



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

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STATEMENT BY
THE HONOURABLE SENATOR A. KOHILAN PILLAY
DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF MALAYSIA
ON

AGENDA ITEM 27 (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 27 (B): SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO
THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND
THE FAMILY

AND

AGENDA ITEM 27 (C): FOLLOW-UP TO THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF OLDER PERSONS:
SECOND WORLD ASSEMBLY ON AGEING

OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE

OF THE 65TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, 5 OCTOBER 2010

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. 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. Our discussions on this agenda item have in the past few years been undertaken in the challenging environment of the global economic and financial crises, increases in the costs of fuel and food, and uncertainty with regard to continued global economic growth and recovery. Progress in the implementation of the outcome of the WSSD and the 24th Special Session continue to remain hostage to contemporary instability. 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.

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, and focus the following:

- 3.1 Firstly, 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 as soon as possible, for the fulfillment of the agreed targets of overall official development assistance from developed countries;
- 3.2 Secondly, 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 government and the private sector, and a balance between regulation and market-driven approaches;
- 3.3 Thirdly, 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, Governments in all corners of the world are faced with a limited fiscal space. We have seen a growing shift in policy formulation, in many parts of the world, that better balances social protection policies with policies that promote economic growth. For example, the need for more flexible hiring policies, stricter due diligence by financial institutions, and pro-trade policies – all of which are policies which traditionally have been seen as being at the other end of the spectrum vis-à-vis social development policies. Thus, the key priority areas of the WSSD need to be made to work towards greater economic growth, especially in a limited fiscal policy space, and without creating economic and financial burdens on countries.

As such, greater coordination is needed at all levels, to ensure greater coherence between work currently undertaken in the social development field and the work related to overall economic and sustainable development. The ECOSOC is already undertaking this coordination role, but further engagement by the General Assembly is needed, specifically coherence between its Second and Third Committees.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Allow me to touch on questions relating to older persons and persons with disabilities in Malaysia:

4.1 With regard to older persons, with declining fertility and longer life expectancy, Malaysia's population is ageing. By 2030, Malaysia will be in the category of ageing nations with older persons constituting more than 15% of the population.

As such, the Government realises that harnessing pool of resources from older persons is valuable and necessary. Therefore, during the Tenth Malaysia Plan period from 2011 to 2015, continued emphasis will be placed on ensuring the health and well-being of older persons so that they are able to age with dignity and respect as well as lead independent and fulfilling lives as integral members of their families, communities and country.

Programmes undertaken will, amongst others, focus on enhancing elderly friendly infrastructure, improving access to affordable healthcare, ensuring adequate provision of shelters and improving financial security and opportunities for employment. To encourage greater employment opportunities, the 100% tax rebate on costs to retrain older persons will be continued. Independent living will also be emphasised through the Home Help programme whereby volunteers will provide assistance in managing daily routines, especially for those who live alone. Access to healthcare will also continue to be improved through provision of free transport to hospitals and clinics by the Department of Social Welfare.

4.2 On 19 July 2010, Malaysia ratified, and subsequently became a State Party to the Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities.

For the Tenth Malaysia Plan period from 2011 to 2015, the Government will focus on better integrating Persons with Disabilities into society to enable them to be independent, productive and valued contributors.

Amongst other, greater efforts will be made to provide easy physical access to transportation and buildings for a more disabled-friendly environment. Existing community-based rehabilitation centres will be upgraded to one-stop service centres which will provide more comprehensive services such as registration of PWDs, disability screening and detection, referral services, vocational trainings, job placements and dissemination of information on disabilities.

The Government will also seek to provide greater employment opportunities for PWDs. In line with this, the Government will actively pursue its target of 1% disabled employment in the civil service. The Government will also look into establishing specialised learning institutions and vocational schools dedicated to PWDs.

Mr. Chairman,

5. 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.