



Human Rights Commission  
of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)



United Nations Development  
Programme (UNDP)



High Level Policy Dialogue

# “A Human Rights Perspective on MDGs and Beyond”

New Development Targets

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New Development Targets

Proceedings of the High-Level Policy Dialogue

Organized by SUHAKAM and UNDP

Kuala Lumpur, 26 July 2005



Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)



United Nations Development Programme

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HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF MALAYSIA (SUHAKAM)  
Tingkat 29, Menara Tun Razak,  
Jalan Raja Laut, 50350 Kuala Lumpur  
E-mail: [humanrights@suhakam.org.my](mailto:humanrights@suhakam.org.my)  
URL: <http://www.suhakam.org.my>

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP) MALAYSIA  
Wisma UN, Block C,  
Kompleks Pejabat Damansara  
Jalan Dungun, Damansara Heights  
50490 Kuala Lumpur  
URL: <http://www.undp.org.my>

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# Foreword

by the Chairman, Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)

In September 2000, member states of the United Nations gathered at the Millennium Summit and espoused the Millennium Declaration which affirms their commitment to reducing poverty and the worst forms of human deprivation.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are consistent with the international human rights framework. The MDGs adopted by the United Nations General Assembly are a list of goals excerpted from the Millennium Declaration of September 2000 which spells out the values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility. These values are, in fact, the basic concepts of human rights.

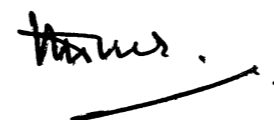
The Millennium Declaration includes six commitments for promoting human rights, democracy, and good governance. Through the Declaration, governments commit to respect and fully uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), to strengthen the capacity of all countries to implement the practices of democracy and human rights, to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), to ensure respect and protection for the rights of migrant workers and families, to work collectively for more inclusive political processes that allow genuine participation by all citizens in all countries, and to ensure freedom of the media and public access to information.

The MDGs therefore present a range of challenges to the human rights community. The central task is not one of deciding whether to engage in the MDG processes or not but rather one of determining how these processes could be made compatible with human rights and thus contribute effectively towards achieving economic and social rights.

The Malaysian Government is committed to realizing the MDGs. This is evidenced by the statement of the Honourable Prime Minister of Malaysia, YAB Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, in his address at the 59th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 28 September 2004 where he called upon the United Nations to realize all internationally agreed targets of the MDGs.

To achieve the MDGs, it is inevitable that there should be an effective, transparent, and accessible mechanism of accountability, equitable distribution of economic opportunities, an independent and impartial judiciary, and respect for the rule of law. Above all, there must be a genuine political will on the part of the national and local governments as well as a firm commitment by the private sector to make it a reality.

I would like to thank the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Malaysia for working closely with the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) in the preparation of this report. I would also like to thank all the Malaysian government agencies that have contributed to this report.



TAN SRI ABU TALIB BIN OTHMAN  
Chairman  
Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)

April 2006

# Foreword

by the Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme, Malaysia

At the United Nations Millennium Summit held in New York in September 2000, world leaders resolved to strengthen global efforts for peace, democracy, good governance, and poverty eradication while recognizing their 'collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity'.

From the Millennium Declaration emerged the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with a set of targets to be achieved by 2015. The MDGs, building on the outcomes of UN international conferences of the 1990s, provide a comprehensive blueprint for eradicating poverty in all its dimensions—income and non-income, including health, education, women's empowerment, access to information, clean water, sanitation, and electricity.

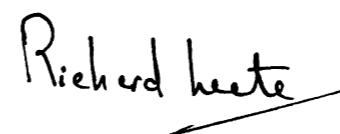
The UN approach to poverty eradication emphasizes a rights-based approach to development, including civil and political rights. Human development and human rights are essentially two sides of the same coin, mutually supportive of a common agenda to eradicate poverty in its many manifestations. Human rights provide the agreed normative standards for the achievements of the MDGs, and the MDGs support the progressive realisation of human rights.

In many countries it is generally the poorest, especially indigenous groups, women and older persons, whose human rights are ignored and who lack access to information and basic services.

