



Permanent Mission of
Malaysia
to the United Nations

**STATEMENT BY MR. M. ASHRI MUDA
REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA
ON
AGENDA ITEM 56:
ERADICATION OF POVERTY AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT ISSUES
(a) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIRST UNITED NATIONS
DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY (1997-2006)
AT
THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 60TH SESSION
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK
ON TUESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2005**

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, my delegation would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report as contained in document A/60/314 entitled "The Centrality of Employment to Poverty Eradication". My delegation also would like to associate itself with the statement made earlier by the Distinguished Representative of Jamaica, on behalf of the Group 77 and China. Nevertheless we wish to highlight a few issues of interest to Malaysia.

Mr. Chairman,

2. The 2005 World Summit outcome has once again reaffirmed our commitment to the eradication of poverty and to the promotion of sustained economic growth, sustainable development and global prosperity for all. Earlier, we have committed to implement multi-dimensional measures in dealing with poverty under the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997–2006). The commitment made was further reinforced when the Millennium Declaration in 2000 proclaimed the eradication of poverty as the first achievable target of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, despite all these commitments and awareness in combating poverty, the world in general has not achieved much. More than one billion people are still living in extreme poverty surviving on less than US\$1 a day and in some countries the situation of extreme poverty seem to have exacerbated further.

3. Against this backdrop, it is pertinent for all of us to continue to focus on strengthening implementation of the poverty eradication programmes at all levels with an integrated approach. Malaysia concurs with the notion that the responsibility for poverty eradication rests primarily with national governments. However, solo efforts by national governments alone without the requisite support from the international system and the community that represent the system will not bring much success. No nation will be able to fully generate positive economic growth without the support of a conducive and enabling international environment. Market access as well as foreign direct investments is among the many important factors that

would contribute to promoting economic growth and generating productive employment. If we are really serious in eradicating poverty across the globe, national governments should not only be assisted and encouraged to formulate and implement the right development policies and programmes, but also the international community in particular the developed partners must extend the necessary support to enable these countries to achieve reasonable economic growth.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The Government of Malaysia is committed to eradicate poverty nationally, and gives priority to efforts in further elevating the status and quality of life of the lower income group. In Malaysia, the thrust of our development planning has always been driven by the philosophy of “growth with equity”, and this principle has underpinned Malaysia’s efforts in the eradication of poverty. In order to improve the living conditions of the poor, Malaysia’s poverty eradication strategies have always place emphasis on efforts to enhance income-earning opportunities. Malaysia has always recognized the multidimensional nature of poverty and the need for practical and integrated approaches to effectively eradicate poverty. In this connection, our development plans are divided into core national policies, which are categorized as long-term, medium-term, annual, and special development plans; and sectoral and industry-specific master plans. All these plans were prepared taking into account inter-alia the existence of poverty in the society and the need to formulate strategies and measures to reduce poverty and to achieve a higher standard of living for all citizens.

5. One of our long-term plans, the New Economic Policy (NEP) which covered the period from 1970 to 1990, managed to reduce poverty from 49.3 per cent in 1970 to 16.5 per cent in 1990. Subsequent development policies such as the National Development Policy (NDP), National Vision Policy (NVP) and Vision 2020 had continued to incorporate elements of poverty eradication strategies in their implementation. With effective implementation of these policies, Malaysia’s poverty index has declined further and now stands at less than five per cent. In the coming years we will continue with the program of poverty eradication and our development policies will focus on the objective of reducing the incidence of hardcore poverty to zero per cent by the year 2009.

6. We concur with the Secretary-General whereby he had stated that since agriculture contributes significantly to the economy of developing countries, poverty reduction could not be achieved without focusing on this sector. It was also stated in his report that most of the poor in developing countries are not unemployed and half of the people living in poverty today are of working age. They work but in unproductive, low paying jobs where they cannot earn enough to rise above the poverty threshold. In this context, Malaysia has taken various concrete steps to raise the income of those employed in the agricultural sector. We have introduced the program of resettling the landless in new land development schemes, introduce new higher-yielding crops, integrate agricultural and rural development with downstream processing of farm products as small-scale industry among agricultural households for more added value; establishing direct markets for farmers in urban centers; training in terms of attitudinal change; as well as the application of improved production technology; and providing a better infrastructure for easier market access.

7. The Government of Malaysia had also provided assistance to the children of the poor by providing financial assistance or scholarships to enable them to further pursue their education until the tertiary and university levels, as we believe that better education would help them to

attain employment with higher incomes, which could then contribute to better living standards. Malaysia is also aware that in order to achieve greater success in the eradication of poverty and better economic growth with the implementation of various development programs, it is also important to enhance integrity, eradicate corruption and improve the public service delivery system. This will not only increase economy-wide efficiency and productivity but will also ensure that the implementation of the various programmes for the poor will reach their intended targets.

Mr. Chairman,

8. As the efforts to eradicate poverty would produce better results with a consolidated approach, external assistance from countries with advance technology is important to increase productivity and achieve higher incomes. Debt relief and Official development assistance (ODA) should continue to be provided to the needy countries as the liberated resources could then be directed towards activities consistent with poverty eradication, sustained economic growth and sustainable development. In our programmes of eradication of poverty, Malaysia has benefited from the assistance, guidance and cooperation that have been extended through the various bodies in the United Nations system such as the United Nations development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as well as the Bretton Woods Institutions. We look forward to continue working with them.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.