freedom. Our initial optimism, raised by the reforms launched by Mr F.W. de Klerk and the initial progress made at CODESA, (Convention for a Democratic South Africa) has now given way to serious concern about the prospects for peaceful transition to majority rule. We urge the Pretoria regime to undertake immediate actions to revive the negotiating process under CODESA and to work within a specified time frame towards the establishment of an interim government for the eventual realisation of a democratic, non-racial and united South Africa. We must also urge black Africans to remember that they have all suffered together and they must not allow themselves to be the instruments of white rule. Those who do must be regarded as traitors to the cause and to democracy.

11. Your visit to Malaysia will, I am sure, provide you and your delegation with an opportunity to see for yourself the possibilities that exist for us to cooperate and work together for mutual benefit. The discussions that we are going to have tomorrow on bilateral, regional and international issues will identify areas of cooperation that will enhance relations between our two countries. Although at present economic interaction between both countries is minimal, the abundance of natural resources in Namibia and Malaysia's expertise in different fields of industrial production and our endeavour to achieve a better life for our peoples, should enable us to complement each other in many areas.

12. I trust Mr. President, that you and your delegation will have a fruitful and enjoyable stay in our country. The programme we have laid out for you will give you a glimpse of what the government and the people of Malaysia are striving to achieve in our quest for progress and prosperity. I hope Your Excellency and your delegation will carry home with you fond memories of your short stay with us.