Malaysia has made tremendous gains in human development.<sup>1</sup> Yet despite Malaysia's remarkable progress towards eradicating poverty, major challenges remain. There is a need to improve spatial and ethnic equity in development outcomes; to improve the lives of the indigenous people, migrants, and the disadvantaged; to promote gender equality, economic and political, empowerment and eliminate gender-based violence; to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS; and to improve pre-school education coverage, as well as for better environmental management.

I am pleased to note that in the recently released Ninth Malaysia Plan, 2006-2010, prepared in a more participatory manner than previous 5-year plans, ambitious poverty and equity targets have been set. For the first time ever, an explicit reference is made to the plight of Malaysia's indigenous communities and the need for measures to reduce the disparities.

In closing, I would like to thank the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM), other United National agencies in Malaysia and all those who contributed to and participated in the dialogue that led to this report. I hope it will go some way towards raising awareness of the relations between human rights and the MDGs.



DR RICHARD LEETE  
Resident Representative  
United Nations Development Programme

April 2006

<sup>1</sup> *Malaysia: Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Successes and Challenges, 2005*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 26 July 2005, the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM), in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), organized a High-Level Policy Dialogue on 'A Human Rights Perspective on MDGs and Beyond'. The dialogue sought to provide fresh ideas on how the MDG plus agenda can be advanced in support of national development, using a human rights perspective. Some thirty participants from SUHAKAM, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the government, and NGOs participated in the dialogue.

### **HUMAN RIGHTS, MDGs AND BEYOND**

Malaysia's achievement of the MDGs is commendable. Despite the progress attained, however, there are still pressing development challenges that need attention in order to make the right to development a reality for all. Malaysia should address these challenges, using a human rights lens, by developing country-specific development targets.

A human rights approach to development should be mainstreamed into national policies and programmes. The principles of participation, empowerment, transparency, and accountability should be the operating principles of the Ninth Malaysia Plan. Good governance and corruption must be dealt with to ensure society benefits from human development policies and programmes. The Government should ratify and report on relevant international human rights instruments.

#### **Eradicating poverty**

- High priority should be given to identifying vulnerable groups and individuals that are deprived of their basic right to an adequate standard of living, which presupposes the right to health, education, a clean water source, and a safe environment. For example, the Orang Asli and the indigenous communities in Sabah and Sarawak are greatly affected by poverty. More resources should be channelled to these communities by targeting them in policies and programmes, including giving their representatives a voice during the formulation of such policies and programmes.
- Basic facilities and amenities in less developed rural and remote areas need to be upgraded to enable poverty-affected groups to improve their livelihood, to reduce social exclusion, and to decrease spatial inequities.
- Emerging trends, such as globalization, ICT, and privatization and their impacts, whether positive or negative, should be considered in the development of country-

specific poverty-reduction strategies. Strategies and policies to address equality between men and women in relation to poverty should reflect equal benefit between the two sexes.

- The Ninth Malaysia Plan should present the necessary disaggregated data for poverty and inequality to better identify the most vulnerable.

### **Achieving universal education**

- Intensified efforts are required to encourage the enrolment of children from vulnerable groups at all education levels and to sustain their participation. This includes the provision of an enabling environment, access to ICT, and adequate facilities and amenities, particularly in rural and remote areas.
- Pre-school education should not only be given as much emphasis as primary education but be made universal and funded by the Government.
- Attention needs to be given to the high dropout rates of boys at secondary and tertiary levels, and the target should be to ensure that all children complete secondary schooling.

### **Promoting gender equality and empowerment of women**

- Improved childcare facilities, more flexi-working arrangements, and better maternity benefits are needed to increase female participation in the labour market.
- Women's right to participate in decision making should be further recognized with real commitment through affirmative action to ensure that 30 per cent of decision-making positions at all levels are filled by women.
- Gender-based violence, including that against children, must be reduced with benchmark indicators established to monitor progress.
- All discriminatory practices against women should be monitored and addressed.

### **Improving the health status**

- Policies and programmes that provide improved health care for the poor and vulnerable groups, as well as for the growing number of older persons, need to be formulated and implemented.
- The poor must be excluded from user charges with increased privatization of health services.

