



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMB. HUSSEIN HANIFF
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ON AGENDA ITEM 27 B: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO
THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE
FAMILY: MEETING DEVOTED TO THE LAUNCH OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
COOPERATIVES 2012**

**AT THE PLENARY MEETING OF THE
66TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, 31 OCTOBER 2011**

Mr. President,

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives. Mandated by the United Nations General Assembly in its A/RES/54/184, the Global Launch of the International Year of Cooperatives aims to increase public awareness about cooperatives and their contributions to socioeconomic development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and to promote the formation and growth of cooperatives worldwide. With the theme 'Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World', it seeks to encourage the growth and establishment of cooperatives all over the world, highlighting the contribution of cooperatives to socio-economic development, particularly their impact on poverty reduction, youth, ageing, disabled persons and family.

Mr. President,

2. It is undeniable that the broader livelihood and ecological changes have taken place in the lives of the world community following the disruptions in the food circle and energy security and not forgetting the threats of climate change. On a different setting, we also have an emerging generation that uses social media in a very essential way. They collaborate with one another through social media. They are temperamentally predisposed toward working together, connecting with one another – aspects of cooperation that is essential to what we want to achieve. With these two factors combined, the International Year of the Co-operatives is a well-timed event as it represents the depth of understanding of the entire cooperative movement.

Mr. President,

3. The 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen stands as one of the achievements of contemporary international governance as 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.

4. 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 global and national financial markets, as well as to challenges brought about by the fuel and food crisis. These challenges 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 has not been accompanied with the requisite safeguards of corporate and market responsibility and discipline.

5. The purpose of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy healthy, safe and creative lives. Pure development cannot guarantee social harmony in a plural society like Malaysia. National development has always emphasised growth with equity. Malaysia believes that importance should be given to programmes which will improve the quality of life of the population through the provision of essential social services such as primary health care and various types of financial assistance. The Government has and would continue to sequence a mix of economic and social policies to ensure that economic and social goals are simultaneously met.

Mr. President,

6. Allow me to touch on questions relating to youth, ageing, and disabled persons. The social agenda of the national policies of Malaysia, through the nation's New Economic Policy, bear implicit as well as direct references to the creation of a 'caring society'. Malaysia believes that the success of a nation is reflected not only in economic terms but, more importantly, social development. There seem to be great difficulties in determining the right formula for the success of a nation, particularly in the social sector. However, since its independence, Malaysia has been active in developing and prescribing policies and providing various goods and services to the people, including the elderly, persons with disabilities, family and youth, enabling them to take advantage of and share the wealth and prosperity of the nation.

7. In Malaysia, youth constitutes about 43 percent of the population and their number amounting to 12.5 million Malaysians. In terms of structures, mechanisms, policies and plans, the Government of Malaysia ensures the full range of the necessary support system to enhance youth participation and empowerment at all levels. The Government continues to engage with the younger generation through national scale events. For example, in May 2011, Putrajaya, which houses the Federal Government Administrative Centre, was turned into a sea of youth, where National Youth Day was celebrated to honour the youth of the country. The celebration included a youth convention which discussed the direction for youth transformation. Putrajaya has also been officially declared as a Youth Friendly City.

8. On the issue of ageing, while the proportion of our population whom fall under the category of 'older person' at present is not as high as that of some developed countries, like many others, Malaysia is having a rapidly ageing population. Older persons constituted 4.3 per cent or 1.2 million of the total population in 2005 and this number is expected to grow to 3.3 million, or 9.8 per cent of the population by the year 2020.

9. Realizing the socioeconomic implications of an ageing population, the Government of Malaysia has taken proactive steps in improving the status of the older persons. The new National Policy and Plan of Action for the Older Persons are also expected to be implemented by the end of 2011. There are various strategies and improvements included in the new policy and plan which would fulfill the current and future needs of the ageing population. As to the social development

issues concerning persons with disabilities (PWDs), The Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 was passed by Parliament in December 2007 and came into force on 7 July 2008. It is an Act that provides for the registration, protection, rehabilitation, development and well being of PWDs, the establishment of the National Council for PWDs, and for matters connected therewith. The Act is aimed to ensure that the rights, interests and welfare of PWDs are protected. In addition, the Act is also intended to assist PWDs to seek a better life and to be able to contribute to national development.

Mr. President,

10. Malaysia is of the view that it is important to promote healthy families, information on health and disease prevention, family planning, nutrition and child development programmes, as well as parenting skills, which include child upbringing and discipline, interaction and communication between parents and children and improving self-esteem. In addition to intellectual and emotional development, programmes aimed at developing family members who are confident, responsible, considerate, hardworking and dedicated are vital to the family. The people are the core and the key to development. The investment in the wellbeing of the people is equivalent to the act of investing in the future wellbeing of all societies, for progress and peace. This is the time to empower and strengthen the family, the youth, the elderly and the disabled to address future challenges.

Thank you.