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**STATEMENT BY  
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ENVIRONMENT, MALAYSIA  
AT THE FOURTH SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE  
PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS  
CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT  
AT THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK  
25 MARCH 1992**

**NEW YORK**



Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I deeply appreciate the opportunity to address this Fourth and Final Session of the Preparatory Committee before the Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) at Rio De Janeiro, Brazil in June 1992. I need not repeat nor elaborate on the vital role of this PrepCom meeting in setting the stage for a successful UNCED at Rio.

Since the First Substantive Session in Nairobi in August 1990, much work has been done. In this regard, I wish in particular to congratulate the Chairman, the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General and the others in the UNCED Secretariat for their tireless efforts in assisting the work of the PrepCom process.



Mr. Chairman,

We are today into the fourth week of this five-week long final PrepCom meeting. Clearly, the PrepCom process has entered into a critical state with less than 67 days to go before UNCED at Rio. It is equally clear that despite 18 months of negotiations, which began in Nairobi, the core issues have remained unresolved. Unless these core issues, particularly those dealing with excessive consumption patterns in the North with their adverse environmental degradation as well as the urgent need for the economic growth and development in the South, are resolved, we indeed run the risk of leaving New York without much to advise our leaders. In the remaining days of this PrepCom, we must therefore redouble our efforts to arrive at decisions worthy of UNCED at Rio.

Mr. Chairman,

It has always been the policy of the Government of Malaysia, particularly since the **Third Malaysia Plan** period 1976 - 1980, "to balance the goals for socio-economic development and the need to bring the benefits of development to a wide spectrum of population... against the maintenance of sound environmental



conditions." This policy is continued throughout the fourth, fifth, and the current, sixth 5-year plan periods. It is further articulated and incorporated in the Second Outline Perspective Plan to the Year 2000, and beyond to the Year 2020, as reflected in the First Statement on Malaysia's Vision 2020.

The progress in Malaysia towards environmentally sound and sustainable development is evident by its implementation of the various pollution control strategies, laws and regulations. The application of the polluters pay principle for the rapid compliance by the industries, in particular the palm oil and rubber processing, has proved to be a remarkable success for the control of effluents discharged from these industries. The response of other industries for the reduction of lead in petrol, industrial emissions, and for the management of toxic chemicals and hazardous wastes from industries have been encouraging. Malaysia has recently engaged an international firm to build and operate fully Malaysia's first fully integrated toxic and hazardous waste facilities.

Much progress has been made in the implementation of the mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Procedure and requirements, especially since 1988. This preventive measure is to



ensure that project proponents incorporate fully environmental factors into account at every stage, from technology assessment and selection, project siting, planning, design, to implementation and abandonment.

At the national and local level, there has been a marked increase in environmental awareness. Malaysians are today more environmentally conscious. In fact, the three "R's" of environment, namely reduce, recover and reuse, are becoming familiar household terms.

Both the public and private sectors in Malaysia are engaged in constructive cooperation in safeguarding the environment, particularly through the utilization of environmentally sound technologies. In this connection, I wish to underscore the urgent need to step-up measures that promote the application of such technologies as well as those required by all industries to assist developing countries including Malaysia to comply with the various provisions of the Montreal Protocol and other environment-related international agreements. Despite difficulties with specific provisions and the implementation of the Montreal Protocol, Malaysia continues to bear its fair share of responsibility in the protection of the environment.



Yesterday, I had the benefit of participating at the Third UNEP-ICC high-level meeting here, where I had publicly offered to share Malaysia's indigenous palm oil and rubber affluent treatment technologies with both developing and developed countries. In the same vein I challenged the captains of the industry in the North to respond to the pressing need to transfer environmentally sound technologies to prevent environmental degradation in the South.

Mr. Chairman,

At this juncture, I wish to refer to the issue of forest, an issue that has dominated this PrepCom process, often at the expense of other critical core issues. You would recall that Malaysia has consistently called for a comprehensive and holistic effort to address the issue of all types of forests. We have, among others, strongly advocated the need for a comprehensive programme of action for the greening of the world. Malaysia calls for a comprehensive approach to ensure that by the end of this century at least 30 per cent of the land area of this planet shall be green. Currently the global forest cover is approximately 27.6 per cent. A 2.4 per cent increase over the next several years to



the year 2000 A.D. will require an average hectarage increase of 0.3 per cent per year. This is achievable. It can be done.

Some parts of the world already exceed the 30 per cent level : Oceania as a whole, Central America, South America, Africa, what used to be the USSR and South East Asia. But there is a list of countries which are not only below the 30 per cent line (for various reasons) but which are also in a position to play a bigger greening role, not only at their national level but beyond. Let me cite some examples. In Europe, Denmark has 12% per cent of its land area under forest cover, France 25.5%, Netherlands 9%; Norway 27%, Switzerland 25%, the United Kingdom 8.3%, the United States 21.3%, and Australia 5.5%.

Mr. Chairman,

Regional cooperation is integral to regional efforts in environment protection and the promotion of development. In the case of ASEAN, a grouping of developing countries consisting of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, we have pledged to promote harmonization and enhanced coordination to safeguard the environment and promote economic growth and



development. Recently the ASEAN Ministers of Environment met in Singapore and adopted the Singapore Resolution on Environment and Development which outlines the positions and perspectives of ASEAN. This Resolution itself was based on the guidelines provided by the ASEAN Summit earlier this year. I understand the Resolution has been circulated here for the information of delegates. My ASEAN colleagues and I look forward to working closely with all countries towards the successful outcome at UNCED.

Mr. Chairman,

UNCED Rio provides us all with an ideal opportunity to act decisively on the issue of the environment, without forgetting the necessity of development. The Summit at Rio is an opportunity to act decisively to protect the rights of future generations, without forgetting the rights of the present generation. This opportunity would be squandered if at Rio, those who have destroyed their own environment chastise those who have not. Indeed it would be a tragedy if UNCED were to degenerate into an occasion for finger-pointing.



Malaysia continues to maintain that whatever the obstacles, UNCED Rio must result in

- (i) a Rio Declaration on Environment and Development;
- (ii) an Action Plan with assured and predictable financial underpinning,
- (iii) Agreements on Climate Change and Biological Diversity;
- (iv) Clear and Specific commitments of the North on financial resources, technology transfer and a supportive international system;
- (v) Statement of Principles on Forests;
- (vi) Appropriate Institutional Framework.

Mr. Chairman,

Malaysia, as you are aware, has been actively involved in the Prepcom process. In fact we have had the benefit of



involvement from the time U.N. General Assembly Resolution 44/228 was drafted. To us, like other countries, the outcome of Rio must be balanced and comprehensive. There must be positive movement on all issues, not merely those of interest to certain groups. We must not merely preoccupy ourselves with environmental issues. This is a Conference of environment and development. We call upon our friends from the North to forge an alliance to eradicate poverty, hunger and disease, in the South, while addressing unsustainable lifestyles in the North. The South must not be made to shoulder the burden of unsustainable lifestyles in the North. The South risks repeating the mistakes of the North if resource limitations and inequities in the international economic system are not resolved on an urgent and priority basis.