- Reproductive health targets, including those for adolescents, should be set, to further improve maternal health.
- Sexual education in schools, as well as through civil society and religious organizations, should be intensified, to prevent health problems, such as the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and pregnancy among youths.
- Country-specific MDG plus targets relating to mental health, heart disease, and cancer should be set and monitored.

### **Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases**

- Laws need to be implemented to prohibit discriminative practices against people living with HIV/AIDS, and to protect their human rights—consent and confidentiality should be guiding principles in testing for HIV and in treating HIV/AIDS patients.
- Efforts and resources to address HIV/AIDS infection must be scaled up to eradicate these diseases, including operational research into the causes of drug use among youths.
- Measures should be implemented to encourage leadership and raise community awareness about HIV/AIDS to thwart institutional inertia, understand group behaviour and values, and address related social issues.

### **Ensuring environmental sustainability**

- Country-specific MDG targets should be set on sustainable consumption.
- There is a need to improve the coordination of land development by practising good governance, technology sharing, and better coordination between the federal and state governments.
- Land rights, rights to resources, and rights to judiciary appeal should all be interlinked and the judiciary needs to be enlightened.

### **Addressing the needs of migrants and refugees**

A number of participants voiced concern about the plight of migrants and refugees:

- The basic health and educational requirements of migrants need to be recognized and addressed.

- Migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees constitute a significant part of today's complex global landscape. Refugee protection and human rights should therefore be included in the national development agenda. Malaysia needs mechanisms that can identify asylum-seekers and refugees in order to provide them with international protection.

#### **Developing a global partnership for development**

- Malaysia can do more to spread its development success by building capacity in other less developed countries, and creating an enhanced capability for coordinated and flexible responses to humanitarian and post-conflict crisis situations.
- Malaysia's success in meeting the MDGs, especially in poverty eradication, should be further leveraged, with the continued support of UNDP and other agencies, to promote new initiatives.
- A number of participants proposed that Malaysia, as an advanced developing country, provide 0.1 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) as development aid for poorer countries by 2015, which would put pressure on the more developed countries to meet their commitment of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product (GNP).

# PROCEEDINGS OF THE DIALOGUE

## I INTRODUCTION

Malaysia's general achievement with regard to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is laudable. This is documented in its MDG Country Report entitled *Malaysia: Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (Success and Challenges)*, which was launched by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, on 28 January 2005.

Nevertheless, despite the encouraging achievement, there are still some pressing issues that need to be addressed. For instance, Malaysia is lagging behind in the goal to eradicate the spread of HIV/AIDS. In addition, it has to give attention to the pockets of deprivation that exist amidst the country's success, such as poverty within the female community and amongst the Orang Asli. To address these outstanding pockets of deprivation, Malaysia needs to formulate country-specific goals, targets, and indicators according to local situations and the needs of these affected groups.

Thailand and Vietnam are among the first countries to develop their own country-specific targets and indicators. These targets and indicators are fashioned to suit the needs and current situations of their countries. For instance, besides having additional indicators for HIV/AIDS, Thailand has specified heart disease as another ailment to be combated. Therefore, as an advanced developing country, Malaysia should step up and develop its own country-specific targets and indicators with a firm emphasis on human rights.

The human rights approach sets out various principles, among which are the following:

### 1. Principle of accountability

This principle maintains that duty holders, such as policy makers, are held accountable for the success and failure of a programme or policy.

### 2. Principle of equality and non-discrimination

This principle, which holds that every person has the right to an adequate standard of living (Article 25 of the UDHR), is relevant to such issues as pockets of poverty.

### 3. Active and informed participation

A meaningful poverty-reduction strategy entails the participation of those who are greatly affected by poverty. Everyone has the right to participate in the government of their country through chosen representatives. (Article 21 of the UDHR).

The ratification of various human rights instruments binds a country to uphold the rights of their community and be accountable for any success or failure on their part towards the community in relation to the provisions enshrined in the various international human rights instruments ratified.

Therefore, the human rights approach to the MDGs, among others, works by putting pressure on the state parties of various international human rights instruments to ensure that duties and responsibilities towards communities within their jurisdiction are realized.

