

**STATEMENT BY
THE HONOURABLE DR AHMAD ZAHID HAMIDI
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA
AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 71ST SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, 24 SEPTEMBER 2016**

Mr. President,

1. Allow me at the outset to congratulate His Excellency Peter Thomson on his election as the President of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

I also wish to express my delegation's deepest appreciation to His Excellency Mogen Lykketoft, President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly for his leadership and able stewardship.

2. Malaysia is committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals therein. For Malaysia, the nation's development agenda has always been people-centred, which runs parallel to the aspirations of the SDGs.

3. I am pleased to state here that Malaysia has set in motion initiatives and actions to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Our current five-year development plan, the Eleventh Malaysia Plan covering the period of 2016 - 2020, was formulated with people at the centre of all development efforts and with the theme, 'anchoring growth on people'. The Plan embraces three main principles - achieving high income, inclusiveness, and

sustainability. In many aspects, the Plan mirrors the multi-dimensional nature of the SDGs.

4. In implementing the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs are being integrated into the framework as part of the national outcomes under the Eleventh Malaysia Plan. Malaysia is also in the process of formulating a National SDG Roadmap, establishing a broad-based and inclusive committee to oversee the implementation and monitoring of SDGs, and strengthening the data requirement for the SDGs. This will serve as an overarching and guiding policy for Malaysia's sustainable development.

5. In the meantime, all efforts are being taken to ensure initiatives outlined in the Eleventh Malaysia Plan are implemented accordingly such as, the Technical and Vocational Educational Training or TVET. By providing essential skills through TVET programmes, we are not only preparing the youth for the labour market, but also preparing human capital for nation building. Graduates of our TVET programmes which involve the collaboration between the National Youth Skills Institute and various multinational companies have a 90% employability rate.

6. Next is our very own MaGIC, or Malaysian Global Innovation and Creative Centre, from where we will work to make Malaysia the startup capital of Asia. Our mission is to catalyse the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Malaysia, by bringing together

the abundant resources from partners and communities alike, to develop entrepreneurs of enduring and high growth startups that will make positive impact at the regional and global level. MaGIC, which is located in Cyberjaya, Malaysia, was jointly launched by President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak in April 2014, and on that memorable day, MaGIC signed a memorandum of understanding with UP Global to further foster and develop a vibrant startup ecosystem in Malaysia and beyond.

7. In Malaysia, we no longer work in silos. We have moved into a new working environment that we call the Blue Ocean and bid farewell to the archaic Red Ocean. We have introduced a unique national development strategy based on creativity and innovation known as the National Blue Ocean Strategy or NBOS. It is a strategy where over 80 ministries and agencies – from the police and military, to women, youth, and higher education organisations – are collaborating to formulate and execute creative blue ocean strategy initiatives that are transforming the country. This unique strategy also involves public and private partnership. NBOS gave birth to our unique Urban Transformation Centres and Rural Transformation Centres where one only needs to go to either centre for all government services.

8. Malaysia is also no stranger in the area of volunteerism and I am referring to our very own Malaysian-based Hospital Beyond Boundaries or HBB as well as other voluntary organisations and NGOs. HBB is a non-profit organisation that

provides healthcare facilities to underprivileged communities led by United Nations Young Leader recipient award, Dr Mohd Lutfi Fadil Lokman. HBB is committed to accessible healthcare through community-run clinics in Cambodia as well as Malaysia. His selection was under the Sustainable Development Goal 3 on Good Health and Wellbeing - one of 17 goals set by the UN for young leaders to pursue.

Mr. President,

9. We have heard testimonies from various Small Island Developing States on the devastating impact of climate change on their countries and population, which presents an existential threat to their subsistence. We have seen an increase in the frequency and intensity of climate-related disasters such as floods, coastal erosion and landslides in many other countries across the globe.

10. These extreme weather events have affected economic activities, livelihood and safety of the people. If left unchecked, I am afraid climate change could in fact, constitute the greatest threat multiplier for global security. Realising the increasingly urgent need to address the impact of climate change, we came together in Paris last December and took the historic step of adopting the Paris Agreement. We must now follow through and carry out the commitments therein. Malaysia is committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emission intensity of GDP by up to 45% by year 2030. In this regard, Malaysia is currently

undertaking domestic processes towards ratification of the Paris Agreement.

