

**SPEECH BY
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Mr. President,

1. We are confident that under your able leadership, we will have a very successful meeting. I would like to thank the Government and the people of the Republic of South Africa and the City of Johannesburg, for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting, and the hospitality accorded to my delegation.

2. The situation in the world today is markedly different from that in 1992 when the Earth Summit was held in Rio. Globalisation has dramatically changed the world's landscape. Exponents of globalisation chant mantras that market forces and deregulation will bring wealth and social progress. Sadly, the benefits that are supposed to trickle down to the poorest are scant and lacking.

3. The digital revolution is profoundly transforming our lives. It will fuel the engine for future economic growth. The knowledge economy and e-commerce have become new sources for future wealth. Unfortunately, developing countries that lack technological capabilities, infrastructure and adequate knowledge will not benefit from this revolution. A digital divide has been created, a divide that will further widen the gap between the developing and developed countries. If the problem is not addressed, it will be the source of future poverty in developing countries.

4. Global financial markets have become more integrated, but real economic growth has not matched expectations. Not only has global economic growth slowed, it has also become prone to volatility that has caused serious crises.

5. The efforts of developing countries to attain economic development need to be supported by the creation of a conducive international economic environment. Expectations for developing countries to build capacity are wholly unrealistic, unless the international financial architecture accords adequate protection against volatility and external shocks.

6. It is disappointing to realise that ten years after Rio, the international community has failed to promote human development and reverse environmental degradation. The blame lies in insufficient resources, the lack of responsibility and political will, and the uncoordinated piecemeal approaches to achieve sustainable development.

7. To overcome these weaknesses, Malaysia believes that it is necessary to strengthen the principle of multilateralism. This is particularly true in a world increasingly defined by interdependence and interconnectivity. International agreements must be negotiated and adopted on the basis of equality, precluding unilateral action by any one State or group of States.

8. Each voice at the table must be effectively heard. Therefore, we must acknowledge that there are differences in the levels of development and capacity. In this regard, it is imperative that the principle of common but differentiated responsibility is reaffirmed and urgently translated into action. It must be integrated

into all three pillars - economic development, social development and environmental protection. It is disheartening that the principle has been breached more often than adhered to.

9. The benefits arising from the use of biodiversity must be shared in a fair and equitable manner. We think that this is best achieved through an international regime under the Convention of Biological Diversity to promote and safeguard this principle.

10. On the issue of forests, Malaysia is concerned that sustainable management seems to be focused disproportionately on tropical forests and forests in developing countries. It is imperative that there should be parity treatment for all types, be they tropical, temperate or boreal. Malaysia therefore calls for a global legal framework on all types of forests to deter "free riders" and ensure that all the world's forests are sustainably managed. We also call for a global fund for sustainable forest management. We are confident that the "green" returns from investing in such a fund would outweigh the initial cost of investment.

11. On trade issues, we are disturbed by the actions of some countries to unilaterally use trade instruments to further non-trade agendas. This is totally unacceptable. The way forward is to empower developing countries with market access, financial support, knowledge, and environmentally sound technology to enable them to pursue development that is sustainable.

12. In conclusion, we should no longer be satisfied with the status quo and with resolutions that are never implemented. The road map for achieving sustainable development was adopted ten years ago, but to reach our destination, resources must match rhetoric.

13. This Summit must bridge the implementation gap by putting in place plans for concrete action. Sustainable development is ultimately a moral, political and humanitarian imperative for the international community, for all of us, without exception. It is the best insurance policy for peace and security and for the prosperity of both the North and the South. It is the best policy to ensure the safety of our one and only planet.

14. It is our collective responsibility to take decisive action at this Summit. We must together succeed. Failure will be detrimental to us all ultimately.

Thank you.