



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

**Statement by**  
**The Honourable Mr. Huan Cheng Guan,**  
**Member of Parliament, Malaysia**  
**on agenda items 61(a): Advancement of Women &**  
**61(b): Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference**  
**on Women and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly**  
**at the Third Committee of the 61st Session of**  
**the United Nations General Assembly**  
**New York, Wednesday, 11 October 2006**

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on the agenda items under consideration. We would like to also express our appreciation to the various officials for presenting us with their respective reports yesterday.

Mr. Chairman,

2. To realise its full potential in pursuing sustainable development, a nation needs to harness all of its human resources including women. Given equal opportunity, women have succeeded in holding high positions and being involved in decision-making processes, both in the public and private sectors. We recognize that the vision and leadership of women, their knowledge and skills, their energy and drive, have benefited their families and entire communities. We also recognize that women's progress has contributed significantly to the overall progress of the nation.

Mr. Chairman,

3. 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. 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.

4. 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 also 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.

5. With a separate Ministry dedicated to women’s issues, gender mainstreaming and gender responsive processes across the whole country have been enhanced. The catalytic role of national mechanisms is further strengthened by 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 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.

Mr. Chairman,

6. Malaysian women are empowered. Laws, policies and programmes have ensured their access to education, healthcare and employment. 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. In many instances, they very often exceed expectations of their potential.

7. Notwithstanding these accomplishments, 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.

Mr. Chairman,

8. 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.

9. Similarly, the Government has issued guidelines against sexual harassment in the work place and has encouraged its implementation in the private sector, as well.

10. Women's safety and security is a major concern in Malaysia, especially given the rise in violence perpetrated against women worldwide. The ratio of one in three women subjected to violence at one point in her lifetime is indeed very disturbing. We welcome the long-awaited Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women and remain confident that its recommendations would indeed become a clear strategy for Member States and the UN systems to make measurable progress in preventing and eliminating violence against women. Malaysian Government agencies, in close collaboration with NGOs, have succeeded in making significant progress in the fight to curb domestic violence and other crimes against women. One-stop crisis centers, acknowledged in the Secretary-General's report as one of the best-known good practices in service provision, have been set up in almost all hospitals in Malaysia. This service brings together police investigation, medical treatment and counselling services in one neutral and friendly place.

Mr. Chairman,

11. Monitoring progress and setting benchmarks are essential steps in order for us to ensure the effectiveness of all our initiatives and the progressive realization of our goals. 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.

12. At the 35th session of CEDAW in May this year, Malaysia presented a comprehensive account of the situation of Malaysian women to the committee in its initial and second periodic reports. My delegation appreciates the constructive dialogue with the members of the Committee and thanks the Committee for its positive recommendations, which we will endeavour to implement.

13. 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. During our Chairmanship of the 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 member countries to be located in Malaysia was adopted. The Heads of State/Government of NAM countries at the NAM Summit held in Cuba in September this year endorsed this initiative. We welcome the offer of the Government of Guatemala to host the next ministerial meeting next year.

14. Finally, Mr. Chairman, 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. Malaysia will continue to work with all stakeholders and support the international and regional initiatives in making this world a better place for women and all humanity.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.