Against this backdrop, the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM), in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), organized a High-Level Policy Dialogue on 'A Human Rights Perspective on MDGs and Beyond' in Kuala Lumpur on 26 July 2005 with the following objectives in mind:

1. To facilitate a meeting of minds to discuss MDG-related issues that are pertinent to Malaysia
2. To facilitate the development of country-specific MDG targets and indicators for Malaysia
3. To promote the adoption of human rights principles in the development and implementation of country-specific MDG targets and indicators for Malaysia, and
4. To strengthen the bonds of partnership and relationship among the Government, UNDP, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other organizations.

The dialogue began with the Opening Remarks by Y.Bhg. Tan Sri Dato' Ramon V. Navaratnam, the Chairperson of the Economic, Social and Cultural Division of SUHAKAM, followed by the Introductory Remarks by Dr Richard Leete, UNDP Resident Representative to Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei Darussalam.

The dialogue was divided into four sessions, each of which discussed the human rights perspective on the relevant MDGs and beyond within its purview. The dialogue was structured as follows:

Session	Topic	Moderator
1	MDG1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	TAN SRI DATO' R. V. NAVARATNAM Chairperson Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Division, SUHAKAM
2	MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	DR RICHARD LEETE UNDP Resident Representative to Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam
3	MDG 4: Reduce child mortality MDG 5: Improve maternal health MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases	DATUK DR RAJ ABDUL KARIM SUHAKAM Commissioner
4	MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development	DATO' DR SHARIFAH HAPSAH SYED HASAN SHAHABUDIN SUHAKAM Commissioner

## II SCOPE OF THE DIALOGUE

The scope and focus of the dialogue revolved around the term 'beyond'. Participants at the dialogue expressed their views and contributed ideas on determining and defining the term 'MDGs and beyond'.

While MDGs refer to the goals, targets, and indicators set by the United Nations, the term 'beyond' as discussed at the dialogue refers to country-specific goals, targets, and indicators that should be tailored in accordance with the economic, social, cultural, political, and other relevant background or issues pertinent to Malaysia.

In addition, an important aspect of 'beyond' that is emphasized at this particular dialogue is the principle of human rights in relation to the development and implementation of country-specific MDGs.

Based on the discussions at the dialogue, the parameters of the term 'MDGs and beyond' can be defined as follows:

- MDG goals, targets, and indicators to be developed should be of national relevance on one hand and internationally comparable on the other
- Additional targets and indicators should be developed to further address pockets of deprivation within the society
- Country-specific indicators should take into account the principle of human rights
- Dynamic enabling and disabling factors that impact on Malaysia's achievement vis-à-vis the MDGs must be addressed as part of going beyond the MDGs
- For targets that have been reached, alternative ways should be found to sustain the achievement.

### III ISSUES RAISED AT THE DIALOGUE

With regard to general issues of the MDGs and human rights implementation in Malaysia, participants at the dialogue voiced their concern about the following:

- 1 Although the MDGs are able to address critical aspects of human development, the framework of the MDGs was criticized as providing only a snapshot of one point in time that ignores the dynamics of the economic, social, and technological environment.
- 2 Concerns were also raised about the compatibility of the MDGs with existing policies and programmes in Malaysia. For instance, the K-economy, which is a fundamental programme to achieve Malaysia's Vision 2020, is ignored by the MDGs.
- 3 The MDG approach was criticized as a 'one size fits all' approach that ignores the different economic, social, cultural, and technological backgrounds of countries.

Among the MDG issues and challenges that are pertinent to Malaysia and that merit further attention are the following:

#### 1 Outstanding pockets of poverty

- (a) Although Malaysia's general incidence of poverty has dropped, there are certain groups within the society who are greatly affected by poverty, for instance, the Orang Asli community, the elderly, and the female-headed household. This group needs to be catered for.

- (b) There is also a need for poverty mapping to identify groups and individuals that are living in poverty.
- (c) The failure of poverty line income (PLI) to incorporate non-income aspects that affect the quality of life as part of poverty determination has to be addressed.

