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Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me at the outset thank the organizers, the EU and the US, for inviting Malaysia to this important and timely Conference on Iraq. We are witnessing the transitional process, including steps towards democratization and establishing the rule of law, beginning to take shape.

2. However, the tasks and challenges ahead for the new government and the people of Iraq remain formidable. It is a time for patience and perseverance and, above all, for the spirit of national reconciliation to prevail. This is critical if a new Iraq is to achieve true independence and democracy, peace and security. Towards this end, we believe the international community, on its part, should extend its fullest cooperation to the transitional process, and beyond.

3. Nevertheless, the security situation and the continuing violence, is worrying and they need to be addressed effectively. We should be looking at more than repackaging hitherto policies. Instead, there needs to be a shift in policy to break new grounds.

4. A comprehensive approach incorporating security, governance, economic revival, justice and the rule of law is required. Iraq needs all these pillars of stabilization, not just one instrument or just one focus. Military action alone would not be adequate. Similarly, if it were to be only political, the current problems would remain. A holistic approach is needed.

5. In our view, to win the peace, we also need 'soft power' so as to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqis. What is obvious to us is that all segments of society must be brought on board, in an inclusive way, so as to isolate those inclined to violence, from the population at large.

6. Malaysia's own experience in fighting terrorist elements had showed us that in dealing with security situations of this nature, it requires more than the use of 'hard power'. Concerted measures at confidence building to win over the hearts and move

the minds of the people are critical. In other words, all concerned should feel that they have a stake in the building of a new Iraq.

7. For the transitional process to succeed, the importance of peacemaking and peace-building cannot be over-emphasised. The role of the UN, in this regard, is central given its worldwide experiences, say for example, in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Cambodia. I mention this, mindful of the fact that there cannot be one model or template that can be replicated worldwide.

8. In this regard, the UN, working closely with the Iraqis, would certainly help enhance the perception that the Iraqi government is in the driver's seat, and not one under foreign control or occupation. This should be welcomed by the international community in assisting the Iraqi government and people to build a democratic and prosperous Iraq.

9. As we have seen from previous successful UN peacekeeping operations, the role of immediate neighbours in a conflict area is equally important. In the case of Iraq, they have to play a positive and constructive role. We need to continuously engage and support them, and together work out a plan to cut-off possible use of their territories by insurgents. At the same time, we should desist from talk of expanding the theatre of conflict.

10. Malaysia is convinced that Iraq's neighbours fervently desire to see peace return to Iraq. We are equally convinced that they too want to play positive roles and make constructive contributions to help stabilize Iraq.

11. In a nutshell, we need to build political consensus inside Iraq, in the region as well as internationally.

12. We appreciate the briefing that was given on Iraq's plans and strategies encompassing the three pillars – political process, economic reconstruction and rule of law and public order. In this regard, it is important for Iraq to assure the international community that peace and stability is in sight to enable rehabilitation and economic development to take place.

13. Malaysia too would like - however modest - to make a contribution in the building of a new Iraq. We are willing to share our experiences:

- in nation-building process; and
- in Human Resource Development, including provision of training.

14. Finally, I would like to reiterate our desire to working closely with our Iraqi friends during the transitional process and further afield.

Thank you.