

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

EVENT: THE OFFICIAL DINNER HOSTED BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. MARI ALKATIRI  
PRIME MINISTER OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE

VENUE: BALLROOM, HOTEL TIMOR, DILI

DATE: 23 OCT 2003

TIME:

Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for your kind words of welcome. It is indeed a pleasure for me to be in Dili. I am delighted that I have been able to undertake this visit to Timor-Leste before I leave office.

2. On behalf of my wife and members of my delegation, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you, your Government and the people of Timor-Leste for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements extended to us since our arrival in your beautiful country.

3. Timor-Leste is an extraordinary and remarkable country. Your strength lies in your people, whose resourcefulness, determination and grit overcame 24 years of struggle. Your country has been a symbol of courage. Timor-Leste can stand tall and proud, as equals among nations. Malaysia is proud to have been given the privilege of welcoming Timor-Leste as the newest member of the Non Aligned Movement at the last NAM Summit held in Kuala Lumpur last February.

4. I am happy to note the positive trend in the bilateral relations between Malaysia and Timor-Leste over the last three years. At the same time, I believe much more need to be done if we are to realise the full potential of our bilateral economic interaction which is negligible.

5. The appointment of the first Ambassador of Malaysia to Timor-Leste is a testament to the strength of our relationship, which characterises the warm friendship since diplomatic ties were established through the Liaison Office in 2001, which was eventually upgraded to an Embassy last May 2002. Our bilateral ties, premised on mutual respect and understanding has seen remarkable progress since the establishment of your Embassy in Kuala Lumpur in October 2002.

6. Malaysia follows with keen interest Timor-Leste's efforts to improve the economic and social well being of her people. Timor-Leste has enormous potential with her untapped natural resources, and more importantly its young