#### 2 Education-related issues

- (a) The dropout rate among male students in primary education is a cause for concern.
- (b) The difference in the quality of education between different locations and communities, for instance, the quality of education in rural areas and among the Orang Asli community, needs to be dealt with.
- (c) There is a need to upgrade the physical and non-physical quality of educational facilities (such as the safety of school buildings and teaching equipment and teachers' training) as well as other basic amenities that support the delivery of education (such as sanitation and a clean water supply).
- (d) The human rights of both teachers and students must be taken care of to ensure both are motivated and committed to education.
- (e) Access to schools must be ensured. This includes distance, access road, and transportation facilities.

#### 3 Issues related to gender equality

- (a) The number of women in decision-making positions such as ministers or those on the board of directors or in Parliament is limited.
- (b) The female labour force participation rate is generally low.
- (c) Although women in Malaysia have equal access to employment as men, most of them are only involved in lower-level employment, such as clerical and agricultural work.
- (d) There is a compelling need for more analysis to ascertain the reasons for Malaysia's low female labour participation rate and the lack of female representation in higher professional positions and to find ways to create a more enabling environment.

#### 4 Health-related issues

- (a) Issues on sexual reproductive health which forms part of maternal health are often ignored.

- (b) Currently, there are debates about providing sexual education, particularly to youths.
- (c) The maternal and child mortality rate in Malaysia has reached a plateau after decreasing significantly (in keeping with the law of diminishing returns). More effective measures need to be formulated and implemented to further reduce the mortality rate.
- (d) Malaysia is lagging far behind the target to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- (e) Prejudice against people living with HIV/AIDS still exists.
- (f) There are no laws prohibiting prejudiced and discriminative treatment of people living with HIV/AIDS.
- (g) The right of HIV/AIDS patients to appear in public without shame should be upheld.
- (h) The MDGs have failed to address other growing health problems such as heart disease and cancer.

## 5 Environmental issues

- (a) Pollution in Malaysia is slowly and gradually worsening.
- (b) Nature reserves are being depleted and wildlife increasingly endangered.
- (c) The non-physical environment influences an individual's behaviour towards the physical environment. For instance, a person involved in gangsterism may have less respect for the physical environment. This issue is not reflected in the MDGs.
- (d) There is also a tendency on the part of the private sector and society to view the Government as the sole party responsible for environmental sustainability. In fact, the private sector and the public as a whole must both strengthen coordination to ensure environmental sustainability.

## 6 Issues related to global partnership

- (a) There is a need to study the impact of new technology on human rights.
- (b) It is essential to ensure that technologies brought in benefit the society rather than just business organizations and the Government.
- (c) Ethical issues associated with technology, such as genetically modified food and cloning, need to be addressed.

## IV RECOMMENDATIONS

The participants contributed a range of ideas on how to address the issues of 'MDGs and beyond' in Malaysia. Their recommendations are listed under the relevant section headings below:

### 1 General issues and proposals relating to 'MDGs and beyond' in Malaysia

- (a) It was recommended that the Government of Malaysia ratify relevant international human rights instruments to ensure the effective implementation of MDGs.
- (b) It was recommended that the link between development, security, and human rights—for instance, issues of terrorism—be recognized and considered when developing and implementing development strategies.
- (c) Social issues that are currently not addressed by the MDGs, such as crime and violence that may impact on human development, should be dealt with in the country-specific MDGs.
- (d) A participant highlighted the need to recognize as well as emphasize that the MDGs were, in fact, derived from various human rights principles. Therefore, the human rights principles should be enshrined within the MDGs framework.
- (e) It was recommended that the principles of empowerment, transparency, and accountability be the operating principles of the Ninth Malaysia Plan. To this end, institutional deficiencies in public institutions must be addressed to enhance greater independence, transparency, and accountability.
- (f) It was recommended that the human rights approach be mainstreamed in all policies and programmes planned and implemented by the Government.

### 2 Eradicating poverty in Malaysia

#### (a) Definition of Malaysia's poverty line income (PLI)

- It was recommended that the revision of the PLI should not only focus on determining the appropriate amount of income adequate to obtain relevant basic needs but also take into account non-income dimensions of poverty such as poverty in terms of knowledge and literacy.

**(b) Identification of vulnerable groups**

- It was recommended that disaggregated data be collected on groups and individuals that are deprived of their basic right to an adequate standard of living which, among others, includes the right to health, education, a clean water source, and a safe environment.

