



Permanent Mission of
Malaysia
to the United Nations

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STATEMENT BY
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ON

AGENDA ITEM 61 (A): IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE WORLD
SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH SPECIAL
SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

AGENDA ITEM 61 (B): SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS
RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING,
DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY

AND

AGENDA ITEM 61 (C): FOLLOW-UP TO THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF OLDER
PERSONS: SECOND WORLD ASSEMBLY ON AGEING

OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE

OF THE 64TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, 5 OCTOBER 2009

Mr. Chairman,

The 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen stands as one of the achievements of contemporary international governance in that it brought together Governments to reach a consensus on the need to put people at the centre of development. It recognized among others that national development, the development of the intrinsic value of people as a whole and individuals as its components, were interrelated, mutually dependent and absolutely necessary. The follow-up to this Summit, the 24th Special Session of the General Assembly, further expanded the views on the protection and promotion of social development and provided specific targets and strategies in setting and achieving social development objectives.

2. While there has been some progress in implementation of what was agreed at the WSSD and the 24th Special Session of the General Assembly, such achievements continue to remain hostage to contemporary instability in the global economic and financial system, as well as to the continued challenges that remain from the increase in the costs of fuel and food. As the effects of these challenges are felt and become fully understood, it is increasingly clear that these delay, and at times derail, the main policy efforts of national governments needed to achieve long-lasting social development – economic growth, employment generation and productivity growth. Additionally, the free-for-all of financial liberalization and the subsequent bail-outs of private corporations through public funds has not been accompanied with the requisite safeguards of corporate and market responsibility and discipline.

3. It is due to the above that while we examine and look at policy prescriptions which the Third Committee can recommend to the General Assembly, we need to reinforce the following:

3.1 First, our steadfast commitment to the larger political goals of the WSSD and relevant social development fora, especially on enhanced international cooperation, the transfer of technology and expertise, as well as striving for the fulfillment of the agreed targets of overall official development assistance from developed countries as soon as possible;

3.2 Second, for countries to achieve the objectives of social development, the structure of the global financial and economic environment has to be addressed to ensure that it is fair, equitable, and allows for a balance between the role of the government and the private sector, and a balance between regulation and market-driven approaches. In the current economic climate, social development objectives should not be allowed to be set aside;

3.3 Third, in funneling our work into specific streams, such as “Promoting full employment and decent work for all”, and the focus on vulnerable groups, we need to undertake a paradigm shift in our analysis of growth and poverty. The measurement of poverty as being equal to living on a dollar-

a-day needs to be reexamined; the provision of essential social services needs to be counted; and the structural determinants of wealth and income distribution need to be evaluated; and

- 3.4 Finally, there is still yet to be a full evaluation of the effects of the financial, food and fuel crises. Current policy measures in place in many countries continue to be based on crisis responses. We are approaching the second year of living with these crises and we call on the relevant entities of the United Nations System to provide to Member States, an assessment of the long-term impacts.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Allow me to touch on questions relating to youth and older persons.

5. With regard to youth, Malaysia's National Youth Development Policy, which was first formulated in 1985 and later revised in 1997, serves as a framework for the planning and implementation of youth programmes in the country. This policy focuses efforts in major areas such as youth empowerment, human resource development, youth leadership and youth enterprise development. In 2007, the Youth Association and Youth Development Act 2007 was gazetted and this Act among its main points promotes and facilitate the development of youths in Malaysia from the aspect of education, research and human resources, establishes a National Youth Consultative Council, and establishes the Malaysian Institute for Research In Youth Development.

6. On the issue of ageing, current international discourse on the issue of older persons is increasingly dominated by the question of whether we deal with it through a social development approach or through a rights-based approach? Neither is mutually exclusive, but while the former suggests the status quo, the latter suggests the creation of an international legal instrument. A follow-on corollary that arises to this question is to what extent is the international community ready to in fact answer the first question? What we have found is that it is not. Thus, before any determination is made, it is necessary that the international community is given further information on the current status of the rights of older persons.

7. At the national level, while the proportion of Malaysia's population which falls under the category of "older person" at present is not as high as that of some developed countries, Malaysia is having a rapidly ageing population. Older persons constituted 4.3% or 1.2 million of the total population in 2005 and this number is expected to grow to 3.3 million, or 9.8% of the population by the year 2020.

8. The Government of Malaysia has taken proactive steps in improving the status of the older persons. Efforts are realized through the National Policy for the Elderly which was formulated in 1995 and its Plan of Action for the Elderly formulated in 1998. The National Plan of Action focuses on a multi-disciplinary approach to promote programmes and activities for the aged as well as improve access and facilities for the elderly so that they can lead independent and active lives. The Plan of Action also gives emphasis to developing community support systems for families of older persons. This is an initiative to encourage members of the community to provide care for older persons within that community, and we would be willing to share this experience with the relevant agencies within United Nations system, as well as member states.

Mr. Chairman,

9. The well-being of our societies, and the people who constitute that society, no matter whatever differences or vulnerabilities they have remain the prime motivator for the work of the Government of Malaysia. Together with other delegations, it is our hope that we can move forward on this issue and create the consensus and policy prescriptions that will allow us move forward and which would allow for the practical implementation of our decisions.

Thank you.