



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

(Please check against delivery)

**Statement by Mr. Saiful Azam Abdullah,
Deputy Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations,
on Agenda Item 16:
The Role of the United Nations in Promoting a New Global Human Order
at the Plenary of the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
New York, 21 December 2012**

Mr. President,

First and foremost, I wish to thank the Secretary General for his report on the 'Role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order and an assessment of the implications of inequality for development' (A/67/394). Malaysia welcomes the report as well as the assessment made on the impact of inequality on the development agenda. We appreciate the recommendations provided in the report, especially on the call for the UN and Member States to continue emphasizing on the need to reduce inequality throughout the consultative process on the development agenda beyond 2015. This should also include the consideration of tools and mechanisms to assess and monitor the impact of social and economic policies on inequality.

Mr. President,

2. While we can be proud of our success in bridging the development gap thus far, the road ahead is full of challenges and uncertainties. For instance, the ongoing global financial and economic crises and the slow rate of recovery have hampered progress. We believe that the UN provides the best platform to address such challenges and the subsequent effects that have led to greater inequality.

3. At this juncture, allow me, Mr. President, to share some of Malaysia's experience in addressing the gap between opposite ends of the spectrum, including that between the rich and the poor as well as between men and women, which has undeniably contributed to the progress of our nation. Malaysia has been very fortunate that since its independence in 1957, the Government has continuously adopted policies geared towards the people. Since 1970, the Government has undertaken ambitious socio-economic programmes intended to balance the economic participation of various groups of citizens and to promote equitable growth. As a result, Malaysia's per capita income has grown significantly. The incidence of poverty has also dropped from 75 percent in 1957 to only 3.8 percent in 2010 whereby hardcore poverty has virtually been eradicated. Malaysia believes that it is important to monitor the effectiveness of poverty eradication programmes. In 2008, Malaysia introduced the 'e-Kasih' system, which does just that to ensure fair distribution of aid to the poor.

Mr. President,

4. Malaysia truly believes education is a prerequisite for a nation to fully address inequality. This is due to the belief that knowledge is the key to higher income for its people. At the same time,

we feel that the development of human capital is a crucial ingredient in the journey towards becoming a developed economy. Since the mid-1990s, the Government has consistently allocated at least a fifth of the national development expenditure to education and training. Realizing the importance of the acquisition of knowledge, particularly in reducing income inequality, Malaysia also provides free education to all of its citizens at the primary and secondary levels. As a result of our efforts, Malaysia's literacy rate is now above 93 per cent. Its work force is also highly trained. This has helped in ensuring equitable growth to and benefits enjoyed by all segments of society.

Mr. President,

5. The Government of Malaysia has always been supportive in providing an enabling environment for the advancement of women at both the national and international levels. Malaysia's five-year national economic development plans have and continue to include specific strategies and measures to progressively enhance women's participation in all sectors and empower them as agents of change in society and contributors to the economic and social development in the country. The 10th Malaysia Plan for 2011 to 2015, highlighted the Government's commitment in ensuring at least 30percent of women hold positions at decision-making levels. As a result of our efforts, we are witnessing more women in high-level political positions and as top administrators and managers in all key socio-economic areas. To further underscore the importance Malaysia places in enhancing women's participation in the labour force, the Prime Minister of Malaysia recently announced that beginning 2013, a double tax deduction incentive will be provided for training expenditure incurred by companies re-employing women after a career break. The Prime Minister also requested leading listed corporations to disclose in their annual reports policies they have put in place to help promote and support women workforce, such as flexible working arrangements. We view the return of tertiary educated women into the workforce as a strategic advantage to the nation in order to enhance the nation's competitiveness.

6. In order to allow the poor to lead a comfortable, safe and quality life, Malaysia launched the 'House Built Project' to repair and rebuild houses of the poor. This is in addition to various low-income housing schemes to allow the poor to own houses. In ensuring that healthcare services are enjoyed by all, the Government introduced '1Malaysia Clinic'. The Government's emphasis and efforts in enhancing healthcare services have led to higher life expectancy levels and lower infant mortality rates.

Mr. President,

7. In spite of economic crises that stems from global imbalances, the Malaysian economy has grown rapidly, achieving an average GDP growth rate of 6.8percent per annum during the 1970-2011 period. Malaysia's trade in nominal terms has reached 400 billion dollars in 2011, which places it as the 25th largest exporting country in the world. The private sector has also overtaken the Government as the key driver for development. Market capitalization of our stock market has exceeded 400 billion dollars in 2011 and continues to rise. In short, Malaysia has been able to transform itself into a modern industrialized and diversified economy.

Mr. President,

8. In closing, the Government of Malaysia has certainly taken all the necessary steps to allow all its people to enjoy a higher quality of life. This has been done mainly through addressing imbalances and inequalities. While we have done much, there is always more that can be done. In this regard, Malaysia looks forward to the UN playing a more effective role in not only promoting, but realizing greater equality for all peoples of the world in various aspects. Only then can we have a world free from conflict and prejudices.

I thank you, Mr. President.