



Permanent Mission of
Malaysia
to the United Nations

**STATEMENT BY
THE HONOURABLE DATO' DR. NG YEN YEN
DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE I
REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA**

**ON AGENDA ITEM 42:
GLOBAL AGENDA FOR DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILIZATIONS
AND
AGENDA ITEM 43:
CULTURE OF PEACE**

**AT THE PLENARY SESSION OF THE 60TH SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
THURSDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2005**

Mr. President,

First and foremost, my delegation would like to thank the Secretary General for his reports on the promotion of inter-religious dialogue; the state of global agenda for dialogue among Civilizations; and the Secretary-General's note on Midterm global review of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and non-violence for the children of the World, 2001-2010.

Mr. President,

2. The desire for peace has always run parallel to the innate nature of humankind to battle against each other. Our modern history has witnessed two horrible world wars that have brought untold sorrow and suffering to mankind. In order to save succeeding generations from the scourge of such wars the United Nations was founded with the solemn determination to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another. It is disheartening to note that recent tragic events - from the terrorist attack on September 11, the Madrid and London bombing to the latest incident in Bali - have further exacerbated the widening gap between civilizations, and generated negative perspective of Islam particularly among the non-Muslims in the West and elsewhere. There is a dire need to correct the misconception that acts of terrorism are sanctioned by any particular religion or culture. Terrorism must be attributed to the perpetrator and not the religion they profess. It is totally unjustifiable to associate terrorism with

any particular race or religion. The root causes of the any act of terrorism must be carefully examined in order to effectively address and combat terrorism.

3. The international community must recognize the importance of engaging communities in the promotion of religious and cultural understanding and the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance. However, it is regrettable that these issues are being approached within the narrow perspective of a sub-set of the larger debate on counter terrorism, which represents a superficial manner in dealing with the real issues.

4. Realizing this ominous trend, Malaysia supports initiatives such as the culture of peace, dialogue among civilizations, and inter-faith dialogues, which are important international efforts towards the promotion of mutual understanding and cooperation through inter-cultural, inter-civilisational and inter-religious programmes. We believe that positive interaction among peoples of diverse cultures and values would contribute to the attainment of global peace and stability, which are essential for the achievement of sustainable economic and social development.

Mr. President,

5. In Malaysia, we live in a national setting which is multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural. Islam, the official religion, and other religions and faiths co-exist in a tolerant environment. The Government has embarked on a programme to communicate a proper appreciation of Islam as a force for good and progress that places emphasis on development, consistent with the tenets of Islam and focuses on enhancing the quality of life. We call this approach Islam Hadhari or Civilizational Islam, which is being promoted by the Prime Minister of Malaysia since 2004. Through this approach, Malaysia has successfully managed its multi-racial and multi-religious society in a fair manner.

6. The civil society in Malaysia has also embarked on various initiatives to promote a culture of peace and inter-religious dialogue, of which I would only enumerate a few. In April 2002 and March 2003, the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia initiated an interfaith dialogue in Kuala Lumpur, which was participated by representatives of major religious groups in Malaysia. Another effort by a Malaysian civil society is to establish the People's Alliance for Peace Malaysia (Peace Malaysia), which is active in peace and humanitarian aid activities. The activities of Peace Malaysia have become global in reach including aiding tsunami victims in Indonesia and Sri Lanka as well as championing the rights of the Palestinian people.

7. At the international level, Malaysia hosted the inaugural meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) commission of eminent persons, from 27 to 29 January 2005 in Putrajaya. This meeting outlined proposals for cross-cultural and interreligious dialogue, including through regional and

multilateral organizations. Malaysia will also be organizing the 3rd Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) Ministerial Conference on Cultures and Civilizations in Kuala Lumpur in 2007.

Mr. President,

8. My delegation is relating the Malaysian experience to emphasize the point that there is a national as well as an international dimension to the issue of peaceful and cooperative co-existence between religions, cultures and civilizations. Malaysia believes that if Governments can succeed in instituting a culture of tolerance and moderation among people at the domestic level, it would be easy for nation states to cooperate in promoting tolerance and moderation among nationalities and cultures at the international level.

Thank you.