



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

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**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Hussein Haniff, Permanent Representative of Malaysia,
on Agenda Item 118: Strengthening of the United Nations System,
and Agenda Item 15: Culture of Peace,
at the Plenary of the United Nations General Assembly,
New York, 17 December 2012**

Mr. President,

At this plenary meeting of the General Assembly, I wish to present my delegation's views on issues under Agenda Items 118 on 'Strengthening the United Nations System' and 12 on 'Culture of Peace'. I wish to align my statement with that made by Tunisia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement for Agenda Item 118 and to be delivered by Cambodia on behalf of ASEAN for Agenda Item 15.

Mr. President,

2. It is sad to see that many countries coming from post-conflict situations have relapsed into conflict. It is no doubt that these countries face many challenges. In facing these challenges, my delegation shares the view that civilian capacity is an important element in spearheading successful transition of countries emerging from conflict to peace.

3. Malaysia believes that there is a need to expand civilian capacity and expertise in support of nation-building programmes. We underscore the importance of the various fields of civilian expertise in instilling reform and institutional building for governments emerging from conflict. We are also of the view that the necessary expertise from countries, which have experienced conflict, is important. Civilian experts sourced from these countries would be invaluable assets as the experience would be crucial in the development of nation building programmes and institutional building.

4. In this regard, Malaysia is encouraged by the introduction of the CAPMATCH online platform system operated by the UN Civilian Capacities Unit. It is heartening to note that 63 countries and non-governmental organizations have shown keen interest in the programme. We sincerely believe that the CAPMATCH online system can be effective in further enhancing connectivity between governments in the pursuit of a comprehensive political and economic development agenda that would help countries emerging from conflict.

5. Malaysia's efforts in enhancing civilian capacity can be clearly seen in our active role in working towards the resolution of the internal conflict in Mindanao, Southern Philippines. Malaysia has been advocating programmes in the development of human capital and socio-economic activities in Mindanao. Capacity building, human resource development and socio-economic expansion are prerequisites to a sustainable solution to the conflict in Mindanao. This, in turn, will undoubtedly, benefit all parties.

6. Being a member of the Guinea Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Malaysia has trained more than 300 Guinean students at various Malaysian universities. In addition, Malaysia has sponsored over 25,000 participants attending capacity building courses conducted through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) since 1980. We look forward to further contribute in the work and development of civilian capacities in assisting countries in transition, to ensure sustained global peace and security.

Mr. President,

7. Turning to the issue of 'Culture of Peace', this year, several cities across the Middle East witnessed violence as a consequence of the distasteful film "Innocence of Muslims" and the caricatures of Prophet Muhammad. The sole intention of the film and caricatures were to denigrate Islam and inflame Muslims. Unfortunately, inflame Muslims it did. So many lives were lost as a result. While we condemn the film and the caricatures, make no mistake, Malaysia is equally appalled by the violence that ensued. Resorting to violence, killings and destruction would get us nowhere. Moreover, what good would it do to kill people and destroy the very population centers that we live in?

8. We believe that those who resorted to violence have surely smeared the good name of Islam. Let us remind ourselves that Islam does not have to be defended by violence, but must be faithfully represented. This is how we, the Muslim world, should have reacted to the incitement.

Mr. President,

9. No religion asks its followers to do evil. Indeed, all religions enjoin mankind to do good and refrain from evil, to know and understand each other, and to live in peace with one another.

10. Therefore, rarely will we find that conflicts are between religions. On the contrary, we notice that in recent times, conflicts take place over territory or resources, and due to attempts of people, who happen to be of one faith, to dominate another. There is a tendency to describe these conflicts as conflicts between religions and cultures. However, often we find people dressing their causes and political agenda in religious garb to make it more appealing, respected and legitimate. When this happens, it is the obligation of those of the same faith to discredit them. When extremists who kill innocent civilians are engaged in misusing their faith

in this manner, it is our duty to challenge and expose them for what they truly are. They should be condemned for shrouding their noble faith in shame.

11. The faiths are not in conflict. It is peoples and nations with conflicting interests that collide. Realizing this, Malaysia's Prime Minister called on a "Global Movement of Moderates" (GMM) at the 65th UN General Assembly. The call for moderation stems from the belief that it is a guiding principle that would enable a society to successfully prosper in unity. It is based on our own experience in Malaysia.

12. As a Malaysian, embracing 'moderation' is an important value engrained in every Malaysian. It is in-built in every Malaysian irrespective of their ethnic, religious or cultural background and has contributed to the relative peace and harmony experienced by Malaysia to this very day. For Malaysia, moderation comes with a high degree of tolerance, trust and mutual understanding. It places dialogue as an important tool to resolve disputes. With relative political peace comes economic stability, which in turn has allowed Malaysia to concentrate on socio-economic development in the country. However, if we were to take a look back at where Malaysia was during independence in 1957, we could not blame others if they thought that Malaysia would be a fertile breeding ground for extremists. Then, Malaysia was a country plagued by a host of problems. Malaysians were generally uneducated, poor, and more strikingly, were strongly divided along religious and ethnic lines. Thus, our forefathers knew that we had to take drastic steps to ensure that Malaysia remained stable and could move forward.

13. The very first step taken then was to create a more united society by forming an alliance of political parties that represented all the major ethnic groups in the country. This was important to ensure that all the ethnic and religious groups were included in the political process and had a stake in how the country was run. This was one of the most significant decisions that contributed in making Malaysia what it is today. It is one of the most moderate actions taken by our forefathers.

Mr. President,

14. The practice of moderation in Malaysia is not merely confined to religion alone, but is an all-encompassing value that could be applied to other areas such as in the realm of politics, the economy, culture and social dynamics. Moderation is an important approach to bridge differences, facilitate dialogue, resolve disputes, sustain stability and development, as well as create harmonious relations since it calls for mutual respect, tolerance, understanding, dialogue, compromise and justice.

15. In October this year, the Philippine Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) signed an historic peace framework agreement to bring an end to the 40-year old conflict in Southern Philippines. Malaysia believes that this peace agreement was achieved due to the value of moderation practiced by all sides. Had the parties concerned resorted to taking hardline positions, such an agreement would still be far from sight.

16. Malaysia has also approached the conflict in the Rakhine region, Myanmar, by adopting the moderation approach. We believe that the conflict is not one between religions, but is a humanitarian issue in which people of different faiths were suffering. As such, a Malaysian NGO had extended humanitarian aid in the form of food and medical supplies to both the Muslims and Buddhists in the Rakhine State. This would assist all concerned and alienate none.

Mr. President,

17. The idea of GMM continues to receive support from the international community. It has been referenced in various outcome documents of various international meetings and conferences for organizations such as NAM, OIC, the Commonwealth as well as the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM). In April this year, ASEAN leaders unanimously endorsed and adopted the initiative on GMM at the ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh in April 2012, in which GMM would be one of ASEAN's positive contributions in achieving global peace. On this note, we welcome the inclusion of ASEAN's proposal to include a paragraph on 'moderation' in this year's resolution on interreligious and intercultural dialogue. We believe that the language contained in the resolution lays the foundation for further elaboration of the idea.

18. In conclusion, Mr. President, Malaysia believes that GMM complements activities and efforts towards a Culture of Peace. As such, Malaysia wishes to invite all to support the GMM and looks forward to cooperate in promoting moderation to counter extremism in all its forms. We do not doubt that the road ahead will be long and arduous. There will be detractors along the way. But in the end, the moderates will prevail and this will usher in a period of sustained global peace and prosperity for all.

I thank you.