

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

EVENT: THE LAUNCHING OF THE MALAYSIA COMMONWEALTH POLICY STUDIES
CENTRE

VENUE: CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND

DATE: 15 MAR 1995

TIME:

I wish to thank you for your very warm words of welcome and the kind invitation to launch the Malaysia Commonwealth Policy Studies Centre at Cambridge today. It is indeed an honour to be given the opportunity to chair the Board of Trustees of the Centre. May I also take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the distinguished Commonwealth personalities who have agreed to serve on the Board. I certainly look forward to working closely with you to make the Centre a distinctive centre of research for the Commonwealth.

2. The Commonwealth represents a free association of sovereign states whose peoples constitute about one quarter of the world's population. Diverse as they may be in their racial origins, cultures, languages and faiths, they are nevertheless linked together by shared traditions and the belief that their interests are best served through cooperation and partnership. Over the years, the Commonwealth has increasingly relied upon these principles and beliefs, in the search for a better world. As a result of the Commonwealth's efforts in promoting fundamental values that all its members share, we have become quite credible examples of political maturity and democracy in many instances.

3. The members of the Commonwealth have also been able to forge ahead in various fields of socio-economic development. Although much has been done in these areas we cannot but feel that even more needs to be done to alleviate the many socio-economic problems which confront member states.

4. In the years ahead, the Commonwealth would need to focus more sharply on those issues of real concern to its members. This would ensure that the Commonwealth continues to remain responsive and relevant to the needs of its members.

5. The Commonwealth needs to look ahead. In doing so, it could draw upon the various experiences that it has undergone since its inception. The establishment of the Malaysia Commonwealth Studies Centre today is, I think, timely.

6. I am confident that this Centre will serve with distinction as a centre for research to assist Commonwealth countries in achieving some of the objectives of the Commonwealth. The Centre hopefully will play its role as a think-tank to identify and offer solutions to some of the problems faced by member states. Issues such as modern administration, political systems, economic planning and development, food, shelter, health and education can be addressed by this Centre. It will no doubt help to light the way and reduce the pitfalls which seem to plague many Governments in their effort to develop especially those which achieved independence after the last war.

7. The location of the Malaysia Commonwealth Policy Studies Centre here in the University of Cambridge should enable it to benefit from the renowned learning and expertise of this great university. It will thus be well placed to provide ideas, and the necessary stimulus and direction for new thinking within the Commonwealth. Malaysia is honoured to be associated with the Centre and would continue to contribute to the development and success of the Centre.

8. I am optimistic that this Centre would play an important role in assisting Commonwealth countries to respond to the challenges of the future.

9. I hereby have great pleasure in launching the Malaysia Commonwealth Policy Studies Centre.