It was pointed out that although Malaysia's general achievement on most of the MDGs is commendable, there are still vulnerable groups within the society that need attention, for instance, the Orang Asli community and single mothers who are greatly affected by poverty.

- It was recommended that strategies to address pockets of poverty also take into account intra-group poverty. For instance, women are identified as a group vulnerable to poverty. In addition, this group consists of women with various backgrounds such as women with disabilities, women living in rural areas, and single mothers.

Therefore, it is necessary to compile comprehensive disaggregated data on a group to ensure that strategies can be tailored to meet the various needs of members within a vulnerable group.

- The Government was also urged to give more attention to the communities of East Malaysia that have higher incidence of poverty compared to those in Peninsular Malaysia.
- Consequently, it was recommended that in terms of budget allocation, priority should be given to programmes and projects which target groups that are greatly affected by poverty.

**(c) Recognition of emerging trends**

- It was recommended that the development of country-specific goals, targets, and indicators should consider emerging trends such as globalization, ICT, and privatization and any unforeseen circumstances (such as the recent economic crisis) and their impact, whether positive or negative, on any poverty-reduction strategies. For instance, ICT may be seen as an enabler of basic services such as information, while privatization, in particular privatization of basic needs, may impact negatively on the livelihood of the poor.

- Other emerging trends that should be confronted squarely are the increasing cases of child labour, stateless children, street children, and beggars which aggravate the incidence of poverty. Most of these issues are associated with a country's progress towards urbanization.

**(d) Poverty-reduction strategies**

- It was recommended that strategies and policies to address equality between men and women in relation to poverty should reflect equal benefit between the two genders.

**(e) Adequacy of facilities in poverty-affected locations**

- It was recommended that basic facilities and amenities in less developed areas, including rural and remote areas, be improved.

It was pointed out that adequate public facilities and amenities will enhance the opportunity of poverty-affected groups in this area to improve their livelihood. For instance, the construction of roads linking rural and business centres will enable poverty-stricken groups to conduct income-generating activities.

- On the other hand, although urban areas may have better facilities compared to rural areas, attention should also be given to the urban poor who may not have adequate access—in particular, physical and economic access—to basic services. It is essential to ensure that the urban poor have access to such amenities.

**(f) Issues of relative poverty**

- It was recommended that Malaysia, as an advanced developing country, should take the lead in addressing its own issues of relative poverty.

**(g) Participation of the poor in development**

- It was recommended that the right of the poor to participate in development be recognized and accepted.

Concern was expressed over the lack of opportunity amongst the poor to participate in development and to articulate their interests and needs. An

illuminating point made at the dialogue was the ability of highly qualified persons to voice their interests and concerns and consequently getting the resources needed which seems to imply some form of discrimination against the poor who are not given the same opportunity because of poverty or low qualifications. This calls into question the human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination and the right to participate in development. In addition, questions were raised about the ability of the representatives of the poor to articulate their needs and concerns.

It was also argued that while communities in rural areas have development and safety committees that encourage participation from the community, such as the Village Development and Security Committee (JKKK) which assists in human development, there are no such similar development committees in urban areas, particularly amongst the urban poor and at district levels.

The dialogue also highlighted the weak links between district committees and local authorities which hinder participation from the community. Therefore, it was recommended that the links between district committees and local authorities be strengthened. In addition, there is a need to exert pressure on the relevant authorities to address this problem. Thus, the human rights principle of accountability must be invoked.

### 3 Achieving universal education in Malaysia

The following recommendations were made to enhance the quality and accessibility of education in Malaysia:

#### (a) **Access to education for children from vulnerable groups**

- It was recommended that further efforts be undertaken initially to encourage the enrolment of children from vulnerable groups, namely, children from the Orang Asli community and the Penan in Sarawak, and then to sustain their participation in education.

It was noted that although the number of Orang Asli children enrolled in primary education is increasing, there is still a sizeable portion who are unable to

complete primary or secondary education, or who complete primary and secondary education but fail a few subjects. On the other hand, most of the children from the Penan community do not attend school.

