



Permanent Mission of
Malaysia
to the United Nations

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STATEMENT BY MS. AMINAH ABDUL RAHMAN, REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA AT THE 42nd SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT ON AGENDA ITEM 4: GENERAL DEBATE ON NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN POPULATION MATTERS: CONTRIBUTION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT TO THE INTERNATIONALLY AGREED DEVELOPMENT GOALS, INCLUDING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS, NEW YORK, 31st MARCH, 2009

Madam Chairperson,

Allow me to join other speakers in congratulating you for being elected as Chairperson of the 42nd Session of the Commission. We are confident that under your able leadership and guidance, the deliberations of the Commission will be both substantive and fruitful.

2. We thank the Secretariat for the preparation and presentation of the report, world population monitoring, contribution of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) to the internationally agreed development Goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Malaysia shares the views that the ICPD Programme of Action has made a significant contribution to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals. However, in view of the current global recession, it is imperative that governments undertake bold measures to ensure that gains thus achieved are not jeopardised.

Madam Chairperson,

3. Malaysia has achieved most of the goals set in the ICPD-PoA, other development goals including the MDGs in the areas of poverty reduction, universal education, reductions in maternal and child mortality, gender equality, and environmental sustainability. The challenge for Malaysia is to maintain the momentum in dealing decisively the remainder of the MDG goals especially in reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS, and to identify the next set of priorities that will keep the nation moving ahead towards its ultimate objective of becoming a fully developed nation.

Madam Chairperson,

4. Poverty eradication was already our primary concern in 1970, when half of all households in Malaysia were in living in poverty. By early 2000, just five per cent were

poor. Our main goal currently is to reduce the incidence of overall poverty to 2.8 per cent and to completely eliminate the incidence of hardcore poverty by 2010.

5. Malaysia achieved universal primary education in 1990 and by 2005 Malaysia had achieved gender parity in education, with over 96 per cent in primary and 88 per cent in secondary schools. In 2007, females accounted for 56.2 per cent of the total enrolment in institutions of higher learning. Currently the literacy rate of 15 to 24-year-olds is 98 per cent.

6. Maternal and child mortality levels are now similar to those of many more developed countries. Although the contraceptive prevalence rate has increased from 5.3 per cent in 1966 to 51.9 per cent in 2004, unmet need is still relatively high especially among poor and marginalised groups.

7. Although there is an overall improvement in the health status of the population, new challenges have arisen. Communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS are on the increase. Our commitment is to strengthen HIV/AIDS prevention and control programmes and to reduce them through the implementation of a National Strategic Plan by 2010.

8. To further improve the RH needs especially among the young, new policies and programmes were introduced such as the formulation of the National Adolescent Health Policy in 2001 and the establishment of adolescent clinics and introduction of reproductive health module into the compulsory National Service Programme.

9. Educational attainment has enabled more women to join the professional and business fields and more women are holding leadership posts in both the public and private sectors. However, the goal of achieving the minimum target of 30 per cent representation of women in positions of decision making is still a big challenge.

10. Current initiatives with regards to sustainability and environmental protection are embedded in the National Physical Plan which emphasises the need for equal distribution of resources and optimise natural resources for sustainable development. Steps were also undertaken to identify and adopt actions to promote sustainable resource management practices in relation to land, water, forest, energy and marine resources.

Madam Chairperson,

11. Malaysia's commitment to the philosophy of international cooperation has been clearly demonstrated in the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) now in its third decade. Malaysia has also cooperated with international partners to address population related issues including reproductive health through the sharing of experiences and capacity building.

Madam Chairperson,

12. Despite these achievements, challenges still remain. The current global economic recession has affected the quality of life people. A fiscal stimulus package amounting to 60 billion Malaysian ringgit (approximately 16 billion dollars) was announced in March 2009 in addition to the first package introduced in November 2008. The latest package will be used to create and save jobs, ease the burden of the citizens, assist the private sector and building capacity for the future.

13. Finally, Madam Chairperson, we wish to reiterate that Malaysia is committed in implementing the ICPD-PoA and will give our full support in all deliberations of this 42nd Session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development.

Thank you.