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

**ON AGENDA ITEM 15:
“CULTURE OF PEACE”**

**AT THE PLENARY OF THE 68TH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, 18 DECEMBER 2013**

Mr. President,

Malaysia wishes to align itself with the statement made by Brunei on behalf of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) on agenda item 15 “Culture of Peace.” In addition, allow me to deliver remarks in our national capacity.

2. On behalf of my delegation, I wish to thank the Secretary General for his report on the “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace” contained in document A/68/286. I also wish to express our appreciation to the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for her report on the follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace as in document A/68/216. In addition, we welcome the report of the High Representative of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) for the sixth annual report of the UNAOC contained in document A/68/361. These reports chronicle important efforts by the UN system to promote a global culture of peace and non-violence, both within and beyond national borders.

3. Malaysia lauds the work of UNESCO, the UNAOC as well as other UN entities and initiatives in pursuit of true understanding and tolerance that bridge divides and overcome prejudices through intercultural and interreligious dialogue. We also commend the efforts undertaken to instill values related to the culture of peace through education and the focus on youth involvement. It is in full support of these undertakings that Malaysia co-sponsored the draft resolution on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace.

Mr. President,

4. In addition to action within the UN system, we would also like to highlight the contribution that the concept of moderation can add in efforts to promote a culture of peace.

5. In 2010, the Prime Minister of Malaysia called on the silent majority of moderates to come together in a global movement to reclaim the center stage from the loud voices of hatred and extremism. Three years on and neither the relevance nor the urgency of this call has subsided. The international community remains gripped by violent conflicts across the world perpetrated by extremists who choose to influence by sowing discord, instilling fear and committing terrorism. Now more than ever do the collective voices of moderates need to be heard in order to quell the extremist rhetoric that completely contradicts the culture of peace that is so vital for lasting stability, security and development.

6. While the call for a Global Movement of Moderates (GMM) is fairly recent, moderation itself is an age-old, living principle that is embodied within all the great religions. In advocating the middle path between extremes, moderation is an approach that emphasizes the universal values of mutual respect, understanding, tolerance and compassion which are key ingredients in cultivating a culture of peace.

7. We need not look far for vivid examples of moderation in action. The world is mourning the loss of President Nelson Mandela, who exemplified among many other virtues forgiveness and conciliation. It is testimony to his sense of moderation and his leadership that there was no bloody retribution in South Africa for all the evils and injustices perpetrated against the majority of South Africans during the apartheid regime. Rather he called for reconciliation and national healing, charting a middle path that brought together the long-divided people of South Africa.

8. Moderation is also reflected in the conduct of Malala Yousufzai, the young Pakistani who defends the right of all children, including girls to education. Despite being viciously attacked by extremists for her ideals, she refused to be silenced and continues to fight for the noble cause of universal education with courage beyond her years. This, in turn, has garnered massive support and awareness. Malala is evidence that moderation and standing up against extremism is not about being weak or about appeasement, but it empowers people to leave a mark for good.

Mr. President,

9. The Global Movement of Moderates (GMM) is a sincere aim to channel en masse the courage and spirit shown by Nelson Mandela and Malala Yousufzai. In the three years since its inception, the GMM has received far-reaching support from countries and groupings across the world. In particular, ASEAN has endorsed and adopted the GMM in recognition of moderation as a central value of the ASEAN way. It underpins the interactions of our multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious

communities in which we prioritize the peaceful resolution of disputes. The large absence of wars and armed conflict amongst neighbours in the region is testament to ASEAN's commitment to upholding moderate values which promotes mutual trust and confidence as well as predisposes dialogue and negotiation as the key means of resolving disputes. The idea of GMM has also received the support of many others as can be seen through the various outcome documents of a number of international meetings and conferences for organizations such as NAM, OIC, the Commonwealth as well as the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM). We hope that the initiative continues to receive greater support in the years to come.

10. Malaysia believes that the GMM as a whole can complement the mission and work of the UN system at various levels in the promotion of the culture of peace. We are pleased to note that the Global Movement of Moderates Foundation, a non-governmental organization based in Malaysia to further the cause of moderation in pursuit of peace, is working together with the UNAOC to promote better understanding on the concept of moderation and its contribution to enhanced respect and dialogue amongst religions, cultures and beliefs.

Mr. President,

11. To conclude, the obstacles that prevent a culture of peace from taking root are many but they are not insurmountable. We believe that moderation and the GMM can provide a valuable contribution to the overall endeavour towards a culture of peace that is vital to sustained development and prosperity desired by all countries.

I thank you.