

Statement at Online Meeting of NAM Contact Group in response to COVID-19

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**DELIVERED STATEMENT
ONLINE SUMMIT LEVEL MEETING OF THE NON-ALIGNED
MOVEMENT (NAM) CONTACT GROUP**

**By the Honourable Tan Sri Dato' Haji Muhyiddin bin Haji Mohd
Yassin Prime Minister of Malaysia
Putrajaya, 4 May 2020**

Your Excellency Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First and foremost, I would like to thank my colleagues and friends for the congratulatory messages extended to me on my assumption to the office of the Prime Minister of Malaysia. I look forward to working closely with all of

you, not only on the most pressing issue of COVID-19 we have before us, but also on other matters which would benefit our people.

As others before me have said, the world is currently facing an unprecedented crisis with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We have all been affected, one way or another, by this novel coronavirus. COVID-19 has ravaged nations, infecting millions worldwide and killing thousands in its path. To stop it, many of us have implemented, in one form or another, varying levels of 'lockdowns' in our respective countries to inhibit the spread of COVID-19.

Your Excellencies,

Since COVID-19 was first identified in December 2019, we have all focused our national efforts on strengthening our healthcare systems – be it in terms of face masks, test kits, ventilators, or personal protective equipments for our front-liners. Our focus from the beginning was to safeguard our populations from being infected, and save the lives of those who tested positive for COVID-19. However, as we are all aware, COVID-19 is not merely a health crisis. This pandemic is a lethal combination of a health, economic and social crisis coming together to unhinge our nations. For Malaysia's part – my Government has put in place a six-step plan in addressing the impacts COVID-19 has had on the country, and to ensure Malaysia emerges stronger from the ravages of COVID-19.

First was the resolve to break the chain of infections and impose a Movement Control Order (MCO) on our people. Since the implementation on 18 March, we have seen positive impacts – with lower new cases recorded daily, an increasing recovery rate combined with a low mortality rate of only 1.7 percent.

Secondly, we focused on ensuring the resilience of our economy. Due to external factors such as a slowdown in global trade, combined with supply and demand shocks; and internal factors, such as decreased spending from the MCO – we pushed through three economic stimulus packages to support our people's incomes during the MCO, and implement measures aimed to kickstart the economy once restrictions are lifted.

Today the 4th of the May, Malaysia has embarked on the third step of our plan – a widescale restart of the national economy in a controlled and orderly manner. Although most of our economic sectors have reopened today, those involving close human contact and mass gatherings are still prohibited.

This is the balancing act Malaysia is trying to achieve – between kickstarting our economy, and the importance of adhering to new SOPs to prevent another wave of infections amongst the population. However, the reopening of our economic sectors must not be mistaken for a complete

lifting of our MCO. It is important to note that the order is very much still in place until May 12.

Subsequently would be the implementation of an economic recovery strategy in facing this 'new normal', followed by an all-inclusive economic revitalization and finally a structural economic reform in facing a new global landscape post COVID- 19.

The success of these six 'R's I have mentioned today – resolve, resilience, restart, recovery, revitalize, and reform – will greatly depend on the strength of our people in facing this 'new normal'. Things will never be the same again, and we must try our level best to return our nations to some semblance of normalcy. Life must go on, but this can only be achieved if we come together globally to get the medication to treat and the vaccine to prevent this deadly novel coronavirus.

Malaysia's concern is that if we are not united, smaller nations will be sidelined when the medication and vaccine is developed by pharmaceutical giants in advanced nations. We must strongly condemn the declaration and application of unilateral coercive measures against NAM Member states, especially while the world is facing this unprecedented pandemic. Malaysia believes that NAM must play a more significant role to champion access and acquisition for smaller nations in obtaining medical supplies, medications and vaccine once they are developed.

Your Excellencies,

We are not alone in this war against an invisible enemy. All of us have been and will continue to be affected by COVID-19. This pandemic requires collective strength and solidarity as we are only as strong as our weakest link. On that note, Malaysia welcomes the establishment of the NAM Task Force, which would create a common database for basic medical needs, as well as identify social and humanitarian requirements of NAM Member States. Malaysia also welcomes Azerbaijan's initiative to promote the values of multilateralism through this Online Summit.

As a movement, we represent 120 nations; 17 states and 10 global organisations as observers. Collectively, we make up nearly two-thirds of the United Nations' members and are leading fifty five percent, more than half, of the world population. If COVID-19 has proven anything to us as non-aligned nations, is that this pandemic has levelled the playing field in the world. Some smaller nations are just as strong, if not better, than bigger nations in handling this novel coronavirus. This is the time for us as non-aligned nations to come together and prove that by staying united, cohesive and steadfast – we can prove to the world that we can overcome this pandemic and emerge as a major force in the new global order post COVID-19 – Insha Allah.

Thank you.

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