



Permanent Mission of
Malaysia
to the United Nations

Revised Version

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. HAMIDON ALI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ON
AGENDA ITEM 64: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN
&
AGENDA ITEM 65: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE FOURTH WORLD
CONFERENCE ON WOMEN AND OF THE TWENTY-THIRD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AT
THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE 60TH SESSION OF THE UNGA
NEW YORK, 13TH OCTOBER 2005**

Mdm. Chair,

1. My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by Jamaica as Chairman of G77 and China on the agenda items under consideration. However, I wish to take this opportunity to make a brief statement on a number of issues of particular interest to my delegation.

Mdm. Chair,

2. Since our independence in 1957, Malaysian women have actively participated and contributed towards the social and economic development of the country. This was made possible by the Government's position that women are an important resource that can be mobilised to achieve the national development agenda.

3. Malaysia regards the Beijing Platform of Action, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW), and the Millennium Development Goals as inextricably linked. Their principles and goals are compatible with our national agenda towards ensuring the promotion and fulfilment of women's rights and fundamental freedoms. The National Action Plan for the Advancement of Women, formulated in 1997, outlines several measures to enhance the status of women in all areas of concern.

4. Changes have been made in the legal and institutional framework to protect, preserve and safeguard the rights and improve the status of women. The Government continues to ensure that women are not left out on the national development process. As the country

progresses towards achieving greater gender equality, the role of the government has been supportive, pre-eminent and continuous. Women in Malaysia have greatly benefited from the Government's poverty reduction policies and strategies including improvement in health and education services, basic infrastructure, access to economic resources and access to markets.

5. An important factor that contributed towards the social and economic advancement of women was the large investment in education accompanied by the provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all. The UNESCO Literacy Project Data (1998) indicated that female literacy rate is expected to increase from 83.5 per cent in 2000 to 89.8 per cent in 2010. Female primary and secondary school enrolment in local public institutions reflect the gender ratio in the country, and intake into public universities have also expanded significantly from 56.2 per cent in 2000 to 60.9 per cent in 2003.

6. At the workplace, women have managed to break the proverbial glass ceiling. Many hold high-ranking positions in the Government as well as in the private sector.

7. With the advent of information and communication technology (ICT), States should ensure that women are not once again left behind, this time in the information revolution. Recognising that ICT can contribute to the empowerment of women and to reducing gender inequalities, efforts have been taken by the Malaysian government to improve women's access to such technology, in order to achieve an informed and computer-literate society. Women's access to information and communications technology has improved greatly through training programmes. In line with the demands and needs of the industry, more educational and training opportunities are being provided to enable women to meet the demands of the knowledge-based economy and improve their upward mobility in the labour market.

8. Special emphasis is given to programmes to improve the economic well-being of women, particularly in the rural areas. These include measures to facilitate the involvement of women in business through the provision of easy access to capital as well as special assistance schemes for women entrepreneurs.

9. Access to health and medical care is a priority area in the national development programme. The average female life expectancy has continued to improve and the maternal mortality rate, an indicator of the health status of women, remained low at 0.3 per 1000 live births in 2004. In view of the fact that women, especially young women, are in the high-risk category in terms of vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, greater emphasis is being given towards awareness, prevention and treatment. Awareness campaigns on "Women and AIDS" are being conducted and efforts being made to involve men with a view to focus on behavioural change.

Mdm. Chair,

10. The issue of violence against women is an area of great concern to Malaysia. Violence against women, including domestic violence, is viewed as an important social issue to be addressed in a holistic manner. Measures undertaken by the Government, in collaboration with NGOs, have made significant progress towards eliminating domestic violence and other crimes against women. We are also concerned about the trafficking of women and girls for sexual

exploitation, pornography, prostitution and sex tourism, and urge continued international efforts to eliminate this new form of human slavery.

Mdm. Chair,

11. Women have an important role to play in conflict resolution. Their role and positive influence should also extend to include their involvement and participation in peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building. It is in this respect that my delegation would like to reiterate the importance of strengthening women's role in decision-making, so as to preclude, as far as possible, conflicts from erupting in the first place. Women also play a pivotal role in the area of disaster reduction, response and recovery as well as in natural resource management. We urge all States to ensure the full participation of women in decision-making processes towards sustainable development, as well as disaster reduction management at all levels.

12. In line with our National Policy on Women, Malaysia welcomes the positive contributions of members of the civil society in the advancement of women. Partnerships between governments and NGOs in programmes to further enhance and facilitate the mainstreaming of women in the economy and development processes is a sure way to ensure the advancement of women and the attainment of gender equality.

Mdm. Chair,

13. In May this year, Malaysia hosted the Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement on the Advancement of Women, where member countries of NAM adopted the Putrajaya Declaration and Programme of Action on the Advancement of Women in Member Countries of the Non-Aligned Movement. The Declaration and Programme of Action signifies the recognition of and commitment by the NAM Member Countries to the advancement of women. The Declaration, inter-alia, reaffirms that the participation of women and the integration of their perspectives, in all sectors and at all levels, are essential to their empowerment and to the achievement of gender equality and equity. With this Declaration, NAM is also committed to integrating the issue of the advancement of women into the mainstream programmes and activities of the Movement. It was also agreed that the NAM Ministerial Meeting on the Advancement of Women be convened on a biennial basis.

14. Malaysia reiterates its commitment and will continue to take all necessary measures to fulfill its obligations to empower its women.

Thank you, Mdm. Chair.