



Permanent Mission of
Malaysia
to the United Nations

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STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HAMIDON ALI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON BEHALF OF
THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)

ON AGENDA ITEM 73:
STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN
AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS,
INCLUDING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

AT
THE PLENARY OF THE 60TH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, 14 NOVEMBER 2005

Mr. President,

I have the honour to introduce a draft resolution entitled "Strengthening Emergency Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Prevention in the Aftermath of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Disaster" on behalf of the ASEAN member countries, namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam, and my country, Malaysia and the co-sponsors which are listed in the draft resolution as well as other additional co-sponsors.

2. Let me first begin by thanking the Secretary-General for all his reports prepared under the agenda item 73 on "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations".

Mr. President,

3. It has been proven times and again how vulnerable we all are to the violent and destructive forces of nature. Natural disasters and calamities have often hit us without prior warning. For most of the countries in the developing world that lack sophisticated high-tech early warning equipments, the natural disasters have inflicted untold miseries, devastation to properties and lost of human lives. As we have witnessed on many occasions the impacts of the destruction have placed heavy burden on the social and economic fabric of the affected countries, particularly on the developing and least developed countries. Many of us, in varying degrees, have our share of the experience in struggling to rebuild and recover from the devastation in the aftermath of natural disasters. The struggle to cope and rebuild from the pieces of the destruction could have been more painful and daunting if not for the support and assistance that have been rallied around the world in the name of humanity. In facing the pain and suffering caused by natural disasters the affected countries could only seek solace in the overwhelming expression of international cooperation, assistance, solidarity and sympathy. We recall with deep sense of appreciation such demonstration of humanity by governments, rich and poor, NGOs and individuals all around the world to offer their helping hands in the wake of Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami on 26 December 2004.

4. With a globalized media network, the response to such a tragedy was quick and unprecedented, enabling international organizations including the United Nations and other entities to organize emergency assistance to reach the affected countries in due time. Once again we would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge our appreciation to the international community and the UN system for their support and assistance in saving thousands of lives and assisting millions of tsunami victims to rebuild their future. It is our responsibility to ensure the sustainability of the international attention and the continuing support to the reconstruction efforts in the tsunami affected countries even though the issue no longer enjoys broad international media coverage.

5. Be that as it may, the governments of affected countries in the Indian Ocean rim have continued with their obligations on reconstruction and restoring normal life for their people. At the same time efforts have been made to ensure that necessary preventive measure are put in place to protect their people from such destructive forces in the future.

6. In this context, we have agreed to establish the necessary measures with the involvement of the international community, UN system, international organizations, international financial institutions, civil society as well as private sector as set out in the General Assembly Resolution 59/279 of 19 January 2005 on "Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster". In the implementation of the resolution, we are pleased to report that shelter programs have been prepared and implemented and there were no major outbreaks of pandemic disease in the affected areas. Nonetheless we continue to be mindful of the remaining challenges in ensuring the full implementation of medium and long-term rehabilitation and community-driven reconstruction.

Mr. President,

7. We have to acknowledge that the task and the responsibility for the affected governments to undertake the efforts of reconstruction and redevelopment of the area and provinces devastated by the tsunami are far from easy. Nonetheless the affected

governments are committed to ensure that the reconstruction and redevelopment efforts are aimed toward providing the people with better future and safer environment in line with the high expectations of their people and the donor community. We have to be mindful that this is not only a challenge to the tsunami-affected countries, but also for the international community in ensuring a continued, effective management and coordination in the transition between humanitarian assistance and development. There is a need to look at the broader agenda with the formulation of longer-term goals to assist the tsunami-affected populations. This would involve an effective coordination among the Governments of affected countries, relevant bodies of the United Nations system, donor countries, regional and international financial institutions, civil society and private sector in ensuring equity of assistance among the affected communities.

8. It is our expectation that both the tsunami affected countries and donor communities must remain committed to promoting transparency and accountability with respect to the channeling and utilization of resources which will facilitate the long-term sustainability on the recovery and reconstruction efforts. Furthermore, the capacity of the United Nations and international community to respond and to deal with emergency humanitarian situations in countries affected by natural calamities should be enhanced in order to address the problem promptly with greater capacity, quality and accountability.

Mr. President,

9. ASEAN has undertaken several steps forward in strengthening regional and national capacity. In this connection, ASEAN is pleased to inform that it has concluded the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response in July 2005. It is an agreement that facilitates response and disaster reduction activities in the region. In the same way, we also welcome the establishment of a Multi-Donor Voluntary Trust Fund on the Tsunami Early Warning Arrangement in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia, which will contribute to the setting-up of a network of an early warning system and to build up capacity of the region in dealing with natural disasters. An ASEAN-UN Seminar on Humanitarian Assistance and Rapid Response Capacity was also held last October to identify concrete steps to enhance ASEAN's response capacity.

10. Against this background, I am pleased to introduce a draft resolution presented before you, A/60/L.20. We would like to thank delegations that have been cooperating with ASEAN and all those delegations that, by co-sponsoring the resolution, join ASEAN and affected countries in voicing their concerns and interest on this issue.

11. The draft resolution essentially proposes to update General Assembly resolution 59/279 of 19 January 2005, incorporating additional paragraphs from the Joint Asian-African Leaders' Statement on Tsunami, Earthquake and Other Natural Disasters adopted at the Asian-African Summit 2005 and the report of the Secretary-General on "Strengthening Emergency Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, Recovery and Prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Disaster" as well as World Conference on Disaster Reduction and other initiatives. The updated resolution focuses on seven main aspects:

First, the reaffirmation of the commitment of the Heads of States and Governments as reflected in the 2005 World Summit Outcome to work expeditiously towards the establishment of a worldwide early warning system for all natural hazards, building on existing national and

regional capacity such as the newly established Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System;

Second, the continued support and generous contributions of the international community particularly on further rehabilitation and reconstruction;

Third, the appointment of President Bill Clinton as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery and the expression of appreciation on the efforts undertaken by the Special Envoy;

Fourth, the establishment of the Global Consortium for Tsunami-Affected Countries to sustain the political will of the international community to support medium and long-term rehabilitation, reconstruction and risk reduction efforts led by the Governments of the tsunami affected countries;

Fifth, the importance of transparency and accountability from the perspectives of donor and recipient countries;

Sixth, requesting the Secretary-General to continue to explore ways to strengthen the rapid response capacities of the international community to provide immediate humanitarian relief, building on existing arrangements and ongoing initiatives; and

Seventh, the importance of developing stronger institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels through promoting public education, awareness and community participation.

Mr. President,

12. On behalf of the co-sponsors, I wish to inform you that there are two amendments need to be made on the draft resolution circulated before you. First, in preambular eleven, in the second line, the words 'South-East' should be read as one word i.e. 'Southeast'. Second, in the same preambular, in the third line, the phrase 'a multinodal early warning system network' suppose to be deleted and be replaced with 'an early warning system'. Preambular eleven should be read as:

"Welcoming also the establishment of the Multi-Donor Voluntary Trust Fund on Tsunami Early Warning Arrangements in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia, which will contribute to setting up an early warning system and to building up the capacity of the region in dealing with natural disasters,"

13. Mr. President, in conclusion, I wish to express that ASEAN looks forward to member states of the United Nations' continuing support for this important resolution and the adoption of the resolution by consensus.

Thank you, Mr. President.