



# Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

**STATEMENT BY H.E. DATO' 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 ON 'FOLLOW-UP TO THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF VOLUNTEERS AND THE COMMEMORATION OF ITS TENTH ANNIVERSARY' AT THE PLENARY OF THE 66<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, NEW YORK, 5 DECEMBER 2011**

Mr. President,

Malaysia welcomes the commemoration of the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers. Malaysia is also honoured to be one of the co-sponsors of the resolution.

Mr. President,

2. There are positive signs that we are entering into a new age of volunteerism. Volunteerism is a powerful means of engaging people in tackling development challenges worldwide – embracing the concept of universality and inclusivity by supporting each other in fostering participation by people from varied backgrounds. Volunteerism strengthens trust, solidarity and reciprocity among citizens and the world community. What is significant is that volunteerism appeals to different peoples, at different times, providing them with a wide range of opportunities to get involved in actions that can contribute to positive social changes and empowering disadvantaged groups.

3. Malaysia encourages and fully supports the work of voluntary and non-profit organizations, focusing on providing medical relief, sustainable health-related development for vulnerable communities in both crisis and non-crisis situations in the national and international fields. In 2010, non-profitable organizations in Malaysia had joined the international community to raise funds in order to respond to the emergency crises among others in Haiti, Palestine, Somalia, Pakistan, Indonesia and Chile, and participated in humanitarian relief exercises in some of the countries. At the same time, in order to ensure continuation of sustainable efforts in non-crisis spheres, especially related to health and risk-reduction programmes, Malaysia encourages the growing efforts by local non-profit organizations to collaborate with other international volunteer organizations in providing health-related assistance, such as vaccination programmes and disaster preparedness programmes for selected communities in Malaysia. To inculcate early awareness among the younger generation on the virtues of volunteerism, the Ministry of Education of Malaysia jointly collaborated with local non-profitable organizations to conduct nationwide School Preparedness Programme, with emphasis on the importance of civic education among young students.

Mr. President,

4. Understanding the culture, customs and norms of a society is vital for all volunteers. Culturally sensitive volunteering requires a willingness to learn and directly engage with the targeted groups, taking into consideration the cultural sensitivities of the recipient countries, especially in the areas of gender, age, ethnicity, culture and religion. The ability to understand and respect other cultures and local sensitivities are core in underlining engagement and solidarity, which will built trust and acceptance by the local communities of the noble works of volunteers.

5. We acknowledge that the Tenth Anniversary has provided the opportunity and impetus for an unprecedented level of collaboration among governments, the United Nations system and civil society to join hands in furthering the efforts to achieve the goals of the International Year of Volunteers. Let us, Mr. President, welcome with open arms the emergence of a renewed phase of cooperation in the dignified spirit of volunteerism across the world in bringing positive change to our world.

I thank you, Mr. President.