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Office of the Resident Coordinator Of The United Nations  
System's Operational Activities For Development in Malaysia

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Kuching, Sarawak, 7 September 2006 – Although Malaysia has made commendable progress in achieving most of the Millennium Development Goals, the levels of achievement have been uneven and challenges still remain if equity is to be achieved more meaningfully, a United Nations policy dialogue heard today.

The Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010), released in March 2006, reflected five development thrusts, of which two are, 'To address persistent socio-economic inequalities constructively and productively' and 'To improve the standard and sustainability of quality of life.'

Today's dialogue is aimed at identifying the key issues and addressing the remaining challenges in achieving the above. These include the need to improve spatial and ethnic equity in development outcomes, improve the lives of indigenous peoples, migrants and the disadvantaged, as well as the need to improve environmental management.

Speaking at the launch, Datuk Tekhee @ Tiki Anak Lafe said, "Localising the MDGs is important in particular for states like Sabah and Sarawak, as we need to push the MDG agenda forward."

The aim of today's dialogue was to discuss progress made towards achieving the MDGs in Sarawak and the constraints to further improvement, with particular emphasis on disparities in access, especially between rural and urban areas, Datuk Dr Tekhee @ Tiki Anak Lafe told participants.

According to Dr Richard Leete, United Nations Resident Coordinator, said that while Malaysia has made tremendous progress in reducing absolute poverty, there are still about 1.2 Malaysians living below the national poverty line.

"And poverty rates are relatively high in Sarawak, where some 7.5 percent of households are living below the national poverty line," he said at the policy dialogue.

The half-day dialogue gathered participants from state and national government, local authorities and civil society.

**END**

## ***Note to Editor***

### **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

In 2000, at the United Nations Millennium Summit, 189 world leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration and agreed to collective commitments to overcome poverty through a set of eight mutually reinforcing interrelated time-bound goals (MDGs) with related targets.

The MDGs synthesise and respecify the goals of 1990s global UN conferences and provide an accountability framework and global partnership for progressively eradicating poverty in all its dimensions. The MDGs are at the forefront of the global development agenda and represent the international community's commitment to eradicate poverty by 2015.

The eight goals are:

- MDG 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- MDG 2 Achieve universal primary education
- MDG 3 Promote gender equality and empower women
- MDG 4 Reduce child mortality
- MDG 5 Improve maternal health
- MDG 6 Combat HIV-AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- MDG 7 Ensure environmental sustainability
- MDG 8 Develop a global partnership for development

+In September 2005, the UN World Summit resoundingly endorsed the MDGs. In the outcome document of the Summit, it was agreed that by 2006, all developing countries will prepare bold national strategies to achieve the MDGs, and that developed countries would increase their assistance to developing countries, particularly through higher levels of ODA.

