



# 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 UNITED NATIONS ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS (UNAOC)  
GROUPS OF FRIENDS MEETING (PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES' LEVEL)  
NEW YORK, 17 JULY 2013**

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Mr. Chairman,

First and foremost, I wish to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for convening this meeting of the Group of Friends to mainly follow-up on our earlier meeting on the UNAOC Strategic Review for 2013-2018.

2. I believe with your recent assumption as High Representative of the Alliance, this strategic review is timely indeed and the right way forward.

3. Eight years since the establishment of the UNAOC, we are gathered at a truly opportunistic time when we can reflect on what we have accomplished and at the same time, identify and overcome our shortcomings. We all recognize that the Alliance has done tremendous work. It has been able to institutionalize a Forum that promotes dialogue and understanding between civilizations - something that would have been hard to imagine at the birth of the new millennium. Thus, it is especially important to see this Strategic Review take the next step towards our ultimate aim of seeing a world that lives in peace and harmony.

Mr. Chairman,

4. We thank you for sharing with us the Summary Report of the last Group of Friends meeting on 13 May 2013 and the UNAOC Strategic Review and Plan. In going through the Strategic Review, my delegation cannot help but notice reference being made to the original focus of the Alliance, which is, to address tensions between Western and Muslim societies. Looking back at the report of the High Level Group of 2006, my delegation observed that the Alliance has focused greatly on the second part of the report, which touches on areas of media, youth, education and migration. Unfortunately, not much has been done on the first part of the report, which touches on the situation in the Middle East, particularly the situation in Palestine.

5. It is undeniable that conflicts in the Middle East are one of the underlying causes of why there is a divide between Islam and the West. While there can be no doubt that all present here are truly committed to the Alliance, have we really done enough to bridge the gap between the Muslim World and the West? As long as the international community fails to address the problems in the region, certain groups will turn to violence to demonstrate their grievances.

6. Turning to the second part of the 2006 report, my delegation feels that although much progress has been made in fulfilling the recommendations contained therein, the international community must do more in the four thematic areas of the report in order to address the detrimental images and jaundiced portrayals of Islam and Muslims, which has arisen out of stereotyped perceptions.

7. In short, Malaysia is heartened to note that the 2006 report will continue to be a cornerstone to the work of the Alliance in the years ahead. It is hoped that the Alliance and its partners can do more to address a prominent cause of the animosity and distrusts that takes place between religions and cultures. We also welcome greater focus being given to conflict prevention and reconciliation. Nevertheless, the Alliance must be careful as to remain apolitical and not duplicate other efforts being made in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

8. On organizational and financial aspects of the Alliance for the next five years, my delegation welcomes seeing the continued rise in the number of the Group of Friends, which currently stands at 137. On the other hand, it is quite worrisome that overall revenue and unrestricted funding has dropped considerably throughout the years. On this aspect, we look forward to hearing suggestions on engaging with the private sector and other stakeholders to secure sufficient levels of contribution to the Trust Fund, which would enable the Alliance to carry out its programs and activities effectively. Key to securing greater funding is visibility and communications outreach. As such, Malaysia is also pleased with your intention to engage the sports and entertainment community in the work of the Alliance.

Mr. Chairman,

9. As the Alliance continues to forge forward in building bridges between societies and promoting dialogue and understanding, you can count on Malaysia's continued commitment in the years to come.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.