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**STATEMENT BY  
MR. TAN LI LUNG  
MEMBER OF THE MALAYSIAN DELEGATION  
ON  
65 (A): PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN; AND  
65 (B): FOLLOW-UP TO THE SPECIAL SESSION ON CHILDREN  
OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE  
OF THE 64TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
NEW YORK, 15 OCTOBER 2009**

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Mr. Chairman,

It is Malaysia's belief that the promotion and protection of the rights of children must be among the priorities of every country's development agenda. While serious efforts must be taken at the national level by every State to ensure that children are protected from being the target of abuse and exploitation, many problems faced by children in developing countries are closely related to under-development, poverty and conflict. These cannot be solved unless the underlying developmental issues are seriously addressed and the countries concerned provided with the required resources and assistance. Some of the obstacles to achieving the goals contained in both the outcome documents of the World Summit on Children and the special session on children include the lack of resources, debt and decline in international funding to implement identified programmes. These are clearly developmental issues, and have to be addressed if we are committed to further the promotion and protection of the rights of children.

Mr. Chairman,

2. 2009 marks the twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Malaysia acceded to this Convention in 1994, and our Child Act of 2001 was promulgated based on the principles enumerated in the Convention, providing for care, protection and rehabilitation of a child without discrimination as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, social origin or physical, mental or emotional disabilities or any other status.

3. Following the commitments made during the World Summit on Children in 1990, Malaysia had formulated a National Plan of Action on Children through the concerted and coordinated efforts of various government agencies, civil society and international agencies, particularly UNICEF and the WHO. Currently, Malaysia is at the midway point of our Second National Plan of Action for Children, encompassing the period since 2001 and up-until 2020. This Plan of Action sets out a broad framework of actions and measures to be undertaken by the Government in addressing all areas of concern affecting the social and developmental needs of the child, as well as the promotion and protection of the rights of children. This Plan has been formulated by taking into account

discussions held with children and their representatives through consultations at various levels and focuses on areas relating to the development, protection and participation of children in our national development, including programmes for children with disabilities.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Providing quality education is essential to ensure that children have the tools necessary for their further developmental progress. Malaysia recognises the importance of education as a major tool for national development. As such, education has been given the biggest allocation in the national budget since Independence in 1957. Given the great importance of education, training and lifelong learning, under the Ninth Malaysia Plan - Malaysia's five-year blueprint outlining the policies and key programmes aimed at national development for the 2006-2010 period – a total of MYR40.3 billion or approximately USD 12.7 billion, representing about 21 per cent of the total annual budget, has been allocated for education expenditure and training development.

5. Malaysia has formulated an Education Development Master Plan (EDMP) for 2006-2010 which outlines Malaysia's initiatives in ensuring that all students receive fair and equal educational opportunities regardless of location, ability or ethnic background. Malaysia addresses the issue of the lack of access to school by providing a comprehensive set of education support measures which include the textbook loan scheme, supplementary food plan, poor students' trust fund, scholarship, hostel food assistance, transport assistance, life jackets, monthly allowance for disabled students, tuition aid scheme, and hostel facilities for disadvantaged students.

6. Children with special needs are also not left behind. These students are provided education opportunities in special schools and in integration programmes in regular schools. As of 2007, there were 28 special education national schools, two special education secondary schools, two special education vocational secondary schools and 973 schools under the Special Integrated Education Programme. The national school curricula in used in special education schools and in the inclusive education programme, and has been modified to meet the requirements of students with special needs.

7. All these efforts are not new. In fact, Malaysia had already achieved the MDG 2 target of achieving universal primary education in 1990; and gender parity in education was achieved by 2005. Females have increasingly outnumbered males in secondary and tertiary enrolments, so much so that female enrolment represents 60 per cent of students in higher learning institutions.

Mr. Chairman,

8. With regard to health, programmes which are available for children cover the spectrum of prevention, promotion, curative and rehabilitation services. Health services are available for the prenatal period, newborn, infant, and toddler at health clinics. Health services for children are also provided for preschool, primary and secondary schools through the establishment of School Health Teams. Health care programmes for persons with disabilities include care for children with special needs.

9. With regard to MDG 4 of reducing child mortality, the infant mortality rate in Malaysia in 2007 was 6.3 per 1,000 live births, as compared to 74.5 per 1,000 live births at the time of our Independence.

Mr. Chairman,

10. No violence against children is justifiable. Poverty, income inequality, political instability and conflict are among some of the many factors that have been identified that could increase the risk of violence. There is an urgent need for international partnership to address these root causes of the problem, and for mechanisms to be put in place to stop and prevent violence against children. In discussions on this subject, we also must include all children, whose rights are denied due to situations of conflict, including the plight of children living under foreign occupation.

11. Domestically, Malaysia has developed mechanisms for child-care, protection and rehabilitation through the setting-up of inter-sectoral Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) teams at district and state hospitals, in addition to a 24-hour toll-free hotline to report suspected cases of child abuse. As a preventive measure, Malaysia has also established Child Protection Teams and Child Activity Centres at both the State and district levels, which are aimed at mobilising community participation in the implementation of preventative and rehabilitative programmes, targeted especially towards children at risk or vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. The Government continues to work closely with members of civil society, including NGOs and voluntary organisations, through the forging of smart partnerships, to further enhance measures to promote and protect the rights of children.

Mr. Chairman,

12. Malaysia reaffirms its strong commitment to the efforts in protecting and promoting the rights of its children. Protecting our children is a priority as they are the ones who will be expected to ensure the well being of our community, our nation and our future. It is only fair that we leave them with a world that is truly fit for all.

Thank you.