ADDRESS BY
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Mr. President,

May I, as Prime Minister of Malaysia and in my capacity as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement and Chairman of the Tenth Islamic Summit Conference, offer my sincere congratulations to you on your election as the President of the 59th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

2. I am confident that with your wisdom, experience and diplomatic skill, you will steer the proceedings of this Assembly to a successful conclusion. I assure you of Malaysia's fullest cooperation. I strongly believe that the Member Countries of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference would similarly render all their support and cooperation to you.

3. Allow me also to pay tribute to your distinguished predecessor, the Honourable Julian Robert Hunte of Saint Lucia. He had discharged his responsibility with dedication and full commitment, in an efficient and effective manner. I commend especially his leadership in moving forward the process of revitalization of the General Assembly.

4. I wish to commend as well the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for their perseverance and relentless efforts in pursuit of the goals of the United Nations. In particular, I congratulate the Secretary-General for his initiatives to claim for the United Nations a more central role in the management of world affairs. I salute also the dedicated men and women of the United Nations who have sacrificed their lives in the service of humanity.

Mr. President,

5. When we met last year at the 58th Session of this Assembly, we were deeply distressed that there was so much gloom in the international situation as a result of a breakdown in the multilateral negotiating processes. We were bitterly divided over the invasion of Iraq; there was great disappointment about the deadlock in the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Cancun; and we had to mourn the death of international civil servants who were killed during an act of terrorism against the UN Headquarters in Baghdad. Therefore, I consider it our solemn obligation at this 59th Session of the UNGA to reaffirm the rightful role of the United Nations in the management of critical issues affecting international peace and security, and commit ourselves to abide by multilateralism in the quest for a more just and equitable international order. We

must also take the necessary steps to ensure that never again should the United Nations be sidelined.

Mr. President,

6. As the General Assembly is the most representative organ of the United Nations, we must dedicate ourselves to finding consensus on measures to revitalize the Assembly to fulfill its mandate in accordance with the Charter. We must build upon the work done in the 58th Session. Again, we look towards the leadership of the President of the UN General Assembly in this regard.

7. In this connection, the Malaysian Delegation wishes to advocate that this 59th Session of the Assembly accord high priority to ensuring that the UN regains its central role in social, economic and development issues. The UN, in particular through an enhanced ECOSOC, should provide the impetus to the creation of an international economic system which better promotes the interests of developing countries. The UN must do more to realize all internationally agreed targets, particularly the Millennium Development Goals. As the eradication of poverty and hunger is fundamental to the achievement of these goals, Malaysia is fully appreciative of the Brazilian initiative to create new and innovative forms of funding to meet these challenges.

8. We look forward to receiving the Report on Threats, Challenges and Change to be presented by the High Level Panel appointed by the Secretary General last year. We believe the Secretary General will make his own recommendations based on that Report. These should provide the basis for in-depth discussion among Member States in the months to come leading up to the 60th Anniversary of the United Nations. This world body, the processes of multilateralism and indeed the entire international system must necessarily change. However, it must be effected without sacrificing certain immutable principles such as sovereign equality, non interference in the domestic affairs of states, peaceful settlement of disputes and respect for international law. What we do in this respect at this 59th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations would therefore be crucial.

9. Reform of the United Nations is a cause particularly dear to both the Non Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. They look forward to working closely with you, Mr. President, as well as with other members of the UN and the Secretary General in this matter.

Mr. President,

10. Most immediately, we must find ways and means to let the United Nations assume its proper role in combating international terrorism. Malaysia is convinced that the fight against terrorism cannot succeed through the force of arms alone. To win it, we need to exert genuine efforts and demonstrate good faith to address the root causes of terrorism, one of the most obvious of which is the unaccomplished

missions of peoples struggling for independence and aspiring for sovereign states of their own. To find the answers, we must promote genuine dialogue and rid ourselves of the prejudices and bigotry triggered by September-11, which were further aggravated by subsequent events that followed September-11. The United Nations is clearly the best forum where such a dialogue can take place without malice in a shared environment that is devoted to finding peace among nations and building friendship between peoples. The United Nations can facilitate the convening of a special international conference to consider this question in all its aspects, including the root causes of terrorism and the issue of state-sponsored terrorism.

11. One of the most important aspects to be addressed by such a dialogue is the necessity to inculcate a frank appreciation, understanding and acceptance of different civilizations and cultures including religions. There is an urgent need to stop the tarnishing of the Muslim world by unfair stereotypes. We must cease associating Islam with violence, poverty and indignity. In reality, these troubles have nothing to do with Islam. Neither are these problems exclusively in the domain of Muslims. We need to clear the confusion of linking the problems faced by some Muslim countries with Islam the religion.

12. We also note with great concern the increasing tendencies to link the fight against terrorism with the campaign against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Developing countries suffer as a result of restrictions imposed on access to peaceful uses of technology, equipment and material necessary for their economic development. Malaysia is fully and firmly committed to the cause of non-proliferation. But there must be multilateral negotiations for universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements and arrangements. Above all, nothing should be done at the expense of resources needed for the international development agenda.

13. Most damaging of all is the increasing tendency to attribute linkages between international terrorism and Islam. The time has indeed arrived for us to debunk, once and for all, the theory that there is a clash of civilizations.

