

Release No: 23/NOVEMBER

02-1/95/11/15

95-GCT-33

SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER GOH CHOK TONG AT THE DINNER
HOSTED IN HONOUR OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
ZIMBABWE, HE MR ROBERT GABRIEL MUGABE, AT ORIENTAL
HOTEL ON 15 NOVEMBER 1995 AT 8.00 PM

I have great pleasure tonight in welcoming a good friend and a respected international statesman, the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, His Excellency Mr Robert Mugabe. Your visit, Excellency, is a great honour to the government and people of Singapore. It marks the close friendship between our two countries.

National Archives of Singapore

It gives me special pleasure to welcome you in Singapore because I have had the honour to visit your beautiful country four years ago to attend the Harare CHOMG. Zimbabwe is a relatively young country. It had a troubled, difficult birth. But in the last 15 years, under Your Excellency's able leadership, Zimbabwe has experienced peace and prosperity.

Zimbabwe and Singapore may be separated by geography. But we have co-operated and worked closely at the UN, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Commonwealth. There are many areas where we have common views. And there is much we can share with each other. It is my hope that your visit here will add another impetus to our bilateral relations.

Zimbabwe has played an active role in international affairs. At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Auckland, you contributed significantly to our deliberations at the Retreat. I attached great weight to your views as did our other colleagues. Your standing and influence in the Commonwealth is unmistakable. However, such influence also carries with it great responsibility. I know that you, as a statesman, are not only concerned with developments in your country but also in your continent Africa.

National Archives of Singapore

You will recall that in Auckland I had identified three revolutions that are sweeping across the world. The electronic technology revolution has changed the way we communicate and do things. The democratic revolution will, I hope, lead to good government. The third revolution, the economic revolution for open markets and trade liberalisation, is raising the standards of living of more than 2 billion people.

Asia is being swept up by the economic revolution, as are parts of South America. These emerging economies have posted steady growth and investments.

Africa must join this global revolution. You have the advantage of being in a position to learn from our mistakes. In our rush to grow and develop, many of us in Asia made mistakes that could have been avoided. This is the reason why I had suggested in Auckland that the Commonwealth Secretariat should undertake a study of successful economies within the Commonwealth. There may be no single development path. But there are fundamental economic values that are common to those countries which enjoy high growth.

Africa can take advantage of the immense opportunities provided by the emerging economies of Asia. This will ensure that the benefits of growth are evenly spread among nations and among continents.

Zimbabwe can play a crucial role in this economic revolution. As a key player in Southern Africa, Zimbabwe can become a force for trade liberalisation and for open markets in Africa. I am happy to see a large business delegation here tonight from Zimbabwe. As governments, we can lead the way. We must

build the bridge for our private sectors. But ultimately it is the business communities who trade and invest.

The Singapore government encourages its businessmen to invest overseas. Our businessmen have invested actively in China, India and Indo-China. There is scope to expand their interests to Zimbabwe.

Singapore is happy to share its developmental experience with Zimbabwe. Under the Singapore Co-operation Programme, we have trained some of your nationals in various fields, such as productivity management and telecommunications. We will be happy to do more.

It is my hope that your visit to Singapore will spark strong interest in your country's economic opportunities. I thank you for accepting my invitation to visit Singapore. Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I ask you to rise as I propose a toast to His Excellency, President Robert Mugabe:

To your good health,

And to peace and prosperity for the people of Zimbabwe.

PMO(7)/pmnov15.'95

National Archives of Singapore