Mr. President,

11. An enabling international environment of peace and security is also important for the successful implementation of the SDGs. Yet, we are witnessing various conflicts in several parts of the world. The rise in the phenomenon of non-state actors, such as Da'esh, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab, has caused instability and insecurity of nations. The international community continues to witness horrific acts of cruelty by these non-state actors. They employ terror tactics and extremism as their approach and method in spreading their influence and reach.

12. Nevertheless, the fight against terrorism cannot be won through force or punitive measures alone. Hence, Malaysia has incorporated deradicalisation and rehabilitation programmes towards changing the mind-sets of radicalised extremist individuals. These programmes are complemented by various forms of humanitarian assistance to facilitate their reintegration into society. Such measures are important to avoid relapse. The success rate of our deradicalisation programme thus far is around 97.5%. We stand ready to share our experience with other nations.

13. No nation is immune to the threat of international terrorism. Hence, there is an urgent need to counter terrorism comprehensively. We need to counter it from the ideological perspective, - by countering the narratives and addressing the root causes of issues that could be manipulated to attract people into supporting these groups. We need to explore new solutions and continuously work to enhance our domestic legal framework in the fight against violent extremism. These continuous efforts should involve a diverse cross-section of our population.

14. We should enhance our interactions by winning the hearts and minds of religious leaders and women as well as our youths. We should build networks at all levels of society where they can help by providing counter-narratives and counter-messaging through community-based efforts, the arts and media, sports, and culture.

Mr President,

15. Until today, we are still grappling to determine as well as identify the root causes of terrorism. Many quarters speculate that the root causes of terrorism could be poverty, deprivation, alienation, suppression and other myriad of factors.

16. Malaysia, therefore, joins others in calling for robust and effective international actions in our collective fight against terrorism. Such efforts must be based on and in full respect of the UN Charter and universally recognised principles of law,

including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Only if and when the international community stand united, can the terrorists be defeated.

Mr. President,

17. Seven decades after the United Nations' inception, the question of Palestine remains unresolved. The protracted crisis highlights the built-in flaws in the workings of the UN, where the use of the veto continues to perpetuate the longest occupation in modern history.

18. Over the years, the situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is slowly but surely moving away from a two-state solution. The blockade on Gaza by the Occupying Power, the unrelenting expansion of illegal Israeli settlements, the continued construction of the illegal walls, the forced transfer of Palestinians from their homes, and gross violations of human rights of Palestinians, continue unabated despite mounting international pressure and criticisms.

Mr. President,

19. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the lingering problem pertaining to the resettlement of existing refugee population in host countries to third countries. The lengthy delays in the resettlement of refugees would inevitably result in economic, social, political and security hardships to the

host country. We therefore, urge the UNHCR, IOM and State Parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its related Protocol to give serious attention and to promptly act on this matter.

20. While we are cognisant of the elements as contained in the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants, such initiatives should not unduly place non-signatory States to the relevant international instruments in a position inconsistent with the provisions of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties.

21. Malaysia's rapid and robust development and economic growth had attracted people within the region, either through legal or illegal means. They were influenced by the need to search for better living conditions and greater employment opportunities. These are the main drivers for migration within the South East Asia region. Malaysia recognises the contribution of the foreign work force to the country's economic prosperity. Hence, it is equally important to look into their safety and welfare.

22. As such, the Government of Malaysia gives serious attention to cases involving labour exploitation including forced labour. Hence, the definition of trafficking in persons under the Malaysian Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007 has been widened to include labour exploitation. This is in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which requires immediate and stern measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and

human trafficking. Malaysia works in concert with the international community to tackle and eliminate this heinous crime which has caused grave injustice as well as untold sufferings.

Mr. President,

23. Malaysia joins the other Member States in expressing our profound gratitude to His Excellency Ban Ki-moon, the United Nations Secretary General, for his able leadership in steering the world body since 2007.

24. In conclusion, it is our fervent hope that the incoming Secretary General is selected based on his or her strong leadership traits, transformative vision of the United Nations, in particular the reform of the Security Council, and ability to address present and emerging challenges that threaten international peace, security, development and human rights.

Thank you.