



(For Immediate Press Release)

**STATEMENT BY
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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ON AGENDA ITEM 23: ERADICATION OF POVERTY AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT
ISSUES**

AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE

**OF THE 69TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

NEW YORK, 20 OCTOBER 2014

Mr. Chairman,

Malaysia wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Bolivia on behalf of G77 and China, the distinguished Permanent Representative of Singapore, on behalf of ASEAN, and the distinguished Permanent Representative of Peru, on behalf of the Group of Friends on Financial Inclusion. We also would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on this agenda item.

2. We welcome the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/69/204, stating among others that the proportion of people living in extreme poverty on less than USD 1.25 a day have reached new lows in all six developing regions in the past five years. Despite the positive development, much work remains as it also highlighted that progress has been uneven, and there were 1.2 billion people still living on less than USD 1.25 a day in 2010, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. In this regard, we support the recommendations to address the remaining challenges to poverty eradication as contained in paragraphs 77 (a) to (e) of the Secretary-General's report which placed the eradication of extreme poverty in the heart of the post-2015 development agenda. We wish to share some of Malaysia's efforts in line with those recommendations.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The recommendations in the Secretary-General's report among others highlighted the need for Member States to put in place policy priorities in eradicating poverty. Understanding the dynamics and the many dimensions of poverty is important for its effective and sustained reduction. Malaysia is one of the region's dynamic economies, having achieved sustained economic growth, substantial poverty reduction, and progress in human development over the last few decades. The Malaysian economy has seen a periodic growth despite challenging external factors. Since independence in 1957, Malaysia has successfully transformed itself from a poor country to a high middle-income country. This growth rate has helped improve the quality of life for Malaysians and supported widespread advances in education, health, infrastructure, housing and public amenities.

4. Malaysia have attained seven out of the eight MDGs at an aggregate level, and are confident of meeting the target of the MDGs on poverty eradication by 2015. Malaysia was able to achieve the targets through the implementation of constructive policies on the key challenges to poverty eradication, as highlighted on the Secretary General's report, namely, employment challenges, youth unemployment, growing inequality and climate change and poverty.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Malaysia has successfully implemented various poverty eradication programmes at the national level. These include the establishments of health clinics (Klinik 1 Malaysia), affordable housing (PR1MA), welfare programmes providing assistance for low-income senior citizens, children and disabled people (KAR1SMA), as well as a Government backed trust funds for low-income households (AS1M) benefiting around 100,000 households. Underpinning these programmes is the concept of 1Malaysia, which underlines the importance of national unity and ethnic tolerance. The Government of Malaysia has also launched the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) and the New Economic Model (NEM) since 2010. The GTP is expected to contribute in making the country a developed and high-income nation by 2020. Meanwhile, the NEM aims to shift affirmative action from being ethnically-based to being need-based, hence becoming more competitive, market and investor friendly.

6. We wish to also highlight three particular programmes that have been successful in reducing poverty in Malaysia.

First, is the development of the eKasih system, a centralized Malaysian National Poverty Data Bank, which stores information related to poverty. It can be accessed by all Government agencies and other related parties for planning, coordination and monitoring of poverty eradication programmes in Malaysia. It is an innovation which assesses the effectiveness of poverty eradication programs. In 2013, the Government has set up the eKasih mobile team to reach out to deserving applicants who are not on the registry and to set up focus groups to help filter the applications, ensuring that all deserving citizens obtain the assistance that they need.

Second, is the rural development programme which remains as one of Malaysia's biggest success stories. The rural development scheme implemented by the Federal Land Development Authority of Malaysia (FELDA), has successfully elevated the quality of life and brought social and economic benefits to hundreds of thousands of rural families and increased their household income over the years. FELDA is implementing 20,000 units of new generation housing projects for a period of five years on 5,000 acres of land in FELDA areas at a cost of approximately USD 469 million (RM1.5 billion). FELDA will also spend approximately USD 31 million (RM100 million) a year for education and skills training programmes, as well as providing scholarships for 5,000 new generation children from which 30% or 2,000 people are children outside the FELDA scheme.

Third, is the 1AZAM programme introduced by the Government in 2010. It provides assistance in four essential areas; job placements, creating small business enterprises, creating small service providers and creating opportunities in agriculture. The emphasis of the programme is productive welfare; striking a balance between providing direct aid and economic opportunities to its participants to ensure that these individuals become financially self-sustaining. As of December 2013, out of 106,947 participants who enrolled in the 1Azam project, 70,224 participants were women.

Mr. Chairman,

7. The empowerment of women is a key agenda of the 10th Malaysia Plan, with the Government taking efforts to allow women to realize their full potential and participate more effectively in the economic and social development of the country. Overall, total women's labour force participation rate in Malaysia had increased from 45.6 percent in 2006 to 49.5 percent in 2012. However, until the 10th Malaysia Plan, the Government of Malaysia has set forth a plan to increase women's participation in the workforce to 55 percent by the year 2015. Amongst the measures taken to achieve this target includes, increasing the number of

community based nurseries and day care centers, flexible working hours, training and re-skilling opportunities under the Human Resources Development Fund, and gender sensitization programs in public sector recruitment. The Government has also increased leadership and capability development under the *Nur Bestari* programme, and expanded skills development programmes for single mothers through the Intensive Skill Training for Single Mothers (I-KIT) entrepreneurship and skills programme.

8. Internationally, UNDP continues to be an active participant in the work of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth, particularly in its youth employment. Domestically in Malaysia, the Government provides ample opportunities for youths to be gainfully employed where provision of financial assistance for entrepreneurs has been successfully implemented. In order to prepare the Malaysian youth with up-to-date technological, technical and vocational skills, the Government has established Skills Training Centres throughout the country to train thousands of youth annually.

9. In line with the principle of social justice which is at the core of the 10th Malaysia Plan, one of the key goals of the Plan is elevating the livelihoods of the bottom 40% of households, by raising their income generation potential, boosting education and skills attainment of children, strengthening the social safety net to reduce vulnerability of disadvantaged groups, and assessing the needs of special target groups with integrated programmes. At the same time, the focus of the strategies is anchored on enabling equitable opportunities for all Malaysians, which includes equitable access to health, education and basic infrastructure. The Government prioritizes the interests of each and every community, ensuring no group is left behind or marginalized in the course of the nation's development.

Mr. Chairman,

10. October 17 is the United Nation's International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and Malaysia has every reason to celebrate the day looking at the tremendous efforts taken which has led to the success record for Malaysia in poverty eradication. Malaysia strongly believes that the successful implementation of poverty eradication and development programmes is underpinned by political stability, inclusiveness and strong political will. Malaysia has taken concrete measures to leverage on Malaysia's unique diversity as a source of strength in reducing poverty and strengthening the economy to achieve a sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth. However, regional and international stability is also crucial in supporting national growth.

Mr. Chairman,

11. Let me conclude by emphasizing that poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and poverty eradication must remain the central and overarching objective of the post-2015 development agenda.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.