



MALAYSIA

Permanent Mission to the United Nations, New York

**STATEMENT BY
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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE
56TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

TUESDAY, 11 APRIL 2023, CONFERENCE ROOM 1, UNHQ, NEW YORK

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, I congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of this session of the Commission. Malaysia aligns itself with the statements delivered by Cuba on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Belarus on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Family.

Mr. Chair,

2. Education is a longstanding right enshrined in human rights and developmental instruments, including in the Plan of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The ICPD Plan of Action also recognises the key role of education in sustainable development, as well as the responsibilities of different stakeholders, particularly parents, in this regard.

3. Investments in education systems are of utmost importance for population growth, as it empowers people to lead better, healthier and sustainable lives. For Malaysia, the education system serves as a fundamental component in our quest to be a developed nation, and in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Strengthening of human capital through education is a priority to Malaysia, with the Government providing free education to citizens up to secondary level.

4. Educational expenditure makes up 4.5 percent of Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 2021, Malaysia achieved near-universal enrolment rates for primary and lower secondary education at 99.0 and 99.8 percent respectively. Tremendous improvements have been attained in the enrolment rate for upper secondary education, which has more than doubled from 45 percent in the 1980s to 97.8 percent in 2021. Recognising the potential of education to drive individual and societal transformation, Education for Sustainable Development is implemented in the national education system

through the Malaysian Education Blueprint and the Malaysian Higher Education Blueprint respectively.

Mr. Chair,

5. Social and reproductive health education is essential to the development of healthy individuals. It includes lifelong learning on biological, sociocultural, and spiritual aspects. The policies regarding reproductive rights in Malaysia takes into consideration religious and cultural factors which influence behaviour and attitudes on the issue.

6. In this regard, Malaysia has introduced the Reproductive and Social Health Education (PEERS) programme for children as young as pre-schoolers to combat sexual crimes against children as well as underage marriages. To further strengthen such efforts, the National Reproductive and Social Health Education Policy was reviewed and launched in 2022 through a consultative and whole-of-society approach. In line with Goals 3 and 5 of the SDGs, the review provided important insights to enhance the effectiveness of sexual and reproductive health education in both formal and informal settings.

Mr. Chair,

7. Malaysia is also undertaking efforts to ensure that our education system is robust, resilient and fit for the future. We are currently working on a Digital Education Policy, with the aim of nurturing digital talents that are knowledgeable, skilled and ethical in the use of digital technology, thus producing digital-savvy generations. We are further enhancing the Digital Educational Learning Initiative Malaysia (DELIMa) digital learning platform, which was widely used during the COVID-19 pandemic. Malaysia also continues to strengthen the enculturation and implementation of lifelong learning programmes through public awareness on its benefits, improving the quality of existing programmes and introducing more innovative programmes.

Mr. Chair,

8. In conclusion, Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to the ICPD Plan of Action, and will continue develop policies, strategies and programmes, including in the field of education, that contribute to a more just and prosperous society.

I thank you.