

UNITED NATIONS



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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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United Nations 64th Anniversary

Welcome Remarks
by

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**27 October 2009
Kuala Lumpur**

Yang Berhormat Dato' Lee Chee Leong, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia

Tan Sri Tan Sri, Datuk-Datuk, Datin-Datin

Excellencies

UN Colleagues

Distinguished Guests, Members of the Media

A very good afternoon to you all.

On behalf of the United Nations Country Team in Malaysia, it is my great pleasure and privilege to welcome you all to this year's commemoration of United Nations Day. Thank you for taking the time from your busy schedules to join us to mark another challenging yet successful year in our organisation's history.

I would especially like to thank Yang Berhormat Dato' Lee Chee Leong, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, for taking the time from his busy schedule to grace this event with his presence.

Distinguished guests

Today we join member states the world over in celebrating the 64th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. On 24 October 1945, the global community pledged, through the United Nations Charter, to work together in fostering unity and maintaining peace and security among all nations. It saw the birth of a new era in international relations.

It was an era founded on the principles of peace and stability, cooperation and dialogue, equality, human rights and freedom for all peoples of the world. Two clear testaments are that the creation and effectiveness of the United Nations Trusteeship Council which foresaw decolonization has done itself out of a job and that there has been no world war since the creation of the UN despite the numerous tensions and complex challenges the world has faced since then.

Today, the United Nations is much more than a peacekeeper and a forum for conflict resolution. We know that 64 years on, the world has changed dramatically. We can see more clearly now than ever before, that in this complex and interdependent world, the threats of climate change, the spread of disease and deadly weapons and the scourge of terrorism, among the other threats and challenges facing one global community, transcend national borders and spare no one.

Today, the world is grappling with both the food and financial and economic crises that are sending more than a billion people to bed hungry each night and have crippled national banking institutions even in the richest countries respectively. The global economic crisis, along with last year's food and fuel crises, the ongoing climate crisis, and now the H1N1 flu pandemic are adding to the challenges of making progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The UN must continue to support those who are already poor and vulnerable, while also safeguarding the investments and efforts made towards poverty reduction and achieving the MDGs. We must also continue to generate support for the MDGs globally, and work to identify where there are gaps in MDG achievement, and what more we can collectively do to overcome such gaps.

I also see our work on the MDGs as inextricably linked with our support to partner countries on climate change issues and the ongoing negotiations for a new agreement. Development and the impact of climate change are inextricably linked and cannot be treated as distinct issues. By some estimates, forty per cent of overall global development investment from Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) and concessional lending is sensitive to climate risk. Resilience and adaptation to that risk must be built into development strategies, otherwise precious investments in development could be seriously threatened or wasted.

The UN has a number of important roles to play in supporting developing countries in the ongoing negotiations for a new climate agreement – and beyond, for example,

- We work to raise awareness of the issues at stake in the negotiations, and of the threat which climate change poses to development.
- We can assist with the development of low carbon growth and adaptation strategies – and with placing them at the centre of national development strategies.

- We can support the building and development of capacity to implement these strategies – and access to carbon finance now and in the future.

Peace and stability, and good governance, are also pre-requisites for sustainable development. We need to ensure that the United Nations' work in these areas is geared to meeting the internationally agreed development goals

Distinguished Guests,

The 2009 Global Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report found that more than halfway to the 2015 deadline to achieve these internationally agreed goals, major advances in the fight against poverty and hunger have begun to slow or even reverse as a result of the global financial, economic and food crises. It warns that, despite many successes, overall progress has been too slow for most of the targets to be met by 2015. We are at a critical juncture in the fight against poverty. Now is the time to amplify the voices of the vulnerable and ensure that the world follows up on its pledges. The whole development community will have to work hard to stop a serious regression from the progress that has been made to-date.

The UN comprising all its constituent parts, will work with the Malaysian government to continue to support those who are poor and vulnerable, while also safeguarding the investments and efforts that have been cumulatively made towards poverty reduction and achieving the MDGs at both the aggregate and disaggregated level in Malaysia. This effort needs to be strategic and coordinated, as progress towards different MDGs are linked.

We realize that we simply cannot afford to fail, and all member states and partners must do their part. There is much work to be done, and the United Nations and its family of agencies will step up our collective efforts to assist the world's poor to build better lives for themselves and their children.

Distinguished guests

UN Day has historically been an occasion for us to reflect on how far we have come in our efforts to give the poor a more secure foundation. UN Day also allows us to focus the country's attention on the crucial relationship between human rights and development, which are inexorably linked.

Malaysia's exemplary development achievements reflect vision and strong leadership, sound economic policies and programmes, and investments in human capital. Yet there are challenges ahead for the country— among them, eradicating deep-rooted and chronic poverty and deprivation especially but not limited to the rural areas of Sabah and Sarawak, addressing rising inequality between and within communities and regions, reversing the spread of HIV and AIDS, making the transition to a knowledge economy by avoiding the “middle income trap”, and environmental stress.

The United Nations Country Team remains committed, through its long-standing partnership with the Malaysian government and its other partners in the country, to continuing to support the development aspirations of the country and its people.

Thank you.

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