- Consequently, it was recommended that the Government intensify efforts to reach these disadvantaged children to ensure that they are able to enjoy their right to education.

#### (b) **Secondary education as part of country-specific target**

- It was recommended that aspects of secondary education be made a part of the MDGs. It was pointed out that secondary education has significant impact on the future careers of children. Therefore, it should be considered as a target for the country-specific MDGs.

#### (c) **Access to pre-school education**

- It was recommended that pre-school education be given as much emphasis as primary education and that pre-schools be funded by the Government.
- In this connection, concerns were raised about the accessibility of pre-school education among the urban poor. It was argued that children in rural settlements have better access to pre-school education provided by the Government such as KEMAS, compared to children of the urban poor who would not be able to afford the pre-school education in urban areas which is mainly provided by private operators.

#### (d) **Issues on the quality of education**

- It was recommended that issues relating to the home environment and nurturing be addressed as part of students' achievement.
- The Government was also urged to improve the quality of education, particularly in less developed areas such as the remote areas of Sabah and rural settlements throughout Malaysia.

- With regard to achieving universal primary education, it was recommended that factors of an enabling environment, such as access to ICT, teachers' training, and other basic facilities that contribute to the delivery of quality and comprehensive education, be recognized as part of the country-specific MDGs.

**(e) Access to facilities and amenities**

- It was recommended that educational as well as other economic and social amenities be adequately provided in rural and remote areas to support the delivery of education. This includes the provision of public transport, access road, sanitation, a clean water source, and a safe environment.

It was pointed out that although schools are available throughout Malaysia, factors such as distance, quality, and indirect costs associated with sending children to school (for example, the cost of transportation) need to be included in the country-specific MDGs.

- In addition, it should be recognized that the unavailability of these amenities, particularly in rural and remote areas, affects the motivation of children and teachers alike.

**(f) Concern about the student dropout rate**

- Attention was drawn to the dire need for in-depth analysis to ascertain the reasons for the high number of male student dropouts in Malaysia.

#### 4 Promoting gender equality and empowerment of women in Malaysia

**(a) Labour participation amongst women**

- It was recommended that working arrangements be made more flexible, particularly for women, to encourage female labour force participation, including allowing home-based jobs and providing child nurseries within or close to the workplace.

However, care should be taken to ensure that the implementation of home-based jobs is done in a manner that does not reinforce the stereotyped roles of men and women.

- It was also recommended that gender-sensitive training be implemented at all levels to improve the perception of women's role in development.
- In addition, it was recommended that the Government improve the country's maternity benefits to encourage more women to participate in the country's labour force.

**(b) Women's role in decision making and politics**

- There is a need to recognize women's right to participate at decision-making level. In Malaysia, the Government has committed itself to ensuring that 30 per cent of decision-making positions are filled by women. Therefore, the Government is obligated to translate this commitment into concrete action.

It was observed that in the previous election, only 6 per cent of the 600 state seats were filled by women.

It was further recommended that policies and programmes that encourage more women to take an active visible part in the country's political arena be developed and implemented.

**(c) Violence against women**

- It was also recommended that gender-based violence be part of gender equality measurement.

#### 5 Improving the health status in Malaysia

**(a) Responsibility for providing health care to the poor**

- With regard to health care, it was recommended that policies and programmes be implemented to ensure the Government, NGOs, private corporations, and members of society realize their duties towards disadvantaged groups. For instance, the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Malaysia has worsened to such an extent that it is impossible for the Government to deal with it alone. Therefore, it was recommended that the private sector, NGOs, and members of the society come together and pool their resources to combat this disease.

It was further argued that providing health care for vulnerable groups is a multisectoral responsibility. Health care services can range from providing health-related information to providing the vulnerable groups with the means to obtain access to health care services—for instance, financial health care schemes provided by employers. In addition, private corporations should ensure that their activities do not compromise the people's right to health.

- It was also recommended that medical specialists be made available in less developed areas. It was argued that although less developed areas are provided with basic medical care facilities, the availability of specialist medical care in these areas can be improved.

**(b) Adequacy of medical manpower**

- It was recommended that the number of medical personnel, particularly in rural and less developed areas, be increased. In addition, questions were raised about the adequacy of health care services in view of the ageing population.

