



MALAYSIA

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STATEMENT BY
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ON AGENDA ITEM 28: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN
OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE

68TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, 11 OCTOBER 2013

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to take the floor on behalf of the Malaysian delegation under this important agenda item. My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered by Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the statement made by Malaysia on behalf of ASEAN.

2. Malaysia has long acknowledged women's key role in driving forward the national social, political and economic development agendas and had as far back as 1989 formulated a National Policy on Women. In the past decade, a number of innovative steps have been taken by the government to ensure that women's rights are further protected and promoted.

Mr. Chairman,

3. Women have made significant progress in almost all areas in 56 years since Malaysia's independence in 1957. Their achievements have no doubt been facilitated by inclusive policies and plan of action developed by the Government of Malaysia. Under the Tenth Malaysia Plan 2011-2015, the Government has also included a key component; the further empowerment of women. Malaysia thus concurs with the recommendation in the Secretary-General's report, to reaffirm the relevance of gender mainstreaming as a globally accepted strategy for promoting the empowerment of women and achieving gender equality.

4. Under the Economic Transformation Programme, Malaysia reinforces the need to attract, increase and retain female employees in the workforce. We have set targets for women in the workforce, such as increasing female labour participation rate to 55 per cent over the next three years, and increasing the number of women as board members in Malaysian public-listed companies to 30 per cent.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Mindful that rural women continue to be socially and economically disadvantaged due to their limited access to economic resources and opportunities as highlighted in the Secretary-General's report, the Government of Malaysia has introduced income-generating programmes namely agropolitan projects and other commercial agricultural activities for the advancement of rural as well as indigenous women. These women in remote areas are provided training on agricultural farming and best practices to enhance their agricultural skills and knowledge. In the long run, crop yields from such small scale plantations would help to positively contribute towards food sustainability and even towards raising family income.

6. Another successful programme is the 1AZAM Programme. The 1AZAM Programme aims to help Malaysians from low income households, especially women, to generate more income to support their families through its four arms, namely 1AZAM *Kerja* (jobs-placement), 1AZAM *Niaga* (business), 1AZAM *Tani* (agriculture) and 1AZAM *Khidmat* (services). This programme is not just a one-off welfare support but aims to ensure sustainability and economic independence for targeted groups. As of 31 December 2012, a total number of 106,947 participants enrolled in the 1AZAM project, of which 65.65 per cent (70,224) of the participants were women.

Mr. Chairman,

7. The adoption of the historic agreed conclusions on such a significant issue as ending violence against women at the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women this year is a success for the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda. Furthermore, it showed Member States' strong commitment to end one of the gravest violations of human rights. Nonetheless, although a great amount of effort has been made, the challenge now is to ensure policies, legislation and programmes remain relevant to the ever changing and challenging issue of violence against women.

8. My delegation would like to highlight that the Malaysian Government has made violence against women as one of the 13 key sectors under the Plan of Action on the Advancement of Women, in our effort to seriously overcome violence against women. Malaysia's seriousness is also evident with the number of amendments made to broaden the priorities and rights of the victims of violence. Among them are the amendments to the Penal Code, where wider definition of rape and stiffer penalties are given to those found guilty; amendment to the Employment Act, which now addresses sexual harassment at the workplace; and, amendments to the Domestic Violence Act with wider definition on domestic violence, which include emotional, mental and psychological abuse in addition to physical abuse.

Mr. Chairman,

9. Malaysia remains committed in highlighting and advancing the issue of women at the national as well as at the global level. Recently, Malaysia hosted the Women Deliver

Conference from 28 to 30 May 2013 in Kuala Lumpur. The Women Deliver 2013 attracted more than 5,000 leaders from 160 countries and more than 100 journalists from around the world to discuss women's health and right issues at the global stage. The main objective of the conference was to obtain high level support and commitment from governments and international agencies to increase allocation of resources for maternal health in order to reduce maternal mortality and provide universal access to reproductive and sexual health services. MDG 5 which addresses this issue is the focus of the conference as it is the most lagging behind of all the MDGs, especially in lesser developed countries.

10. Additionally, Malaysia hosted the Global Summit of Women from 6 to 8 June 2013 in Kuala Lumpur, which provided a platform to explore practical strategies and best practices in advancing women's economic opportunities around the world. It attracted over 1,000 delegates from 70 countries including top leaders from the business and government sectors as well as civil society. The Summit continues to celebrate women's leadership worldwide by bringing together women business, professional, and governmental leaders.

11. In concluding Mr. Chairman, my delegation wishes to reaffirm the importance it attaches in advancing the status of women both at the national and international levels. The roles and status of women in Malaysia have undergone a profound change in the past five decades. The Government continues to take all measures to prevent and eliminate any forms of discrimination against women in order to develop their potentials in all sectors to the optimum, and to ensure that the rights of women are continuously promoted and protected in enabling them to fully enjoy their human rights.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.