



*Permanent Mission of*  
**Malaysia**  
*to the United Nations*

**STATEMENT BY  
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MINISTER OF WOMEN, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
OF MALAYSIA**

**AT THE 50TH SESSION OF  
THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

**ON AGENDA ITEM 3: FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN  
AND TO THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ENTITLED, "WOMEN  
2000: GENDER EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST  
CENTURY"**

**New York, 1 March 2006**

Madam Chair,

The World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 was a significant breakthrough in the struggle to advance the status of women. However, while the outcome documents - the Beijing Declaration and Beijing Platform for Action - are significant milestones in this never-ending effort, they remain empty words if the will on our part, national and international communities, to realize them is absent. The concrete and action oriented measures contained therein must be given effect.

2. In this regard, Malaysia would like to commend the Secretary General's report (E/CN.6/2006/2) that provides information on actions taken by entities of the UN as well as some examples on initiatives taken by Governments, including Malaysia, in the areas related to the issues to be deliberated at this session, as outlined in CSW's multi-year programme of work. These illustrative examples would serve as models of best practices, lessons learned, and guidelines for us in our efforts to enhance the implementation of the Beijing Platform of action and other internationally agreed documents.

Madam Chair,

3. Malaysia believes that creating an enabling environment and mainstreaming a gender perspective into the national agenda are necessary to establish a foundation of equal rights and opportunities for women and men. It is in this spirit that the Malaysian Government constantly endeavors to reform its related mechanisms and institutions to enable them to take

active measures to redress any gender disparities and inequalities. Fresh insights are required to overcome not only the current disadvantage women face but also the effects of past disadvantage they have encountered.

Madam Chair,

4. The most significant measure taken by the Malaysian Government was the formulation of enabling legislations and policies. Malaysia's Federal Constitution fully recognizes and safeguards the rights of women. It contains explicit provisions that prohibit discrimination against women. Malaysia is now in the process of reviewing existing laws including in the area of Islamic Family Law, to identify and eliminate any provision that may have a negative impact on women, and will carry out gender impact analysis of all future draft laws.

5. In order to ensure the equitable sharing in the acquisition of resources, information, opportunities and benefits of development for men and women, the National Policy for Women and its Plan of Action were formulated in 1989 and are now being reviewed. Greater prominence has been given to promoting and achieving gender equality with the inclusion of a special chapter called "Women and Development" in Malaysia's Five Year Development Plans.

6. The establishment of the Ministry of Women and Family Development with a vision to achieving gender equality and strengthening the family institution in 2001 was another remarkable effort towards creating the enabling environment for the advancement of Malaysian women. With a separate Ministry dedicated to women's issues supported by a specific Women's Department and its 14 offices at state levels, gender mainstreaming and gender responsive processes across the whole country has been enhanced.

7. The catalytic role of national mechanisms is strengthened by the setting up of the Ministry of Women and Family Development, the establishment of the Cabinet Committee on Gender Equality chaired by the Hon. Prime Minister, the setting up of Gender Focal Points in all Ministries and Government agencies, the inclusion of specific chapter on "Women and Development" in our Five Year Development Plan, the inter-ministerial working groups and technical working groups on critical areas of concerned, as well as the broadening of networking and sharing of good practices with government agencies, gender centers and experts in and outside the country.

Madam Chair,

8. Recognizing that access to quality education, employment, and health is the key to achieving gender equality, the Government has dedicated unwavering attention to ensure that males and females have equal access and equal opportunities. Our success at providing Malaysian women with a high level of education has empowered many of them to hold high-level jobs and participate in formal decision-making processes, as well as provided them with access to more resources and better health services. To name a few, our Minister of International Trade and Industry, Chief Justice, Solicitor General, Governor of our Central Bank, Head of the country's Economic Planning Unit, are all capable women who are excelling in their positions

9. Notwithstanding these accomplishments, Malaysia is cognizant of the fact that impediments to the achievement of the goal of gender equality persist. Negative aspects of culture including sex stereotyping for example, remains a major hindrance to the advancement of women. In this regard, the Government has drawn up guidelines to ensure that the content, presentation and graphics in school textbooks are not gender biased. Sex disaggregated data and statistics are produced at all levels of education system. Gender centers have been established in almost all universities, where courses on gender issues are conducted and research in the field of gender are being carried out.

10. In the area of health, an enabling mechanism such as the Advisory and Coordinating Committee on Reproductive Health was established that has helped to integrate the elements of reproductive health into the national health programmes. Sex education has recently been introduced into the school system to inculcate positive values of mutual respect, promote healthy relationships between boys and girls as well as to prevent abuse and create awareness of self worth, rights and responsibilities.

11. Similarly, in the field of employment, the Government of Malaysia has issued guidelines against sexual harassment in the work place and has encouraged its implementation in the private sector, as well.

Madam Chair,

12. Malaysia believes that the sharing of experiences, practices and expertise is essential for the strengthening of the enabling environment and the acceleration of the success of our efforts. Malaysia has been participating in multilateral efforts through which such sharing and learning takes place. Malaysia has been in the forefront of some of these efforts. As Chair of NAM we hosted a Ministerial Meeting on the Empowerment of Women in the era of Globalization where Malaysia's proposal for the setting up of an Institute for the Empowerment of Women for NAM countries to be located in Malaysia was adopted. This initiative awaits endorsement of the Heads of State/Government of NAM countries at the NAM Summit to be held in Cuba in September this year.

Madam Chair,

13. We are compelled to achieve results, and monitoring the effectiveness of all our initiatives is the key. However, results cannot be achieved overnight and our aim is to ensure the progressive realization of our goals. Monitoring progress and setting benchmarks are therefore essential steps. Towards this end, the Government of Malaysia has established the Gender Disaggregated Information System (GDIS), which will help us to track gaps and discrepancies in implementation, and to plan and formulate new initiatives.

Madam Chair,

14. Malaysia also recognizes that the global environment is dynamic and is rapidly changing. Many forces at play may negate our efforts and thwart our intentions. We must

harness the universal values in all religions and beliefs to bring the peoples, cultures and nations together and not to allow the differences to divide us.

15. We must also take into consideration the challenges presented by the new demands emerging as a result of global economic trends, which in turn have an impact at the national level, thus, denying the right to development of developing countries. Social and economic development is mutually reinforcing and we cannot have one without the other. Nor can we work in isolation at the national level, ignoring the impact of global trends. In this regard, the Malaysian Government strongly supports efforts towards global networking, debate and dialogue that will promote recognition of the interrelatedness of social and economic development. Economic resources are a key factor in the creation of an enabling environment. Hence, rich countries have a responsibility to facilitate the growth of developing countries. Malaysia will continue to work with and support the international and regional initiatives that will enable us achieve results.

16. Finally, the government appreciates the work and the continued support of many of the women NGOs. Their wealth of experience and inputs has greatly contributed to the informed decisions and the planning and formulation of policies on women and development in Malaysia. We hope that such cooperation and partnership will be sustained for the achievement of our common goal. But most of all, Madam Chair, except for some exceptions, we have the unstinting support from the men in Malaysia to ensure that we are indeed equal partners to them both at home and in nation-building.

Thank you, Madam Chair.