



Permanent Mission of
Malaysia
to the United Nations

**STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE DATO' DR. CHUA SOI LEK,
MINISTER OF HEALTH OF MALAYSIA AT THE
HIGH-LEVEL MEETING AND COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS
ACHIEVED IN REALIZING THE TARGETS SET-OUT IN THE DECLARATION OF
COMMITMENT ON HIV/AIDS**

NEW YORK, 2 JUNE 2006

Mr. President

Once again, we are here to commit ourselves to arrest an epidemic that has caused hardship throughout the world, an epidemic that knows no boundaries.

In Malaysia, we are very conscious of the devastation that the unchecked spread of HIV can cause to our people.

In 2005 alone, 6,120 were detected HIV positive, giving rise to a rate of 17 new infections per day. Although injecting drug use remains the major mode of spread, recent trends would indicate that heterosexual transmission is increasing the number of women becoming infected.

The Malaysian Government acknowledges the urgent need to address the HIV epidemic and is fully committed to the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS of the 26th United Nations General Assembly Special Session in 2001. However the reality is we continue to face numerous challenges including human resource constrains, technical expertise, effective interventions that meet the needs of vulnerable groups and most of all stigma and discrimination.

In order to address these challenges, a new National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS for 2006-2010 was formulated to show political commitment at the highest level with the establishment of the Cabinet Committee on AIDS chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. Guided by the Three Ones principles, the National Strategic Plan centres upon the following strategies:

1. Strengthening Leadership and Advocacy
2. Training and Capacity Enhancement
3. Reducing HIV Vulnerability among Injecting Drug Users and their partners
4. Reducing HIV Vulnerability among Women, Young People and Children

5. Reducing HIV Vulnerability among marginalised and vulnerable groups

And

6. Improving Access to Treatment, Care and Support

We have demonstrated our commitment and leadership in the areas of prevention and treatment. Notably, in order to make treatment more accessible and affordable, steps were taken to import cheaper generic medication through compulsory licensing. With that the Malaysian government has been able to triple the number of people on anti-retroviral therapy over the last three years. Prevention of mother to child programme was introduced nationwide in 1998 which included provision of free treatment to HIV infected mother and their newborns.

Secondly, recognising that injecting drug use is the main driver for the epidemic, the Government has recently taken bold steps to address this problem. Led by the Ministry of Health in partnership with our leading NGO, the Malaysian AIDS Council, Harm Reduction programmes including opiate substitution therapy and needle and syringe exchange programmes were implemented in October 2005. Rapid scale up to reach the large number of injecting drug users in the country is one of the prevention priorities for the upcoming years.

To implement the newly developed National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS 2006-2010, the Malaysian Government has doubled its budgetary allocation for HIV/AIDS from USD 55 million to USD 135 million for the next five years. Additionally specific targets and time-lines have been set to achieve Universal Access on prevention, treatment, care and support.

The political declaration from this High Level Meeting which we as member states will commit to, will be an added impetus for us to take action. With this political declaration we have achieved another milestone in our fight against AIDS. But this is not the time to rest, for action is what is urgently required.