



Permanent Mission of
Malaysia
to the United Nations

Statement by
The Honourable Haji Fadillah Haji Yusof
Member of Parliament, Malaysia
on agenda items 63(a): Promotion and protection of the rights of children; and
63(b): Follow-up to the special session on children at the Third Committee of
the 61st Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York
Monday, 16 October 2006

At the outset, my delegation would like to express appreciation to all the speakers in the presentation of the Secretary-General's study on violence against children. My delegation also wishes to record our appreciation to Ms. Rhadika Coomaraswamy and Mr. Jakob E. Doek for introducing their respective reports to this committee.

Mr. Chairman,

2. It is the firm belief of my delegation that the promotion and protection of the rights of children are at the forefront of every country's development agenda. While serious efforts must be taken at the national level by every State to ensure that children are protected from being the target of abuse and exploitation, many problems faced by children are closely related to under-development, poverty and conflicts in developing countries. These cannot be solved unless the underlying developmental issues are seriously addressed and the countries concerned provided with the required resources and assistance. Some of the obstacles to achieving the goals contained in both the outcome documents of the World Summit on Children and the special session include the lack of resources, debt and the decline in international funding to implement identified programmes. These are clearly development issues, and have to be addressed if we are committed to further the promotion and protection of the rights of children.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Malaysian government has embarked on various measures and programmes to ensure that the rights, welfare and social needs of children are well taken care of. Malaysia's Second National Plan of Action for Children, spanning the years 2001 to 2020, sets out a broad framework of actions and measures to be taken by the Government in addressing all areas of concern affecting social and developmental needs as well as the protection of the rights of children. It has been formulated taking into account discussions held with children through consultations at various levels. The Plan outlines measures and programs that are designed with the objective of meeting the national goal of achieving the status of a developed nation by

the year 2020 (Vision 2020). In line with this vision, the plan upholds the theme “Caring for the Children of Malaysia” and focuses on areas relating to development, protection and participation of children, including programmes for children with disabilities to ensure a full and productive life lived with dignity and the greatest degree of self-reliance and social integration. The Plan also conforms to the relevant provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Malaysia is a party.

4. Other efforts are being explored and undertaken by the Government in cooperation with the private sector and NGOs. In these efforts, best practices from around the world are taken into consideration, while ensuring the preservation of Malaysia’s own values in keeping with our national political, social and economic agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

5. We commend Prof. Pinheiro and his team for the in-depth study on violence against children, which gives a global overview of this problem. We appreciate that the process that led to the report on violence against children had been inclusive, bringing in all regions and stakeholders, including children themselves.

6. It is certainly true that no violence against children is justifiable. The study demonstrated that violence happens in every country and cuts across social, cultural and religious lines. Poverty, income inequality, political instability and conflict are among some of the many factors highlighted in the report that could increase the risk of violence. This shows that there is an urgent need for international partnership to address these root causes of the problem, and for mechanisms to be put in place to stop and prevent violence against children. Ensuring that children are protected from violence is critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The study is far-sighted and strongly action-oriented. However, we notice one glaring omission. The study failed to address the plight of children in the Middle East, particularly in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Any meaningful discussion on this subject must include all children whose rights are denied due to situations of conflict. While we may not fully agree with some of the assessment and recommendations of the study, we are all duty-bound to protect our children from violence, including through national legislation and its implementation, and through international cooperation.

7. To ensure the protection of children from violence, exploitation and abuse, Malaysia has developed mechanisms for child-care, protection and rehabilitation through the setting-up of inter-sectoral Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) teams at district and state hospitals, in addition to a 24-hour toll-free hotline to report suspected cases of child abuse. As a preventive measure, Malaysia has also established Child Protection Teams and Child Activity Centres at both State and district levels, which are aimed at mobilising community participation in the implementation of preventative and rehabilitative programmes, targeted especially towards children at risk or vulnerable to abuse and exploitations. The Government continues to work closely with members of the civil society, including NGOs and voluntary organisations, through the forging of smart partnerships, to further enhance measures to promote and protect the rights of children.

Mr. Chairman,

8. My delegation welcomes Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy and congratulates her on her appointment as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. We are confident that she will fulfill her mandate admirably and we extend our full support. We thank her for the comprehensive report to this Committee, which highlights the developments in the international, regional and national efforts to promote and enhance the protection of children in armed conflicts. We share her grim assessment that 2006 had been a 'terrible year for children'. More children and other civilians had been killed than combatants. It remains clear that much still needs to be done. As with the study on violence against children, we are particularly concerned that the report fails to address the plight of children in the Middle East, particularly in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We hope that the Special Representative will look into the plight of children living under occupation under the terms of her current mandate and is pleased to learn that she plans to visit this region, hopefully this year.

Mr. Chairman,

9. Malaysia reaffirms its strong commitment to the efforts in protecting and promoting the rights of its children. Protecting our children is a priority as they are the ones who will be expected to ensure the well being of our community, our nation and our future. It is only fair that we leave them with a world that is truly fit for all children, now and in the future.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.