



MALAYSIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS



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**STATEMENT BY
H.E. AMBASSADOR HUSSEIN HANIFF,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**AT THE OPEN DEBATE “WAR, ITS LESSONS,
AND THE SEARCH FOR A PERMANENT PEACE”
AT UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
NEW YORK, 29 JANUARY 2014**

Mr. President,

At the outset, I wish to congratulate you for taking the initiative to convene this important and far-reaching open debate in the Security Council on ‘War, its lessons and the search for a permanent peace’. My delegation also expresses our appreciation to you for the thought-provoking concept note on this theme. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman for his briefing.

Mr. President,

2. I wish to begin by outlining Malaysia’s commitment as an active and strong partner in international efforts to support peace. We have been blessed with a peaceful transition to independence in 1957, instilling in us the belief of peaceful resolution of conflicts via means stipulated in the United Nations Charter. From the distant jungles of the Congo less than three years after our own independence, to the winters of Bosnia under UN and NATO banners, and closer to home in Timor-Leste, Malaysian peacekeepers are proud to have been entrusted to participate in these and many other multilateral peacekeeping operations.

3. From a regional perspective, Malaysia has maintained a keen interest in taking a comprehensive approach in addressing threats to regional security, especially within the ASEAN context. In that regard, we have been actively involved in facilitating peace talks and constructive engagements, culminating in mutually acceptable solutions such as the historical Framework Agreement on 15 October 2012 between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Four days ago, the final and integral annexes to that Agreement were signed by both parties during a landmark round of talks in Kuala Lumpur, paving the way towards a permanent peace in the region. Malaysia’s efforts to facilitate these important negotiations have been recognised and commended by the United Nations Secretary-General, the United States, the European Union, and members of the International Contact Group.

4. Malaysia also hosted the first annual Asian Peace and Reconciliation Meeting on 11-12 November 2013 in Putrajaya. As Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Sri Mohd. Najib Tun Abdul Razak stated in his keynote address to that forum, "*we should be unafraid to use the power of persuasion to counter the misguided rallying calls of the extremists*". This commitment to moderation, from the highest levels of Malaysia's leadership, underlines our conviction on the urgent need for common narratives to address divergent perspectives in conflicts.

Mr. President,

5. Responding to your suggestion on the "reverse engineering" of conflicts, Malaysia reiterates our long-held belief that it is necessary to address the root causes of such conflicts, be it underdevelopment, poverty, political disputes, or preservation of national, socio-cultural and ethno-religious identities. Based on our experiences, we would therefore submit that an agreed or shared narrative could lead to undermining the reason for conflicts, in particular those driven by elements propagating an extremist or exclusionist point of view. At the same time, my delegation is of the view that we must continue to be guided by the principles of international law in the persecution of those responsible for such conflicts.

6. As regards to the specific suggestion to mandating a UN historical advisory team to recover or protect documents related to a shared historical narrative, my delegation wishes to present the following points to ponder. It is our view that the involvement on the ground of such a team should, in principle, depend upon the request or concurrence of the host country. Malaysia has argued before that nation-building programmes and governmental reform cannot be imposed by external entities, and instead, such efforts must be inclusive, have a strong national ownership, as well as possess a legal mandate to lead change. However, this naturally presents challenges should the host country itself be one of the belligerent parties to the conflict, whereby it could be in the interests of that host country to maintain its own version of events.

7. In addition, we should be cautious in defining the roles and capacities of the international community when trying to implement such a move. It would be detrimental to the United Nations' interests if the aims of its historical advisory teams were politically motivated, as opposed to the work of independent and impartial bodies. Furthermore, my delegation fears that this process may lack transparency.

8. This notwithstanding, the important work of collating a shared historical narrative of conflicts should continue. In this regard, my delegation takes note of the work of the Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation, an institution which we feel has benefitted deeply from your personal participation, Mr. President. The Institute's publication, "*Zoom In: Palestinian Refugees of 1948, Remembrances*", portrays the striking differences in which Palestinian and Israeli youths view photographs from the 1948 Nakba. This publication demonstrates the need for greater understanding and a common history of the incident, the consequences of which resound to this very day.

9. We recognise that there is no “one-size-fits-all” formula to achieving permanent peace. We also observe that, at present, there may be insufficient quantitative evidence to assess the risks of deprioritising the need for a reconciliatory narrative. However, there is a growing awareness that preventing relapse into conflicts is one of the more difficult aspects of addressing post-conflict situations. Within the UN system, this may manifest itself through challenges ranging from funding gaps to lack of institutional support. In spite of this, it is perhaps within the UN system itself that the potential for permanent peace can be found, and in our view, it can be found through the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. President,

10. Malaysia continues to believe that the Security Council has benefited tremendously from its increased interaction with the Peacebuilding Commission, particularly given the linkages between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The building of state institutions during the peacekeeping period will have significant impact on a successful transition into the peacebuilding stage. As we have argued, failure to work closely and effectively with national governments and local stakeholders in ensuring a sustainable institutional architecture could possibly bring back instability to the country concerned. It is perhaps here that the Peacebuilding Commission could play an enhanced role, inter alia, in generating a shared historical understanding between parties to the conflict.

11. In this regard, Malaysia welcomes greater connectivity and interaction between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council to enhance further work in the development of practical peacebuilding policies. My delegation underscores the important role of the Peacebuilding Commission as an inter-governmental advisory body entrusted to coordinate and integrate approaches on post-conflict peacebuilding measures, to assist countries from relapsing into conflict. As such, the principal organs of the United Nations should be enhanced and strengthened, in particular the Peacebuilding Commission’s advisory role on peacebuilding matters with Security Council.

Mr. President,

12. In conclusion, Malaysia reiterates our position that the silent majority should speak out to drown out the extreme voices of hate, fear and ignorance. A shared historical narrative is one of several ways for moderates to overcome extremists’ control over the political discourses of a conflict. We should at the same time continue to support existing UN organs which can play an important role in maintaining a permanent peace, in particular the Peacebuilding Commission. To this end, I wish to assure you of Malaysia’s continued support of international efforts to achieve peace and nation re-building initiatives in post-conflict situations.

Thank you Mr. President.