



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

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**STATEMENT BY  
THE HONOURABLE DATO' TAJUDDIN ABDUL RAHMAN  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, MALAYSIA  
ON  
AGENDA ITEM 55 (A): IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE WORLD  
SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH SPECIAL  
SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
AND  
AGENDA ITEM 55 (B): SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS  
RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING,  
DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY  
OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE  
OF THE 63RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
NEW YORK, 6 OCTOBER 2008**

Mr. Chairman,

The 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen stands as one of the achievements of contemporary international governance in that it brought together Governments to reach a consensus on the need to put people at the centre of development. It recognized among others that national development, the development of the intrinsic value of people as a whole and individuals as its components, were interrelated, mutually dependent and absolutely necessary. The follow-up to this Summit, the 24<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the General Assembly, further expanded the views on the protection and promotion of social development and provided specific targets and strategies in setting and achieving social development objectives.

2. While there has been some progress in implementation of what was agreed at the WSSD and the 24<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the General Assembly, such achievements continue to remain hostage to contemporary instability in global and national financial markets, as well as to challenges brought about by the fuel and food crisis. These challenges delay, and at times derail, the main policy efforts of national governments

needed to achieve long-lasting social development – economic growth, employment generation and productivity growth. Additionally, the free-for-all of financial liberalization has not been accompanied with the requisite safeguards of corporate and market responsibility and discipline.

3. It is due to the above that while we examine and look at policy prescriptions which the Third Committee can recommend to the General Assembly, we need to reinforce the following:

- 3.1 First, our steadfast commitment to the larger political goals of the WSSD and relevant social development fora, especially on enhanced international cooperation, the transfer of technology and expertise, as well as striving for the fulfillment of the agreed targets of overall official development assistance from developed countries as soon as possible;
- 3.2 Second, for countries to achieve the objectives of social development, the structure of the global financial and economic environment has to be addressed to ensure that it is fair, equitable, and allows for a balance between the role of the government and the private sector, and in adopting regulation and market-driven approaches. In the current economic climate, social development objectives should not be allowed to be set aside;
- 3.3 Third, in funneling our work into specific streams, such as with regard to the current priority theme of the 2007-2008 implementation cycle, "Promoting full employment and decent work for all", and the focus on vulnerable groups, we need to avoid technical ambiguities in the language of our resolutions. We need to be clear, committed and honest towards achieving our goals and helping those in need, and to not create interpretations which create hindrances in the future; and
- 3.4 Finally, we cannot wait for the full effects of the current financial, food and fuel crises to bear before we take action. Economic growth and social development are complimentary and interrelated, and we must be

prepared in the face of the current circumstance. These crises have been slowly building and we call on the relevant entities of the United Nations System to provide to Member States, at the least by this stage, a preliminary assessment of the impact of these crises.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Allow me to touch on questions relating to youth, ageing, and disabled persons.

5. With regard to youth, Malaysia's National Youth Development Policy, which was first formulated in 1985 and later revised in 1997, serves as a framework for the planning and implementation of youth programmes in the country. This policy focuses efforts in major areas such as youth empowerment, human resource development, youth leadership and youth enterprise development. In 2007, the Youth Association and Youth Development Act 2007 was gazetted and this Act among its main points promotes and facilitate the development of youths in Malaysia from the aspect of education, research and human resources, establishes a National Youth Consultative Council, and establishes the Malaysian Institute for Research In Youth Development.

6. On the issue of ageing, while the proportion of our population whom fall under the category of "older person" at present is not as high as that of some developed countries, like many others, Malaysia is having a rapidly ageing population. Older persons constituted 4.3% or 1.2 million of the total population in 2005 and this number is expected to grow to 3.3 million, or 9.8% of the population by the year 2020.

7. Realizing the socio-economic implications of population ageing, the Government of Malaysia has taken proactive steps in improving the status of the older persons. Efforts that have been taken are in line with the United Nations Principles for Older Persons and realized through the National Policy for the Elderly which was formulated in 1995 and followed by the formulation of the Plan of Action for the Elderly in 1998. To ensure effective implementation of the National Policy for the Elderly, a National Advisory and Consultative Council for the Elderly was established. The Council consists of representative from Government agencies, NGOs and prominent individuals. The National Plan of Action focuses on a multi-disciplinary approach to promote programmes

and activities for the aged as well as improve access and facilities for the elderly so that they can lead independent and active lives. The Plan of Action also gives emphasis to developing community support systems for families of older persons. This is an initiative to encourage members of the community to provide care for older persons within that community, and we would be willing to share this experience with the relevant agencies within United Nations system, as well as member states.

8. On 8 April this year, Malaysia became a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This was possible due to enactment of our national Persons with Disabilities Act of 2007 which provides for the protection, rehabilitation, development and well-being of persons with disabilities. A related Policy and Plan of Action were enacted, and a National Council was also created to address the importance of accessibility, equal opportunities, protection and assistance from the government, private sector, and NGOs. The principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities were integrated into our National Act, and it is the intention of the Malaysian Government to ratify and become a full state party to this Convention as soon as the necessary administrative and follow-on legislative procedures to allow for implementation are completed.

Mr. Chairman,

9. The well-being of our societies, and the people who constitute that society, no matter whatever differences or vulnerabilities they have remain the prime motivator for the work of the Government of Malaysia. Together with other delegations, it is our hope that we can move forward on this issue and create the consensus and policy prescriptions that will allow us move forward and which would allow for the practical implementation of our decisions.

Thank you.