14. Mr. President, I speak from the experience of my own country, Malaysia, where we have shown the way that Islam is not an impediment to modernity and to democracy. It is not an impediment to rapid economic growth, to self-respect and confidence, to tolerance and mutual respect across religions, cultures and ethnic groups. In Malaysia, we celebrate the multi-ethnicity of our people, of Malaysians. For us, our multi-ethnic and cultural diversity is a national asset. It has taught us to be tolerant, value mutual respect and cooperate for the common good. We sincerely believe that this is a message that deserves a wider audience.

15. I am certain that the Organization of the Islamic Conference would be supportive of a dialogue which is designed to create greater understanding between peoples and civilizations and which would lead to real action and effect changes at the societal level. The Non Aligned Movement too would be equally keen to support initiatives which would have the effect of establishing harmony and restoring stability in the world.

16. Since the stability of many nation states continue to be threatened especially by armed conflicts, there is a critical need, more than ever, for members of the United Nations to unite and close ranks to put a stop to such conflicts, be they inter-State or intra-State.

Mr. President,

17. Iraq is still in turmoil. Although the UN Security Council Resolution of June 2004 had enabled the return of sovereignty to the people of Iraq, conflicts continue without relent in that country. The same Resolution had also renewed the mandate of the Multinational Force but the reality on the ground suggests that the existing arrangements cannot stabilize the situation there.

18. It is quite clear that the situation in Iraq calls for the United Nations to be given the lead role, particularly for establishing stability in preparation for the elections scheduled for January 2005. An orderly conduct of the elections is critical to the process of reestablishing a truly independent and sovereign government in Iraq.

19. The United Nations has the best credentials to create the right conditions to enable member states to take part in peace-building and the reconstruction of Iraq. The international community owes it to the people of Iraq to summon its collective resolve and political will to allow all these to happen. If we collectively succeed in assisting Iraq to seize the moment, we would also succeed at the same time in bringing a closure to the bitter divisiveness which was brought about, in the beginning, by unilateralism over this same issue.

Mr. President,

20. While the precarious situation in Iraq cries for United Nations action, the plight and suffering of the people of Palestine remains a tragic embodiment of the consequences of non implementation of resolutions and the non enforcement of decisions.

21. We must actively revive the Roadmap for Peace in the Middle East, which have remained unimplemented. The Quartet needs to play a more vigorous role. The international community must lend its full weight to push for an independent and sovereign state of Palestine, including East Jerusalem as its capital, with Israel and Palestine living peacefully, side by side within secure and recognized borders.

22. To create an environment of confidence for the speedy resuscitation of the Roadmap, we must seriously consider approving the deployment of a UN Peacekeeping Force or the placement of an international monitoring mechanism to overseer the implementation of the Roadmap for Peace in the Middle East.

23. We must also find ways to give effect to the historic Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In October last year, the General Assembly acted to approve, overwhelmingly, a resolution demanding that Israel stop and reverse construction of the wall built in the West Bank. It is unacceptable that a multilateral resolution giving effect to the advisory opinion cannot be implemented effectively. Clearly, the search for peace and security is also dependent on our willingness and determination to ensure its enforceability.

24. I strongly believe that multilateralism is the only way to implement resolutions and decisions concerning global peace and security. Adherence to the Charter of the United Nations should be a solemn obligation, not a matter of choice. For Malaysia, the United Nations is crucial as guarantor of the sanctity of our existence as a sovereign nation, where the principles of international law are protected and safeguarded. Small nations like Malaysia do not have the military and other means to insulate themselves from invasion or occupation by big powers. But no sovereign nation should ever be subjected to the threat of military action by another. No international intervention should ever be undertaken unless consistent with the United Nations Charter. If the law of the jungle were to apply, the small and the weak would certainly perish.

25. In this matter, no one should ever lose sight of the fact that when the defense of the nation state is called for, it is actually the wellbeing of its people which is at stake. It is particularly in this regard that the world must take due cognizance of and give due recognition to the voice and contributions of the global civil society in matters affecting international peace and security.

26. To foster genuine peace and security, the world naturally looks to the big powers for leadership. A sincere commitment to multilateralism on the part of the big powers will send a strong signal to all nations, large and small, that the purposes and principles of the United Nations shall form the basis of the conduct of relations between nations. Such a commitment will also provide the foundation for a true international partnership not only for establishing global peace and security but also for achieving international economic and social development. Of course, multilateralism can only be sustained if it embraces all nations, as important stake-holders, and excludes none.

27. Therefore, urgent steps must be taken to make the multilateral processes relevant and effective. To begin with, the principal organs of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, should be rendered more democratic and representative of the number and geographical spread of its international membership. The exercise of the veto by the permanent members of the Security Council should be regulated so as to prohibit that power being used at the sole discretion of its holder. It is unjust that any one single country should be allowed the impunity of overruling at will the wish of the majority. This injustice can be rectified, for instance, by making certain types of resolutions of the UN General Assembly capable of setting aside a UN Security Council veto.

Mr. President,

28. We must find a comprehensive and just solution to the problem of Palestine. We must allow the United Nations to take the lead role to stabilize the situation in Iraq. We need to address seriously and resolutely the scourge of international terrorism, the elimination of global poverty, the proliferation of transnational crimes, the destruction of the environment, the spread of the AIDS epidemic, as well the economic and social advancement of humankind everywhere. The global economic order, especially in the realm of international finance, must be made more fair and equitable. The way forward, and our best hope, lie in a universal commitment to multilateralism now.

Mr. President, I thank you.