

**STATEMENT BY
THE HONOURABLE ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI
AT THE HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING OF THE 60TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT NEW YORK
14 SEPTEMBER 2005**

Mr. Co-Presidents,

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr. Co - Presidents,

Sixty years ago, the founders of the United Nations pledged in writing that this Organization shall save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, shall reaffirm the dignity of the human person, uphold international law and promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. Indeed, much has been achieved but much, much more remains to be done. Why are we continuing to witness many wars in our times? Why do we continue to see human rights trampled with impunity? Why do states continue to commit serious breaches of international law? Why are hundreds of millions of people still living in poverty and indignity. Yet our best hopes still lie with this Organization. Let us therefore write another solemn pledge on this occasion, to put forth honest efforts and take the necessary steps to reform the United Nations so that it can truly serve the purposes for which it was intended.

2. Malaysia holds the view that the most fundamental objective to be achieved in any reform and renewal of the United Nations system must be the protection and enhancement of multilateralism. This is because multilateralism is the best option for ensuring peace and security in the relations between nations; for protecting human rights, for enforcing compliance with international law, just as much as the multilateral approach is the best hope for eradicating global poverty and creating a more equitable international order. It is furthermore the only way to deal effectively with the scourge of international terrorism.

3. I am aware of the growing consensus towards accepting that the existing provisions of the United Nations Charter regarding the use of force are sufficient to address the full range of security threats; that the only issue remaining is how to ensure that the use of force is applied only as an instrument of last resort. Undoubtedly, this is a priority issue especially as it is also connected to the question of responsibility to protect civilian populations from crimes against humanity. However, any intervention must give due recognition to Charter principles pertaining to sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference. While the Security Council would appropriately be the body to take decisions on these matters, it is Malaysia's view that provisions must also be made for the General Assembly to have an oversight role in this critical matter of the use of force to deal with threats to

international security. We must guard against abuse and double standards in their application. Most important of all, we must guard against unilateralism. Malaysia is convinced that an effective multilateral system, centered upon an appropriately empowered General Assembly, is our best guarantee against exertions of absolute power or disregard for international law.

4. We note that there is also a growing consensus to accept the justifiability of the use force to protect civilian populations from crimes against humanity such as genocide and ethnic cleansing. I would like to say that it is equally a crime against humanity to allow poverty and deprivation to persist in these modern times. How can we continue to stand by while 8 million people around the world die each year because they are too poor to stay alive ! There are over one billion people - that is one in every six people around the world - who live in extreme poverty, subsisting on less than One Dollar per day. Poverty has deprived more than 100 million children the opportunity of going to primary school. There are more grim statistics but the ones I have quoted are sufficient to illustrate the gravity of the problem of global poverty and the injustice suffered by the victims of poverty. I say injustice because it would indeed be unjust for the international community to continue to ignore the misery and sufferings of their fellow human beings in the poor parts of the world. All told, the extreme poor and the relatively poor make up around 40 per cent of humanity. Clearly, this problem of global poverty requires an international response on a global scale, requiring coordination by the United Nations.

5. Undoubtedly, developing countries must rely primarily on their own efforts for their development. But they are in need of international assistance to build capacities in all aspects of governance, including development. Capacity-building would serve the dual purpose of bringing a better life for the population while assisting to establish a system of good governance in their countries. In this connection, a high premium must be placed on providing educational opportunities and on the capability of the people to have access to education. Education and the power of knowledge is the greatest equalizer among individuals in a society and the greatest leveler which can bridge the prosperity gap among the nation states in this globalized world. The United Nations is the best placed to play the lead role in embarking upon a capacity-building programme specifically earmarked for eradicating poverty. We should never renege on our commitments to achieve the targets of the Millennium Development Goals.

6. I come now to my final point, which is why we need effective multilateralism in order to successfully fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

7. First and foremost, terrorism must be condemned. However, the global scope of the fight against terrorism requires the widest possible collaboration among all countries. It is only the United Nations which can galvanize such a huge undertaking.

8. We must know the motives of terrorists in order to identify the root causes of their actions. These could be political injustice, the denial of human rights, a brutish life entrenched in pervasive poverty or something else yet to be uncovered. We must take action to address the root causes so as to render their motivations irrelevant. It

is possible to disrupt, capture or kill individual terrorists. However, unless the root causes are addressed and removed, new recruits will take the place of leaders and groups killed or destroyed in the fight against terrorism. Terrorists deserve neither compassion nor sympathy. But we do need to know their minds and their mentality.

9. We must also maintain a distinction between acts of terrorism and the right of peoples fighting for self-determination. It is equally unjustifiable to associate terrorism with any particular race or religion. Terrorists must be singled out only by their acts of terror and nothing else.

10. There is no single solution applicable to all situations. Malaysia supports an early conclusion of a comprehensive convention against terrorism.

11. In this connection, let me very briefly refer to the Outcome Document before us which we all know is a text which has finally emerged after many stages of painstaking negotiations. Undoubtedly, the language and content of the document reflect many degrees of compromises. This means no one is fully satisfied. Certainly, many issues remain unresolved. Quite clearly, therefore, we have much unfinished business on our hands in the months and years to come.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

12. We have really no choice but to make the United Nations relevant, for now and for the future. The causes of future conflicts may come from a complex mix of political, economic and strategic reasons. The quest for prosperity and security may very well intersect. We must reform the United Nations so that it will be competent to address the inter-related and cross cutting issues, and succeed in preventing future conflicts. In settling conflicts, we want to use the United Nations. But the U.N that is abused is of no use.

I thank you for your attention.