

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

EVENT: THE OFFICIAL DINNER IN HONOUR OF THE HONOURABLE MAXIME
CARLOT KORMAN PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU

VENUE: SRI PERDANA, KUALA LUMPUR

DATE: 07 NOV 1994

TIME:

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you, Mr. Prime Minister, and members of your delegation to Malaysia. I am happy that you have been able to see a bit of the country since arriving in Kuala Lumpur yesterday and I hope that you will have a pleasant stay in Malaysia. Your visit has certainly provided us with the timely opportunity to reaffirm the close and friendly ties that exist between our two countries.

2. Our discussions this morning on major issues of common interest have not only yielded better understanding but also opened up new avenues for bilateral cooperation to our mutual benefit. It is clear that we both share common aspirations to promote the well-being and prosperity of our people whilst securing regional and global peace and stability.

3. As members of the Asia-Pacific community, Malaysia is keen to develop closer ties with Vanuatu. Modern and sophisticated communication system and information technology have made it possible for us to accelerate the pace of bilateral interactions, despite the geographical distance and the vast expanse of the Pacific that separates us. I am confident that, with the support of your government, the necessary instruments could be concluded to provide the framework within which bilateral cooperation could be further expanded in all fields.

4. Your Excellency, Malaysia sees an encouraging prospect to enhance bilateral trade and economic cooperation. We welcome greater exchange of visits, particularly between members of the private sector of both countries. Where necessary, Governmental support and guidance could be extended to enable them to pursue economically viable business ventures. A proper system of networking could also be developed to ensure the success of such ventures. Malaysia in this regard looks forward to the proposed conclusion of an Investment Guarantee Agreement between the two countries.

5. The Malaysian Government appreciates the commendable efforts made by Vanuatu under Your Excellency's leadership

to develop the country's natural resources, infrastructure facilities as well as resource-based industries. I am glad that the Malaysian private sector is taking advantage of the opportunities available to participate in some of the projects. Such participation would go a long way towards strengthening cooperation between our two countries.

6. Whilst supporting the role of the private sector in the development of Vanuatu's natural resources, Malaysian entrepreneurs have been reminded to establish long term economic collaboration rather than involving themselves in ventures aimed at merely short term gains. I hope that a fair and just treatment could be accorded to Malaysian entrepreneurs and that Malaysia's participation in Vanuatu's economic development on a joint-venture basis would continue to be welcomed in the years ahead.

7. Malaysia is happy to cooperate with Vanuatu under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme. I understand that some 31 officials have undergone training at various administrative and specialist training institutions in Malaysia under the Programme. We welcome Vanuatu's continued participation in the Programme and hope that such participation will contribute towards the development of human resources in the Republic.

8. As developing countries, both Malaysia and Vanuatu share similar views on many regional and international issues of common concern. We appreciate the initiative taken by Vanuatu in the issue of decolonisation and the support shown by Your Excellency's Government on other issues affecting the South. Malaysia will continue to work closely with Vanuatu within the context of South-South cooperation, the Non Aligned Movement, the Commonwealth, the Asia Development Bank and ESCAP with a view to further promoting the interests of the developing world.

9. Mr. Prime Minister, trade and economic collaboration can only thrive within a climate of peace and stability. As members of the international community our two countries have the responsibility, however modest, to contribute to the process of developing such a climate. Vanuatu's active role in promoting better ties with its neighbours in the Asia Pacific region and its contribution of troops to the South Pacific Peace Keeping Force to provide security for the Peace Conference in Bougainville recently bear testimony to its constructive approach in the interest of regional peace and stability.

10. Malaysia, similarly, is concerned with the preservation of peace and stability in the South East Asia region. We believe in promoting dialogue as the primary means of resolving conflicts and in enhancing confidence building measures.

11. At the global level, efforts should be made together

with other like-minded countries to evolve the most appropriate response to various challenges and opportunities brought about by changes in the political and economic landscape.

12. Mr. Prime Minister, your visit marks an important milestone in the relations between our two countries. It is my sincere hope that it will usher in a new, positive and active era in Malaysia-Vanuatu relations.