

VERBATIM TEXT

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THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO MALAYSIA
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Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. On behalf of the Government, the people of Malaysia, of course it is our honour to welcome our dear friend President the Republic of South Africa, Cyril Ramofosa and members of the South African delegation.
2. We have, as referred to in our series of meetings today and my early meetings with the President and lately in Rio, Brazil we are known to each other one another and the fact that our relations has been close even during the apartheid and our affection for Madiba Nelson Mandela is well known.
3. And in fact, I mentioned that we were invited after the initial reconciliation with the suggestion of Nelson Mandela to invite Vice President Frederik Willem de Klerk to Malaysia to showcase the multiracial multi religious entity and the working relations between all the major races in this country.

4. I was also fortunate that soon after I was released from prison 2004, Nelson Mandela invited me and the family to spend some time with him in Joburg. Before then I proceeded to Cape Town. So, you see, the relations are not only diplomatic or Government-Government, but it was a very personal and emotional journey in advancing a cause for human dignity, freedom, and justice.
5. President Cyril Ramaphosa, to us, represents also a new voice, a voice of conscience, tenacity, and conviction defending justice and human rights across the continent in Africa, and more so up to Gaza. They are very prominent player in the Hague initiative at the ICC, and of course, on behalf of Malaysians generally, I must also express my profound gratitude for this courage to defend what is right.
6. Because without historical antecedents is one, historical experience must teach us what you went through. Of course total hardship unimaginable under this period of time. But then, you have to showcase that this experience must teach humanity a lesson. Well, in some areas, people unfortunately have not learned.
7. Now, on a bilateral basis, we agreed both my colleagues, the Cabinet members, and yours have agreed that we need to enhance the Malaysian strategy is to expand new trading partners whilst continuing with existing conventional arrangements.

8. We have decided to open up, that's why we have members in terms of expanding the trade, intra-ASEAN trade, and focus in Asia. But we also realised that through BRICS we have now been very committed to expand our trade relations with Africa and Latin America.
9. Africa and South Africa also has a special place of influence and your economic strength, both in the defence, agriculture and related industries. So, we are given assurance that we will continue to collaborate even in new areas other than palm oil which is ongoing, semiconductor, halal, agriculture and defence. We're expanding this to education and research in universities and scientific institutions of research, and the ministers here will have various other ministers who will then follow this through.
10. Now again, congratulations, President Ramaphosa, for being given this Honorary Doctorate in International Relations by University Malaya, and this is second after Nelson Mandela in 1990. So you can see this strength, the son of South Africa being honoured by Malaysians generally.

Thank you again for being here.

QUESTION: ZAKIAH KOYA THE STAR

South Africa plays an active role in BRICS, while Malaysia is influential in ASEAN. How can both groupings collaborate more effectively to shape a more balanced global economic order?

ANSWER

To follow up on the session by the President, I would say that Malaysia is essentially a trading nation and we believe in globalisation and multilateral arrangements, and to effect this change, we have to open up new markets.

So, of course, the fundamental concern and priority is economic collaboration. But in this polarised setting, we realise that discussions should extend to other areas culture, the arts, research, education and, more so, about the essential sentiments and aspirations to protect human dignity and honour. And with President Ramaphosa, we discussed that there is clearly a clear deficit in terms of political leaders in terms of protecting honour, dignity, and the lack of compassion.

So, other than trading arrangements, which we have to open up because Malaysia, for example, cannot be totally dependent on a few countries because the market is expanding, the economy is growing and to ensure our own survival, than we have to take very pragmatic, practical measures to enhance intra-ASEAN trade and collaborate further, more effectively, within the region of Asia.

Therefore, in this globalised world, we have to secure friends particularly friends that share common vision, common ideas and that's

why, when I was given the opportunity to chair ASEAN, I said two countries that I would certainly focus, because I believe in them. And express the same sentiments with their leaders — so South Africa and Brazil.

And I'm so happy, of course, and delighted with my colleagues that they are here. And from here, we move further. But again, the test is not in these meetings. The test is whether we can concretise and execute what we have decided.

Thank you.