



# **MALAYSIA**

Statement by

The Honourable Dato' Zainal Abidin Osman,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia  
at the International Meeting for the Review of the  
Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the  
Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Port Louis, Mauritius

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(Please check against delivery)

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I should like at the outset to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Government of Mauritius as well as the United Nations, in particular the Office of the High Representative for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS for the excellent arrangements made for this International Meeting and the courtesies extended to me and my delegation. I would also like to congratulate the Honourable Mr. Paul Raymond Berenger, Prime Minister of Mauritius on his election as President of this important meeting. I am confident that under his able stewardship, we will be able to conclude this meeting successfully and adopt concrete outcomes for the benefit of the small island developing states (SIDS). My delegation thanks Secretary General Kofi Annan for his important statement yesterday.

Mr. President,

2. I would like to take the opportunity of this International Meeting to thank and congratulate the international community for the generous and compassionate response to the recent tsunami disaster by providing emergency rescue and relief assistance as well as other forms of assistance. We welcome the decision by the Paris Club to freeze debt owed to them by the countries affected by the tsunami thus allowing these countries to dedicate all available resources to address humanitarian and reconstruction needs. The sheer magnitude of the disaster in terms of the number of deaths and scale of destruction has resulted in a massive outpouring of support and solidarity from every corner of the world. While the ongoing relief efforts themselves have proved to be a daunting task to the governments of both the affected and contributing countries, NGOs and individuals, the reconstruction of devastated areas and rehabilitation of shattered lives will further present enormous challenges for now and in the near future.

3. The Government of Malaysia sincerely appreciates the concern, support and sense of solidarity of the international community in this most difficult time. However, the number of casualties and damage suffered by Malaysia is much less than the other countries. Nevertheless, this is a national tragedy for us. Despite this, Malaysia has done its part to contribute towards the international relief effort. We are fully aware of the enormous burden faced by Indonesia, the country hardest hit by both the earthquake and tsunami, and the island nations of Sri Lanka, Maldives and Seychelles. The tsunami has certainly driven home the point that small island developing states remain vulnerable to natural disasters, in particular a disaster of such impact and magnitude as the recent one. Other recent experiences faced by island nations in the Caribbean struck by hurricanes further clearly illustrate this vulnerability.

4. In this regard, Malaysia strongly welcomes the Declaration of the Special ASEAN Leaders Meeting held in Jakarta on 6 January 2005, which had proposed the establishment of a Regional Tsunami Early Warning Centre on the Indian Ocean and the Southeast Asia region, including enhancing international cooperation and partnership to build and manage an effective regional early warning system, promoting public education and awareness as well as encouraging community participation in disaster prevention and mitigation.

5. Our gathering in Mauritius at this Meeting is a reminder that the international community must not allow the plight of the SIDS to be forgotten. It is therefore very important for the international community to give full effect to the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action ( BPOA ). The SIDS have not been lacking in their efforts to implement the BPOA at the national level through various programmes and activities carried out by the respective governments, the local populations and communities. There have been many achievements in areas such as sustainable tourism, water management, development of alternative sources of energy and cooperation in the area of marine resources including fisheries. These need to be

further promoted and encouraged. While many SIDS have been successfully promoting their tourism industry, the success is very much dependent on both internal and external variables.

Mr. President,

6. Malaysia holds the view that in order for the BPOA to be fully implemented, the following needs to be done:

- a) The year 2005 will witness a series of activities related to development, resulting in the High Level Plenary Meeting In the United Nations General Assembly which would, inter alia, assess the progress of attainment of the MDGs. This occasion could be used to elevate the profile of the SIDS;
- b) The goals in the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAS) that are most relevant to the SIDS, including In the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol should be fully implemented; and
- c) There should be an increase in financial and technical support, particularly through the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to assist the SIDS in the development and implementation of their national action plans. In this connection, Malaysia would like to recall the pledge made at the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 for the provision of effective means, including adequate, predictable new and additional financial resources.

7 Malaysia firmly believes that the international community should look ahead and must not backtrack and regress from the targets agreed upon In Barbados and further reaffirmed at this International Meeting here in Mauritius. We should be bold enough to identify the factors hindering the implementation of the BPOA and remove those obstacles To ensure the achievement of these targets, we must look at measures

which are practical, cost effective and, perhaps most importantly, implementable. It is essential that donor countries, relevant United Nations entities, multilateral institutions, the private sector and civil society, all contribute fully to this process. We should assist in building physical, economic and social resilience in the SIDS.

Mr. President,

Malaysia is committed to enhancing cooperation with the SIDS. In this regard, in order to help facilitate the success of this international meeting, the Government of Malaysia made a modest contribution to the SIDS Voluntary Trust Fund. Malaysia has done its part largely through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme and the promotion of trade and investment relations with a number of SIDS. We have also developed active collaboration and smart partnerships with the SIDS in the context of south-south cooperation and through our active involvement in the Commonwealth and also as a dialogue partner with the Pacific Island Forum countries. We are prepared to look into future areas of cooperation on the basis of the outcome of this meeting

In conclusion, allow me to state that Malaysia firmly believes that this Meeting must strongly reaffirm the priorities of the international community, the BPOA and the Strategy for Further Implementation as the blueprint for the sustainable development of SIDS. A renewed pledge must be made by all, in particular the developed countries to provide sufficient resources to enable the SIDS to fully implement sustainable development strategies for the benefit of their peoples.

Thank you. Mr President.