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STATEMENT BY
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AT THE HIGH-LEVEL EVENT ON 'THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN, THE
YOUNG AND CIVIL SOCIETY TO THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA'

NEW YORK, 6 MARCH 2014

Mr. President,

Allow me at the outset to express our appreciation to you for organizing this important High-Level Event. My delegation believes that the convening of this event is timely and much needed to deliberate on the direction and framework of the post-2015 development agenda, particularly on the equal participation of women, the young and civil society.

2. I wish to associate my statement with that delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia on behalf of Group of 77 and China.

Mr. President,

3. The importance of gender equality is underscored by its inclusion as one of the eight Millennium Development Goals. Gender equality is acknowledged as being a key to achieving the other seven goals. However, gender inequality remains the most pervasive and persistent form of inequality in many areas around the world.

4. Malaysia believes that the new development agenda should outline specific strategies to eliminate gender-based inequalities in all areas of concern to women, be it economic, health or social development, among others. There is also a need to recognize that multiple factors such as race, ethnicity, gender and disability can intensify discrimination and marginalization.

5. Both the Rio + 20 outcome document and the UN Task Team report, "Realizing the Future We Want for All", made clear reference to gender equality and women's empowerment as central to sustainable development, which was reiterated in the UN Development Group's post-2015 thematic and national consultations. At the same time, several bodies, agencies and organizations have issued proposals on addressing gender equality and women's rights in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

6. Drawing on the proposals above, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should encompass both a stand-alone goal on gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment and ensure the integration of gender specific targets and indicators across all goals. Not addressing gender inequalities – unequal access to education, participation, health, including reproductive and sexual health, land and productive assets, and employment, particularly given women's and girls' heavy unpaid work burden – is costly for societies and undermines all three dimensions of sustainability.

7. As women and girls constitute 48.6 per cent of a growing population of 29.3 million people in Malaysia, the welfare of women and girls are obviously of utmost importance to the country. It is due to this that the Malaysian Government is firmly committed to eliminating and preventing all forms of violence against women and girls.

8. My delegation is of the view that women should not just be seen as victims, but are central to all efforts to end gender-based inequality. Malaysia believes that equal, full and active participation of women is key to the successful implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. Thus, it is crucial to bring women into any development agenda process and that they must be active participants in all efforts to ensure its meaningful and effective implementation.

Mr. President,

9. 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.

10. Post-2015 had also called for increased access to quality and affordable education. Recognising that investment in education and training is a prerequisite for prosperity of the country and the well being of the people, education and training development in Malaysia have consistently been given the biggest allocation in the national budget since Independence in 1957.

Mr. President,

11. Almost 85 per cent of the world's youth live in developing countries. Thus it would be incomplete to discuss future development goals without recognizing the role that young people can and must play as enabler and problem-solvers in development. 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.

12. Malaysia's National Youth Development 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 programmes and smart policies to tap the potential of 12.5 million youths in Malaysia.

Mr. President,

13. Indeed, civil society plays an indispensable role in advancing the United Nations agenda. Malaysia therefore hopes that discussions on the post-2015 development agenda would continue to be open, transparent and inclusive to ensure that the process receives full support from all parties and stakeholders.

14. Malaysia fully endorses the need for greater partnership and cooperation in the post-2015 development agenda, simply because human development is a shared responsibility. What is crucial now is the pooling together of all the knowledge and practice into a coherent framework and this will require a multi-faceted approach to ensure the active, full and meaningful engagement of all stakeholders including women, youth and civil society in the post-2015 development agenda.

Thank you.