

Biography of Mr. Razali Ismail, President of the 51st Session of the General Assembly

Razali Ismail, who was today elected President of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, has been Malaysia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations since June 1988. He is also his country's ambassador to Cuba and its High Commissioner to Barbados, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago.

As Malaysia's Permanent Representative, the new Assembly President has served in various capacities in the United Nations. From 1989 to 1990, he headed Malaysia's delegation to the Security Council, where he was President in June 1989 and July 1990. In 1990, he chaired the Security Council Committee on the South African arms embargo, and in 1991 he served as Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council.

In 1992, Mr. Razali headed Malaysia's delegation to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), and in 1993 he was elected Chairman of the Commission on Sustainable Development. He also served as Vice-Chairman, representing Asia, of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations. In 1989, Mr. Razali was Chairman of the "Group of 77" developing countries.

Mr. Razali, a career diplomat, joined his country's foreign service in 1962. Prior to his current assignment, he had served, from 1985, as Deputy Secretary-General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in charge of political affairs. He was Malaysia's Ambassador to India (1982-1985) and, before that, to Poland (1978-1982), concurrently accredited to Hungary, the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia.

His other assignments were as follows: Chargé d'affaires in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic (1974-1976); Counsellor in the Malaysian High Commission in London (1970-1972); and Second Secretary of Malaysia's Embassy in Paris (1966-1968). From 1964 to 1966, he was Malaysia's Assistant High Commissioner in Madras. He also served in his country's High Commission in New Delhi from 1963 to 1964.

Mr. Razali has been a member of Malaysia's delegations to meetings of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Non-Aligned Movement, the Commonwealth and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. He was Adviser to the Prime Minister of Malaysia when he chaired the United Nations International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, held in Vienna in 1987. From 1989 to 1990, he was member of the Board of Directors of the International Peace Academy.

Mr. Razali was conferred the title of Dato' Setia Diraja Kedah in 1985, and the Panglima Setia Mahkota in 1991. In 1992, he received the Langkawi Environment Award from his Government.

Mr. Razali holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree in the humanities and literature, has received an Honorary Doctorate from the National University of Malaysia, and from 1993 to 1995 was Adjunct Professor of International Studies at Michigan State University. He is a member of the International Advisory Panel of the International World Trust, Malaysia; a fellow of the Institute for Environment and Development, National University of Malaysia; and a member of the Board of Advisers of Wetlands International Asia-Pacific, Malaysia.

Born in Kedah, Malaysia in 1939, Mr. Razali is married and has three children.