



Permanent Mission of
Malaysia
to the United Nations

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**STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE DATUK FAIZAH MOHD TAHIR
HEAD OF DELEGATION AND SECRETARY GENERAL, MINISTRY OF WOMEN, FAMILY
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, MALAYSIA ON ITEM 4: POPULATION
DISTRIBUTION, URBANISATION, INTERNAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT AT THE
41ST SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT, UNITED
NATIONS, NEW YORK. 8th APRIL 2008**

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to join other speakers before me in congratulating you for being elected as Chairperson of the 41st Session of the Commission. We are confident that under your able leadership and guidance, the deliberations of the Commission will be substantive and fruitful.

Mr. Chairman,

2. My delegation would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary General for his comprehensive reporting on population distribution, urbanisation, internal migration and development as contained in the documents before us. Malaysia shares the concern of the Secretary General that the process of urbanisation must be managed in ways that maximise its potential benefits and prevent its negative consequences. We do recognise that as we become increasingly urban, we have to be very careful in making our decisions today, as it will determine the quality of life of future generations.

Mr. Chairman,

3. Malaysia is currently experiencing an increase in population mobility mainly caused by industrialization and urbanization. Between 1970 and 2006, the proportion of population living in big cities (namely Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Johor Bharu) had doubled due to rapid urbanization mainly contributed by internal migration. Internal migration in Malaysia is gender, age and area selective; it is dominated by males mainly in the age group of 15 to 34 years, though female migration is expected to increase in the future. This trend in internal migration has resulted in population redistribution due to an influx of people to the urban areas.

4. The rapid urbanisation process in Malaysia is due to industrialisation which occurs mainly in the urban areas. In 1980, the level of urbanisation was only 34.2 per cent and it had reached 61.8 per cent in 2000. The latest estimate shows that the level of urbanisation is currently at 65 per cent and is expected to reach 85 per cent in 2050.

5. Realising that migration is centred in urban areas, measures have been taken to ensure that all regions will have a fair share of the benefits of development. In this regard, in 2007, Malaysia has initiated five new economic development corridors, namely East Coast Economic Region (ECER), Iskandar Development Region (IDR) in the South, Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER), Sabah Development Corridor (SDC), and Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (SCORE). The latter two being economic corridors in the island of Borneo. The development of these economic development corridors is expected to reduce inter-regional migration.

6. Malaysia also recognised that urbanisation would strongly influence the world of the twenty-first century, and urban as well as the rural population would be increasingly interdependent in their economic, social and environmental well-being. Thus, Malaysia is very committed to ensure that urban development will contribute towards protecting the world's natural resources through its ability to support large numbers of people, whilst limiting its negative impacts on the natural environment.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Urbanisation is one of the major challenges local authorities must overcome as urban services providers. Local authorities may not be able to face these challenges on their own as resources are limited. Due to this, efforts have been undertaken to improve the coverage and quality of urban services. Since 2002, implementation of the Local Agenda 21 program was made to encourage greater participation of the local community and the private sector in the management of their living environment. Through the Local Agenda 21 programme, the society and private sector will be exposed to sustainable development issues and eventually be involved directly in the development planning that will be implemented in the Local Agenda 21 Action Plan. Participation from local residents, private sector and NGOs will be intensified in activities such as recycling of solid wastes and campaigns on creating a clean and sustainable as well as safe living environment.

8. To further improve the efficiency and quality of urban services, a National Urbanisation Policy was formulated in 2006. The policy is to drive and coordinate the planning and development of national urbanisation so that it is more efficient and systematic particularly in managing the increase of urban population in 2020. Emphasis will be given in balancing the urban social, economic and physical development. The National Urbanisation Policy will be the main pillar of all planning and urban development activities including preparing advancement programs at state and local authorities' levels.

Mr. Chairman,

9. Although we concur that most people benefit from living in urban areas, as they have better access to a variety of social services and economic opportunities, urbanisation has also posed adverse effects including the increased incidence of urban poverty. More often than not, the poor bear the brunt of adverse impacts of urbanisation.

10. In Malaysia, efforts to eradicate urban poverty are guided by the Urban Poverty Strategic Action Plan which was formulated in 2004. However, there are still some constraints in addressing these issues particularly for those who do not have access to amenities, knowledge and skills. To address this, the Government has formulated the Urban Poverty Eradication Program under the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010), which will combat poverty in a more holistic manner. The components of this program include income generating activities, education and training.

11. Historically, poverty eradication strategies and programs have been very successful in reducing the income gap. In 1970, the incidence of poverty in the rural areas was 58.7 per cent, as compared to 21.3 per cent for the urban areas. Currently, it is 11.9 per cent and 2.5 per cent respectively. The Government has also targeted to fully eradicate hardcore poverty throughout the country by the year 2010.

12. The Government is also very concerned that any physical development would not jeopardise the quality of life of local communities. Hence, the Government has regulated that any physical development programmes should undertake Social Impact Assessment (SIA).

Mr. Chairman,

13. As in many countries, population mobility in Malaysia, especially to urban areas, involves mainly young people particularly from the plantation sector, who leave for better job opportunities in the cities and bigger towns. Therefore, with urban growth, reproductive and social health needs for the young require innovation in service delivery. In this regard, since ICPD 1994, Malaysia would like to report that much progress has been made. The Government has endorsed the implementation of the Reproductive Health and Social Education Guideline in 2006. Subsequent to this, the National Population and Family

Development Board under the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development has set up Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH) Centres called *Kafe@Teen* in 2006. Currently, more than 14,000 adolescents have registered under this programme and about a quarter of them are actively participating in the activities conducted under this programme.

14. Malaysia is also currently reviewing its Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010). Issues on population distribution, urbanisation, internal migration and development are therefore being addressed for the Government's attention.

15. Finally, Mr. Chairman, we wish to reiterate that Malaysia is fully committed in implementing the ICPD-POA and will give its full support in all deliberations of this 41st Session.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.