



Permanen Minister of  
**Malaysia**

STATEMENT BY  
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MALAYSIA.

ON  
AGENDA ITEM 3: FOLLOW-UP TO THE 2000 WORLD CONFERENCE ON  
WOMEN AND TO THE TWENTY-THIRD SPECIAL SESSION  
ASSEMBLY, ENTITLED "WOMEN, 2000: GENDER EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT  
AND PEACE FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY"  
OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH SESSION  
OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

**NEW YORK, 9 MARCH 2010**

Mr. Chairperson,

The Government of Malaysia stands by our commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Fourth World Conference on Women provided the international community with a consensus on a forward progress agenda for women. The global policy framework encapsulated in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is the tool for all countries, the United Nations system, civil society, as well as individuals, wherever they are, to implement the Declaration and Platform for Action in their efforts for the advancement of women, and men can contribute, and both genders have a mutual interest in the matter.

2. Our review of this landmark declaration in 2005 and 2007, as well as the five and ten-year review and appraisal reports respectively, revealed that challenges and obstacles to implementation remained and more needed to be done. This remains the case in our fifteenth-year review. While the international community as a whole has made progress in the implementation of the Platform for Action, uneven follow-up outcomes have barriers persist in the fundamental issues of gender equality and empowerment of women that undermines the full realization of the Platform. We cannot come back again in five years time at the twenty-year review and report ourselves.

3. Yet what makes this year different from the past is that conceptually, the international community as a whole – its governments and societies, and not only those working on women's issues – has built better awareness of how important it is to invest in women. No longer are women's issues isolated from the rest of government policy and programmes as a separate, isolated component. The Millennium Development Goals provided for the cross-cutting conceptualisation of issues related to women and girls to secure a developmental

gender equality is not only a goal in itself, but also a means towards achieving all the other internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

Mr. Chairperson,

4. Allow me to share some information on Malaysia's efforts to implement the Platform for Action and its follow-up:

4.1 On education and training - 97% of girls are enrolled in primary schools, and the female literacy rate in 2008 was 89.5%, and female enrolment in higher learning institutions is 91 per cent;

4.2 On women and health - The maternal life expectancy was 76.4 years in 2008 and the maternal mortality rate is 36 per 1,000 live births. To promote early detection of breast cancer, a subsidy for mammogram screening was introduced in 2007.

4.3 On women and HIV/AIDS - a feminization of HIV/AIDS. In addressing the epidemic, special focus has been given to reducing HIV vulnerability among women, young people and children. Under the National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS (2006-2010), women found to be HIV positive are provided with free counselling and free anti-retroviral treatment. A national task force was established under the Department of Women's Development to address the feminization of HIV/AIDS. As part of the rapid response effort between the Government and the NGO, financial assistance is provided to NGOs which provide support services such as counselling, research and counseling as well as providing information to victims of HIV/AIDS, sex workers and transvestites.

4.4 On women and poverty - a microcredit scheme, entitled, *Maafatih* (Ikhlas Malaysia), has been used since 1997. An impact study showed that borrowers enjoyed an average 10% rise in monthly household income of 502 per cent 2005. 100% of financial critical outcomes before and after the disbursement of the loans. The usage of a cost effective eligibility test to ensure the loans are disbursed to the right and deserving beneficiaries. The scheme's borrowing procedures are designed in such a way that they are very convenient to the borrowers, rules and regulations for borrowing are easily understood by the borrowers; and a number of stress-reducing and support services are provided to the borrowers.

4.5 On violence against women - The Government of Malaysia recognizes that violence against women is a serious issue that has multi-dimensional causes, including the unequal power balance or relationship between sexes. We undertake a zero tolerance policy towards it and we undertake a holistic approach to this matter that includes improving immunity and prosecuting those who commit violence, as well as protecting and rehabilitating victims.

The Malaysian Penal Code was amended in 2006 to include penalties for husbands who subject their wives to unwanted sex. A husband who forces his wife to have unwanted sex with him can now face up to 10 years in jail. Our Domestic Violence Act 1994 includes marital rape as a form of domestic violence, and the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act 1997, to increase its effectiveness, including criminalising emotional violence. In addition to this, the Anti-Harassment in Persons Act was enacted in 2017. It, among others, seeks to prosecute the offenders and provide protection and shelter to the victims. A statutory shelter homes have been established to provide protection and rehabilitation to affected victims.

- 4.5 On women and the economy: In 2009-2008, the female labour force participation rate is 45.7 per cent with 3.95 million women in the labour market, which made up for 10.3 per cent of the total labour force. To increase the participation of women in the labour force, training grants for setting up a small business and care centre at the workplace in the public sector was increased. In addition, a subsidy for child care costs is also provided to those who are employed, especially to those with low income.

Various training programmes and financial assistance schemes are also implemented by various agencies to facilitate women to become entrepreneurs. In addition, the Government includes the development of 4,000 women entrepreneurs by 2012 as one of its key performance indicators.

- 4.6 On women in power and decision-making: In addressing the issue of under-representation of women at the decision-making level, the policy of at least 30 per cent participation of women in decision-making positions at all levels was announced by the Government in August 2004. There has been a positive advancement that women make up 30.5% of the top management positions in the public sector in 2009. Despite this, the number of women in decision-making positions in politics and the private sector remain comparatively low. To increase the participation of women in decision-making in the public sector, legislative proposals a plan is being prepared and submitted to the Government for approval this year.

- 4.7 On institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women – the National Council for Women and Family Development was established at the state and parliamentary levels to develop policies and work with grassroots in 2002. The Family Policy Unit (FPU) in government ministries and agencies was established in 2005.

- 4.8 On the human rights of women: In 2001, the Federal Constitution was amended to include the word gender as one of the prohibited grounds for discrimination. Following this, various laws and regulations were amended to ensure consistency. Reviews are ongoing of other laws and other federal and state laws related to discrimination against women in the Federal Constitution.

5. Despite our progress, gaps and challenges remain. These include the impact of the economic crisis, the increasing feminization of HIV/AIDS, violence against women and continuing gender stereotypes and attitudes which create institutional and societal barriers to mainstreaming a gender perspective in implementation of policies and programmes. Additionally, continued monitoring and analysis of progress is deemed not enough in a knowledge-based economy, science, technology and vocational skills provide an advantage, but many women and girls continue to display an inclination for the arts and soft sciences, which can lessen opportunities and career advancement.

**Mrs. Chanperson**

6. Malaysia looks forward to the successful conclusion of the ongoing work and taking place with regard to the consolidated gender entity within the System-Wide Conference discussions. We welcome the document containing elements of the new Entity which the GCC has submitted to the Co-Facilitators of the system-wide conference process.

7. Malaysia remains committed to the role of government and governmental organisations in the GCC play an important role in complementing the efforts of the Government for the benefit of women, and for funding for NGOs is provided within our national budget to support various women and programmes for the advancement of women.

**Mrs. Chanperson**

8. Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and looks forward to productive and successful session.

**Thank you.**