



Permanent Mission of
Malaysia
to the United Nations

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STATEMENT BY MR. RAJA NUSHIRWAN ZAINAL ABIDIN, REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA ON AGENDA ITEM 54: 'OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT', QUESTIONS' AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 63RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, NEW YORK, 15 OCTOBER 2008

Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to support the statements by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the G77 and China and Indonesia on behalf of ASEAN.

2. For many of us in the developing world, the United Nations is most visible and relevant in its operational and developmental work. Across continents and in all spheres of human activity, the UN development system has shown that it does indeed make a difference to the lives of millions. While those millions who benefit from its activities are unfamiliar with the bedrock principles of the UN's developmental activities such as its voluntary and grant nature, its neutrality and multilateralism, these principles do get translated into activities on the ground. We must always remember that these are not just words in the realm of abstractions.

Madam Chair,

3. We thank the Secretary General for his report on trends in contributions to operational activities for development (A/63/201), written pursuant to paragraph 30 of the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR). We are greatly concerned with some of the issues highlighted:

- 3.1 The upward trend in total contributions to the UN operational activities since 2002 halted in 2006;
- 3.2 Efforts to expand the donor base have not been successful, with heavy reliance on a limited number of donors more the norm;
- 3.3 Generally, the total number of countries contributing to the operational activities has fallen; and
- 3.4 There is a persistent imbalance between non-core funding, which in 2006 stood at US\$12.1 billion and core funding, which stood at US\$5.1 billion. Further, non-core funding is growing at 17.4 percent, as compared to 7.1 percent for core funding during the 2002-2006 period, indicating that this situation will worsen.

4. This concern is compounded by a fall in resources dedicated to the UN's Development Pillar in general, evidenced by the following facts:

- 4.1 As a percentage of total UN budget appropriation, combined requirements for development-related sections fell from 21.8 percent in the 1998-99 biennium to 17.8 percent in the 2008-09 biennium;
- 4.2 Over the same period, the proportion of posts under these budget sections fell from 33.5 percent to 29.9 percent of the approved staffing for the Secretariat;
- 4.3 The imbalances between responsibilities and resources can no longer be addressed through more efficient utilization of resources by restructuring and redeployment; and
- 4.4 Piecemeal attempts made at increasing resources for the development pillar have been generally unsuccessful. For example, the Development Account established as far back as 1997 to finance capacity building and technical assistance, as well as technical cooperation projects for the benefit of developing countries have yet to achieve adequate levels. It stands at a paltry US\$20 million.

5. The report mentions the importance of promoting greater political will to equip the UN to better support the developing world. However, the more fundamental issue that needs to be addressed is the causes of the lack of political will to do so. Three questions has to be squarely addressed:

- 5.1 One, is there is a systemic attempt to weaken the UN's involvement in development and operational activities?
- 5.2 Two, is the multilateral, voluntary, neutral and grant-based nature of the UN, deemed for so long as its strengths, have turned out to be its weaknesses as the developed world increasingly opts for bilateral channels for development assistance? and
- 5.3 Three, is there is an increasing sense of donor fatigue?

6. What we can do in the meantime is to have a report from the Secretary General which not only addresses these critical issues, but also contain feedback from the developed world. It should also contain information on the resources that they have contributed to the UN's operational system and to cooperation in general.

Madam Chair,

7. The success of the UN's operational activities endeavours in assisting the developing world depends on a very large part on the dedication and commitment of UN

staff present in the field. Without a doubt whatsoever, they are the UN's most important assets. For many in the developing world, they are the UN.

8. We therefore view with grave concern any situation which may imperil any member of the UN working at the field level. The tendency to directly target UN staff is a cause for great concern. We therefore support all efforts to strengthen the security of these UN staff.

9. Having said that, we must bear in mind that the purpose of the UN staff is to serve the weak and destitute. They will not be able to do so if they are themselves locked in a secure zone, out of touch with the ordinary people. We must therefore avoid a downward spiral in which increased security measures result in increased isolation, making the UN more out of touch and susceptible to attacks, which in turn results in increased security measures. Thus the descent begins.

10. As member states it is our solemn responsibility to address this issue effectively. We must not stand idly by, reduced to hand-wringing whenever tragedy strikes.

11. In order for us to do so, we need to address the following issues:

11.1 Firstly, has the nature of conflict changed in such a way that the UN is now seen as legitimate target, whose killing brings material advantage for the perpetrators?

11.2 Secondly, there is a tendency now to have integrated missions involving peacekeeping, political and humanitarian activities. Have this made humanitarian workers in general more susceptible to threats and danger? and

11.3 Thirdly, is there a perception now among belligerents that the UN is no longer neutral?

We hope that the important issue of threats to security and its impact on the UN's operational activities can be addressed in a systematic manner by member states soon.

Madam Chair,

12. My delegation firmly believes that the agenda on the UN's operational activities is of vital importance, as for many of the world's poorest and dispossessed, the map of the world encircled by olive leaves represents their best hope for survival. Diplomats may come and go. We make statements in between. But we must do more if the humanity's noble aspirations contained in our Charter are to be achieved. We must give meaning and effect to our statements.

Thank you.