



Permanent Mission of
Malaysia
to the United Nations

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**STATEMENT BY MR. RAZIF MUBIN, REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA ON
AGENDA ITEM 51: ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF
THE 62ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, NEW
YORK, 5 November 2007**

Madam Chair,

Malaysia aligns itself with the statements made by Pakistan on behalf of G77 and China and Indonesia on behalf of ASEAN.

Madam Chair,

1. The world as we knew it has changed. In many ways, it has changed for the better. But for those countries which were only just playing 'catch-up' with the phenomenon that is globalisation, the change has brought greater challenges. And for countries which have neither the technological know-how, nor the ability to acquire them, there are daunting challenges ahead.
2. Developing countries, particularly vulnerable economies, are now being confronted with yet another yawning chasm – that of the digital divide. In the race to a knowledge-economy, with knowledge as the main commodity, more and more countries fall by the wayside. In the African continent for instance, where 14% of the world's population reside, the number of internet users make up only 3.5% of the global total, as compared to 19.14% of global internet users in North America with only 5% of the world's population. Even though measures are currently in place to try to address this situation, much more can be done. Current conventional development means and institutions are becoming less adequate for the knowledge-driven economy and society, unless appropriate changes are made.
3. The multi-stakeholder approach towards ICT advancement as set out in the outcome of WSIS, with the UN at the forefront is a step in the right direction to ensure ICT is efficiently used in our development process. However, mainstreaming ICT for development's sake alone is insufficient. In order for the digital divide to be bridged effectively, there must be a significant sharing of the technology that makes the advancement of knowledge possible. Knowledge-economy powered by ICT innovation and driven by science and technology has the very real potential to transform this interconnected world of ours into a more prosperous one.
4. Beyond the issue of physical access and connectivity, ICT advancement also has a huge impact on economic and social development. As we move closer towards becoming 'one global village', we have to be reminded that we must continue to retain the richness and diversity of ICT content, culture, values and communities. Content issues should now dominate policies and

strategies towards generating new economic wealth and job creation. At the same time, this new knowledge economy should provide effective solutions for poverty eradication and economic development.

5. The real value of ICT can be further realized with innovation which would provide greater access to global resource and information. We therefore must provide the appropriate environment that would promote innovation. To this end, the promotion and advancement of ICT must be facilitated by a proper Intellectual Property framework that would serve to benefit, in particular the poor and disadvantaged.

6. Knowledge and ICT enabled development agenda are means to an end, not the ends itself. They are means to development, and therefore must be linked to the overall development programme. There are many readily available technologies that have both significant social and economic impact for development. For example, the use of advanced ICT could easily enhance and rejuvenate the agriculture sector to one that enables the farmers especially in developing countries to increase their productivity. As a means to eradicating poverty, this is an invaluable tool in itself.

Madam Chair,

7. As a way forward, my delegation would like to recommend some points of consideration for the UN and other multilateral development agencies in ensuring that ICT is appropriately used in the quest for development:

- a. One, the UN and other multilateral agencies must champion the implementation of ICT for development especially in developing countries;
- b. Two, ICT for development programmes should become a networking platforms for economic wealth creation and enhancing societal value;
- c. Three, ICT for development programmes need to focus on content, applications, community, cultures and other non-technical issues so that its advancement will truly benefit all its users; and
- d. Four, ICT for development needs to focus on information security and thus provide a trusted environment for the information society to realize its economic growth potential and enhance societal value.

Madam Chair,

8. In recognizing the need for a multi stakeholder approach towards ICT advancement for the global development agenda, Malaysia hosted the Inaugural Meeting of the UN-initiated Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID) in Kuala Lumpur in June 2006. More than 600 ICT experts from member states and UN agencies as well as various multi stakeholder organizations participated. Topics on ICT for Development in the areas of Health, Education, Entrepreneurship and Governance were discussed and adopted as the key thrusts for UN GAID's future direction.

9. The establishment of the UN GAID as a model of a multi stakeholder platform within the UN system pursuing the four topics mentioned is a step in the right direction to achieve the MDGs. We should all focus and lend our support to UN GAID as the platform to engage all the stakeholders, not just for UN agencies and initiatives but to also extend it to other development agencies such as the World Bank and other regional development banks to truly reflect an

inclusive operating ICT model. This global multi stakeholder networking platform can promote ICT policy dialogue and partnership for action.

10. Malaysia is proud to be an active member and contributor to the UN GAID. As an affirmation of Malaysia's commitment to UN GAID, we have assigned a fulltime staff member to the Secretariat. Malaysia's active participation in UN GAID has enable Malaysia, as a developing nation, to tap into vast pool of policy makers, experts, academia and NGOs available in the areas of ICT for development. The UN GAID has assisted us in turning ideas into reality.

11. As an example, Malaysia conceptualized and launched the Cyber Development Corps - one of the three Flagship Partnership Initiatives (FPI) of GAID. FPIs are initiatives that are endorsed by the GAID Steering Committee that must involve a multi stakeholder approach and the initiative has benefits for the global audience. Cyber Development Corps (CDC) is the promotion of ICT-based capacity building through South-South cooperation on the spirit of volunteerism. The objective of the CDC is to produce ICT literate centres of excellence that are self-sustainable. This has provided Malaysia with the platform to lead the ICT for Development agenda for the developing, including the least developed countries. To date, the Asian chapter of the CDC has been launched and requests have been received from governments in Africa and NGOs in other developing countries to assist them in promoting the CDC.

12. Next year, in 2008, Malaysia will be hosting the World Congress on IT (WCIT) which is the largest gathering of global leaders and decision makers on information and communications technology. WCIT 2008 will be held in Kuala Lumpur from 18 – 22 May 2008 and is expected to attract more than 2,500 participants from over 80 countries worldwide ranging from CEOs from top ICT companies around the world, content creators, entrepreneurs and members of the academia. Malaysia welcomes the participation of experts from member states at the WCIT 2008 in Kuala Lumpur.

13. In conjunction with WCIT, Malaysia will also host UN GAID's Ministerial and High Level Meeting in Kuala Lumpur from 18 – 19 May 2008. Continuing the multi stakeholder approach and taking advantage of the diversity of the audience championing ICT being in Malaysia at that time, the UN GAID's Ministerial and High Level Meeting intends to bring together policy makers, experts and NGOs together with the CEOs of the ICT companies, content creators, entrepreneurs, and academia to discuss and provide recommendations for future ICT for Development agenda and activities of UN GAID. Other issues such as financing mechanism for ICT for Development and the importance of local content in the ICT industries will also be deliberated at length. It is my pleasure to invite all member states to attend and actively participate in the UN GAID's Ministerial and High Level Meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

Madam Chair,

14. In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate that we must provide opportunity to all, to further develop through the advancement in ICT, in line with our own economic, social and cultural environment norms. Access to information in the application of ICT within this knowledge-economy is no longer a privilege. It is a right. It is a right to development.

Thank You.

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