



MALAYSIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS



CANDIDATE
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**STATEMENT BY
H.E. AMBASSADOR HUSSEIN HANIFF
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA
ON AGENDA ITEM 27: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE**

**68TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, 7 OCTOBER 2013**

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I wish to congratulate you on your election as the Chairman of the Third Committee for the 68th Session of the General Assembly. I would also like to extend my congratulations to the other Members of the Bureau. I am confident that under your leadership, the Committee will be able to complete its work with successful outcomes.

Mr. Chairman,

2. My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the statement made by my own country, Malaysia on behalf of the ASEAN member countries on the agenda item under consideration.

3. The goals and objectives of social development require continuous efforts to eliminate poverty, unemployment and social exclusion to achieve the overarching goals of the World Summit for Social Development. The World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995, stands as one of the achievements of contemporary international governance, with the aim of enhancing the wellbeing and quality of life of the people.

4. More than 18 years after the adoption of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, the social challenges continue to persist. While there has been some progress in the implementation of what was agreed at the World Summit, such achievements continue to remain hostage to the impact of the global financial and economic crisis, as well as challenges to poverty eradication brought about by widening inequality, high and volatile food and fuel prices and menacing environmental risks.

5. We concur with the recommendations put forth in the Secretary-General's report, that the empowerment of people should be considered as an approach to advancing social development, mainly to the promotion of the rights and enhancement of the capabilities and functioning of marginalized and disadvantaged social groups, including women, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, youth and older persons.

Mr. Chairman,

6. The Secretary-General has identified working with and for women and young people as one of the top priorities for his second term. His Five-Year Action Agenda delineated the objective of addressing the needs of young people by deepening the youth focus of existing programmes on employment, entrepreneurship, political inclusion, citizenship and protection of rights and education.

7. Malaysia recognizes that youth participation is a critical driver of the nation's growth as a key source of capable talent to support the human capital needs of the economy. In line with this, the Tenth Malaysia Plan 2011-2015 streamlines the delivery system of existing youth development programmes to ensure that the younger generation is more productive in the nation's socio-economic development, particularly through the activities of associations and volunteerism.

8. Malaysia was one of the earliest countries to formulate the National Youth Policy back in 1985, which was subsequently enhanced to become the National Youth Development Policy in 1997. This Policy encompasses areas such as youth empowerment, human resource development, youth leadership and youth enterprise development. The principles of engagement, participation and empowerment would always be applied in all youth programs and smart policies to tap the potential of 12.5 million youths in Malaysia.

9. The Malaysian Government continues to engage with the younger generation through national scale events. In May 2013, Putrajaya, which houses the Federal Government Administrative Centre, was turned into a sea of youth, where the 'Putrajaya Youth Festival 2013' was held to develop the potential, creativity as well as uphold the unity and integrity among the youths. The event, with a successful turnout of some 1.5 million visitors, was a manifestation of the Government's recognition of the younger generation, who represent 45 per cent of the population, as a national development partner.

Mr. Chairman,

10. Malaysia welcomes the Secretary-General's report on the "Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing" which examines three key priority areas for implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Malaysia believes that work and employment are as important to the social integration of older persons as they are for adults of other age groups. To encourage greater employment opportunities, employers are allowed to claim 100 per

cent tax rebate on retraining costs for older persons taken in as employees. With this initiative, the Government of Malaysia encourages older persons to work by providing them with an opportunity to be retrained and adapt to the changing demands of work.

11. By the year 2035, Malaysia is expected to attain the 'Ageing Nation Status', where 15 per cent or more of the country's population are aged 60 years and above. As such, harnessing the pool of resources from older persons is valuable and necessary. Realizing the importance of fostering a society for all ages, the Government of Malaysia in January 2011 approved the new National Policy for Older Persons and Plan Of Action for Older Persons. The policy and plan of action were drafted based on the three priority areas in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

Mr. Chairman,

12. As of August 2013, registration of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Malaysia stands at 458,835 people. The government firmly believes that persons with disabilities are entitled to the same rights as all other citizens in the country and equal opportunities to partake in the country's development. In 2007, Malaysia formulated the PWDs Policy and National Plan of Action as well as PWDs Act, which was drafted based on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The PWDs Act 2008 is an act to provide, among others, for the registration, protection, rehabilitation, development and well being of PWDs.

13. The Tenth Malaysia Plan 2011-2015 focuses on to better integrate persons with disabilities into society, in line with the recommendations set out in the Secretary-General's Report on the way forward: a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond. Further emphasis is placed on efforts to improve working conditions to enable disabled persons to have more opportunities to join the workforce. Greater efforts are also made to provide easy physical access to transportation and buildings for a more disabled-friendly environment. Existing community-based rehabilitation centers are being upgraded to one-stop service centers which will provide more comprehensive services such as registration of persons with disabilities, disability screening and detection, referral services, vocational trainings, job placements and dissemination of information on disabilities. The Plan is to enable them to be independent, productive and valued contributors. Malaysia thus welcomed the convening of the High-Level Meeting on Disability and Development that took place recently, in our effort to take concerted action towards a disability inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond.

Mr. Chairman,

14. To conclude, a progressive society is one that ensures the rights of its citizens are upheld and respected. It is a society where diversity is respected and encouraged, and where people of different backgrounds, ethnicities, and religious beliefs work together to ensure that as the nation advances, no one is left behind. Youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and the family unit are all vital components of society,

and therefore embracing and balancing their needs against an evolving social environment is critical towards achieving a truly progressive and inclusive society. The Malaysian Government remains committed to ensure that continuous efforts and initiatives are taken to promote equal opportunities and full participation of all segments of the society.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.