



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

(Please check against delivery)

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HUSSEIN HANIFF,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
AT THE
UNITED NATIONS ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS (UNAOC)
GROUPS OF FRIENDS MEETING (PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES' LEVEL)
13 MAY 2013**

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I wish to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for convening this meeting and for your briefing on the main outcomes of the 5th UN Alliance of Civilizations Forum held in Vienna as well as for your views on the prospects for the Alliance for 2013-2018.

2. I wish to once again congratulate you on assuming the post of High Representative of the Alliance and look forward to working with you in fulfilling our commitment to the noble goals of the Alliance in promoting understanding, tolerance and mutual respect between diverse groups, faiths and religions.

Mr. Chairman,

3. We support the efforts of the Alliance in engaging all stakeholders towards achieving peace and prosperity for all peoples of the world. On this, we are particularly appreciative of the recent UNAOC Stakeholders' Consultation in obtaining inputs and views for the Strategic Plan for the next five years. We can certainly agree with some of the views provided especially on the need to increase the visibility of the Alliance in regions where its work is less known. For a start, it could do more in Asia in order to enhance visibility in the region. In this regard, we welcome the convening of the next AOC Global Forum in Indonesia in 2014, which would surely allow the Alliance greater exposure and familiarity in the region. A comprehensive media strategy, including that for the region, is also welcomed.

4. In our view, the Alliance could also make full use of its numerous partners in spreading its message. This includes through civil society organizations. It is also important to continue engaging with the Group of Friends as well as civil society groups

in formulating the Strategic Plan for 2013-2018 in order to get more views from all levels.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Despite great efforts made by the Alliance and countless others, conflicts continue to emerge and affect the lives of many people, societies and countries. There has been one too many instances of irresponsible people vilifying and defaming certain religious groups. This has resulted in tragic consequences. As a result, Malaysia strongly feels that the Strategic Plan for 2013-2018 should accentuate the need to combat all forms of discrimination, intolerance, negative stereotyping, incitement to violence and violence against persons based on a person's religion or beliefs.

6. Malaysia also believes that it is important for the Alliance to focus on socio-economic development programmes that target the disenfranchised and under-developed areas, as it is important to address the root causes of tension and conflict between diverse societies. The Alliance would need to address social injustices that could lead to clashes between various ethnic and religious groups.

Mr. Chairman,

7. In complementing the on-going activities with the UNAOC, Malaysia has called for the creation of a "Global Movement of Moderates" to counter extremism in all forms. In this regard, Malaysia believes that the Strategic Plan should include a means to engage the people in cultivating peace and moderation and providing sustainable resolution to all conflicts and crises.

8. We also welcome the recent signing of a Plan of Action for 2013-2015 between the GMM Foundation (GMMF) and the Alliance, which would pave the way for greater cooperation in promoting moderation and respect between religions, civilizations and cultures. In this regard, both organizations should have regular consultations in order to develop and carry out concrete and pragmatic programmes. For a start, such programmes could focus on youths and students so that they would be exposed to the concept of moderation, which in turn, would assist in bridging cultural and religious divides in the communities they live in.

Mr. Chairman,

9. To conclude, in a time of significant historical transformations and unprecedented political, economic, social and cultural changes, Malaysia believes that the Alliance is more relevant than ever. Therefore, you can count on Malaysia's continued commitment and cooperation in advancing the vision and goals of the Alliance.

I thank you.