



MALAYSIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT BY
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REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA**

**ON AGENDA ITEM 69 (a, b): RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE**

**70TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, 19 OCTOBER 2015**

Mr. Chair,

From the very beginning, rights of the indigenous peoples has always been a priority for the Government of Malaysia as evident in their special protection under the Malaysia's Federal Constitution and Indigenous Peoples Act of 1954. Article 8 of our Federal Constitution addresses the right to equality, as well as, provisions for the protection of rights of indigenous people in the Peninsula and the natives of Sabah and Sarawak.

2. Conscious of the need for renewed commitment in promoting and protecting the rights of the indigenous peoples, Malaysia joins the international community to commemorate the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples with the theme "Post 2015 Agenda: Ensuring indigenous peoples health and well-being" on the 9th of August this year. The theme is indeed apt and timely, as the international community collectively works towards improving access of indigenous peoples to health care and services.

3. At the national level, Malaysia's Eleventh Five Year Plan spanning from 2016 to 2020, among others, is focused in improving access of Malaysia's indigenous community to quality healthcare. An allocation of USD10 million has been provided for the construction of 165 new clinics in rural areas, particularly in areas with a high concentration of indigenous communities.

Mr. Chair,

4. Malaysia remains committed to its obligation to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and more recently, the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous People adopted last year. In this regard, allow me to share some of the recent measures undertaken to safeguard the rights of indigenous peoples and these include the following:-

4.1. Firstly, the Malaysian Government had agreed to accept all recommendations made by Malaysia's National Human Rights Commission (SUHAKAM) on giving special attention to the issue of land rights affecting the rights of indigenous peoples. The approval by the Government in June 2015 culminated from series of consultations with state authorities, agencies and representatives of indigenous communities and the release of "National Inquiry into the Land Rights of Indigenous Peoples" report by SUHAKAM;

4.2. Secondly, in relation to the acceptance of recommendations by SUHAKAM, the Government of Malaysia has established a Cabinet Committee for the Land Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Recognizing the need for strong political will in addressing the issue, the Cabinet Committee will be tasked to address, monitor and implement the findings of the report;

4.3. Thirdly, the inclusivity approach of the Eleventh Malaysian Plan will also include programmes to encourage Institutions of higher learning and skills training institutes to provide more places to students from the indigenous communities in Peninsular Malaysia, and those living in rural and remote areas in Sabah and Sarawak. This is in line with our strategic thrust on inclusivity which aims to ensure that no segment of society is sidelined from enjoying the benefits of the country's prosperity and growth;

4.4. Fourthly, the Federal Department of Indigenous Peoples Development (JAKOA), as well as, its respective state and district offices continue to provide an enabling and conducive environment for the direct participation of indigenous peoples in the rapidly evolving socio-economic scenario in Malaysia. Appropriate resources are allocated towards this end;

4.5. Last but not least, the Government has introduced income-generating programmes and commercial agricultural activities tailored specifically for the indigenous communities to further spur their socio-economic advancement. These programmes were introduced in line with the Government's target of further reducing poverty among the indigenous peoples to 25 per cent by the end of this year.

Mr. Chair,

5. In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reaffirm Malaysia's commitment to continue to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples. Indigenous groups in Malaysia continue to receive special attention from the Government with the aspiration to integrate them into the mainstream of society and national development. The Government will also continue to approach the subject of advancing indigenous communities through close consultations with all stakeholders, particularly the indigenous peoples themselves.

Thank you.