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Signing Ceremony for

***'Capacity Building Support for Malaysia's Role in Multidimensional  
Peacekeeping Training'***

A UNDP-Government of Malaysia Project

Remarks by

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Putrajaya

- Yang Berbahagia Dato' Noriyah Ahmad, Director General, Economic Planning Unit in the Prime Minister's Department
- His Excellency Masahiko Horie, Ambassador of Japan to Malaysia
- Major General Dato' Ismail bin Ibrahim, Assistant Chief of Staff, Defence Planning, Malaysian Armed Forces
- Colonel Johar Ramli Ahmad, Commandant of the Malaysian Peacekeeping Training Centre (MPTC)
- Distinguished guests, members of the media, ladies and gentlemen

On behalf of the United Nations Development Programme in Malaysia, I would like to thank the EPU for hosting the signing ceremony for the UNDP-Government of Malaysia project entitled '*Capacity Building Support for Malaysia's Role in Multidimensional Peacekeeping Training*'.

I would also like to thank the Government of Japan for the significant role it has played in making this project a reality, not least because of its substantial financial contribution through the UNDP-Japan Partnership Fund.

Peacekeeping operations are today one of the main instruments employed by the United Nations to safeguard international peace and security. Unfortunately, increasing conflict both within and across borders over the last decade has significantly increased the demand for UN peacekeeping missions. This demand has outstretched the UN's human and financial resources in this area but has nevertheless confirmed the importance, value and legitimacy of this key UN function.

The increasing and multi-faceted complexity of operating in conflict-torn countries has also changed the landscape in which UN peacekeepers operate. Once responsible only for maintaining peace and security, peacekeeping operations today have evolved in response to the multiple needs of the peace keeping and peace building agendas and processes, including the requirements of early post-conflict recovery.

Today, peacekeepers are increasingly involved with assisting political processes, supporting judicial reform, training law enforcement and police forces, disarming and reintegrating former combatants, and supporting the return of internally displaced persons and refugees.

The major contributors of both financial and human resources to UN peacekeeping missions have also changed over the years. Today, the second highest contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget is Japan, while the top five contributors of uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping operations are from South Asia and Africa.

These developing country regions together account for over 40,000 such personnel in 2010.

Malaysia's long-standing support for UN peacekeeping operations has been substantial. Since the country's first peacekeeping mission to the Republic of Congo in 1960, over 20,000 Malaysian military personnel have supported over 25 operations in more than 20 countries around the world over the last half century. This has firmly established Malaysia as a good international citizen through its sustained and continuing contribution to the critical area of global peace and security.

In view of the evolution of peacekeeping operations and the increasing number of new UN peacekeepers, particularly from Asia, each year, the UNDP-Japan Partnership Fund is poised to support an important project which will hopefully transform the Malaysian Peacekeeping Training Center from a national training center, into an international training center which will seek to strengthen the multidimensional roles and training needs of UN peacekeepers today.

UNDP believes that this project is of strategic importance to Malaysia, since it not only builds on the country's long-standing and continuing commitment to international peace and security, but also its commitment to South-South Cooperation through which it will share its experience in this area with other Asian and African countries.

This project is also significant because it hopes to transform the existing Malaysian Peacekeeping Training Centre into a world-renowned peacekeeping training facility, which will be the first in South East Asia to emphasize the multidimensional aspects of peacekeeping, focusing on civil-military coordination and gender issues such as the protection of women and children against sexual violence in situations of conflict.

In the area of civil-military coordination, its training programmes will focus on enhancing peacekeepers' understanding of the importance of coordinating their activities with civilian actors, such as international aid agencies and non-governmental organizations which implement peace building activities, so that the international community's efforts to support the rebuilding of a country after its conflict has ended are better aligned and more effective.

The inclusion of gender as a key area of focus in this project is especially important, given that women and children are amongst the most vulnerable in times of war and civil strife. As such, focused training in this area should help raise the awareness and understanding of peacekeepers about their roles and responsibilities in protecting women and children from sexual violence during conflicts, and reduce incidents of sexual violence perpetrated by UN peacekeepers themselves. All the programmes supported by this joint project will adhere to the measures stipulated by UN Security Council Resolutions on women, peace and security, which include: SCR 1325, SCR 1820 and SCR1888.

Last but not least, I am pleased to reiterate that this project has been developed using a South-South Cooperation framework, which is now widely recognized as one of the increasingly important and indispensable modalities of international development cooperation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Under this framework, the project will enable countries such as Malaysia, to share both their experience and their lessons learnt with other developing countries (especially but not restricted to those in Southeast Asia and Africa), which contribute members of their army, police and civilian populations to UN peacekeeping missions.

Let me conclude by conveying UNDP's and my personal thanks to the Minister, Director General and staff of the Economic Planning Unit in the Prime Minister's Department, who presented this project to the Cabinet in early March, as well as to the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, for making it a reality. I would also like to thank the Malaysian Peacekeeping Training Center in Port Dickson, as well as the Government of Japan for their strong commitment to this project.

We at UNDP Malaysia look forward to working with all of you to make the implementation of this project over the 2010-2011 period a resounding success.

Thank you.

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