

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

EVENT: DINNER HOSTED BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. SAM NUJOMA,  
PRESIDENT OF NAMIBIA

VENUE: WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

DATE: 25 AUG 1995

TIME:

May I, first of all, express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Your Excellency for the kind and spontaneous invitation extended to me and my wife to visit Namibia for the second time. I also wish to take this opportunity to thank Your Excellency, the Government and the people of Namibia for once again according us such a warm and friendly welcome as well as generous hospitality.

2. This afternoon I was discussing with the Prime Minister how things have changed. I am visiting a country ruled by terrorists, or at least former terrorist. Yet this country is peaceful and well administered and is growing fast. The terrorists or ex-terrorists are not at all seeking revenge. Instead they are so friendly even with those people who were not so friendly with them before. I will not encourage people to become terrorist because of this. But I hope we do not rush to call people terrorist without giving them a chance to demonstrate their good intentions.

3. I am delighted to be here again, to touch base with you on issues of common interest and especially on ways and means of further strengthening the bilateral relations between Malaysia and Namibia. The way relations between our two countries have been developing since we last met in 1992 reaffirm my belief in Namibia as a friend and partner with whom Malaysia can work with for mutual benefit.

4. I am most encouraged by the frequent exchange of visits at ministerial and official levels as well as by members of the private sector which has led to close economic interaction between our two countries. The volume of our bilateral trade has seen significant increase over the last two years and a start has been made by Malaysian companies to invest in this country.

5. I am therefore looking forward to my visit to Grootfontein tomorrow and see for myself the fruit of the first Malaysia-Namibia joint-venture in the area of housing. Modest as this project may seem, it

nevertheless exemplifies what we, the countries of the South, can do together in support of development. The support and encouragement that Your Excellency and the government of Namibia had rendered, gives me every reason to be optimistic that Malaysia-Namibia cooperation is on the way to a healthy growth.

6. Malaysia is aware that tremendous opportunities exist for cooperation and investment in the fields of tourism, construction, mining and fishing. I assure you, Your Excellency, that the Malaysian Government will do everything it can to encourage the Malaysian private sector to work with your people to seize those opportunities. We are always concerned that the people of Namibia should benefit from those opportunities. Perhaps it is necessary for them to acquire certain skills and expertise. The government of Malaysia would be most pleased to contribute towards the development of those skills and expertise should the government of Namibia so require. Malaysia had provided training to Namibians in selected fields in the past. It is ready to continue doing so if Namibia finds such training useful.

7. We have been most impressed by the policies the government of Namibia has followed under your wise leadership. The priority that government has placed on economic development has directly benefitted the people of Namibia. Your success and that of your party at the last general elections is testimony to the trust and support the people of Namibia have placed in you. We are confident that the Republic of Namibia will continue to benefit from your pragmatism and willingness to compromise in the long term interest of the nation.

8. I welcome your decision to have full diplomatic representative in Kuala Lumpur. In view of our increasing involvement with each other I will recommend to my Cabinet that we reciprocate your move.

9. Several important developments have taken place in southern Africa since my last visit to Namibia. Apartheid is dead and a new South Africa - non-racial and democratic - has emerged. In Mozambique peace has returned. These developments have made a significant contribution to peace and stability in the Southern African region. Countries of the region can now direct their attention towards economic development free from distractions and the threat of war. Malaysia welcomes these positive changes which we hope would have an equally positive influence on efforts to find a peaceful and durable settlement in Angola. In this regard, we would like to pay tribute to Namibia for the active role it had played in support of such efforts.

10. Malaysia like Namibia finds it difficult to make

an impact on the international scene. We will only be taken seriously if we speak with greater unity. We would like to work closely with Namibia in international fora such as the UN, NAM and the Commonwealth. In order to be effective we would like to consult and discuss international issues more frequently with each other. In this way we can respond more effectively when others make decisions affecting us.

11. May I once again express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to you and the Government of Namibia for the kind hospitality extended to us and for receiving us with such warmth and friendliness. My wife and I will take home with us many pleasant memories of this visit.