In connection with this, there is a need to review the remuneration of health care personnel. Besides motivating them to deliver better services, better remuneration may encourage health service personnel to work in rural and less developed areas.

**(c) Impact of health reforms on vulnerable groups**

- It was recommended that any health reforms to be implemented should take into account the impact of the reforms on vulnerable groups.

**(d) Reproductive health as part of country-specific MDGs**

- It was recommended that issues of reproductive health be part of the country-specific target to improve maternal health as such issues are pertinent to women's rights.

**(e) The burden of disease and primary health**

- It was noted that when the issue of the burden of disease was discussed, there was a tendency to forget the impact of this on women and reproductive

health. It was proposed that the vulnerability of mothers towards the burden of disease be recognized and addressed.

**(f) Sexual education**

- It was recommended that sexual education be provided to society as one of the Government's efforts to prevent health problems such as the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and pregnancy among youths.

It was maintained that correct information on health does not always reach the public, particularly members of vulnerable groups. In addition, there is still disagreement amongst various parties on providing sexual education, particularly to children.

It was asserted that, on the one hand, health-related organizations often fail to see sexual education in a positive light. On the other hand, failure to disseminate such information may compromise the lives of the people, particularly youths, as there are as yet no effective programmes to deal with premarital sex and drug abuse.

- It was therefore recommended that civil society and religious organizations make concerted efforts to inculcate the correct values in youths pertaining to various social issues such as vandalism, premarital sex, and HIV/AIDS.

**(g) Resources to combat HIV/AIDS**

- In view of Malaysia's progress with regard to halting and reversing the number of people infected with HIV/AIDS, it was recommended that resources to address HIV/AIDS infection be scaled up.

- It was further proposed that inputs into the National Plan of Action on HIV/AIDS, currently being prepared by the Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC), be considered by the Government in the formulation of policies and programmes to combat HIV/AIDS.

**(h) HIV/AIDS testing as a country-specific indicator**

- In line with the human rights perspective, it was advocated that indicators to ensure HIV/AIDS testing be developed.

**(i) Laws to prohibit discriminative practices against people living with HIV/AIDS**

- It was asserted that HIV/AIDS infected people are deprived of their human right to live in dignity and to appear in public without shame as there is no law that prohibits practices that discriminate against them.

Therefore, to encourage people living with HIV/AIDS to step up and demand their rights, it was recommended that laws to prohibit discriminative practices against this particular group be formulated and enforced.

**(j) Malaysia's success in providing health care as part of the country-specific indicators**

- It was recommended that Malaysia's success in ensuring enhanced accessibility of health care to people living with HIV/AIDS be reflected in the country-specific indicators.

It was argued that Malaysia's progress on Goal 6 of the MDGs may indicate its failure to battle the spread of HIV/AIDS. However, there is a need to acknowledge the significant measures taken by the Malaysian Government to control the epidemic; for instance, the reduction in the cost and price of HIV/AIDS treatment for the public is not reflected in the MDGs.

- It was further highlighted that Malaysia has formulated local indicators which are very useful for monitoring HIV/AIDS in Malaysia. These should be included in the country-specific MDG indicators.

**(k) Other health indicators for Malaysia**

- It was recommended that additional country-specific goals, targets, and indicators be developed to address emerging health issues in Malaysia, such as heart diseases, cancer and mental illnesses.

## 6 Environmental sustainability in Malaysia

**(a) Social environment as a country-specific indicator**

- Social environment should be part of Malaysia's country-specific MDGs that assess the non-physical environment. In this case, factors such as divorce rates should be included as indicators.

**(b) Adoption of technologies that help preserve the environment**

- Technology sharing that may help to preserve the environment should be considered. This should be reflected in the MDGs under Goal 7 to ensure environmental sustainability. For instance, special information satellite sensing enables us to detect and analyse the serenity of underground water without having to dig wells that may cause land erosion.

## 7 Developing a global partnership for development

**(a) Adoption of principles of global partnership within Malaysia**

- It was recommended that the principles of global partnership be adopted within Malaysia to ensure that poorer or less developed states and communities are able to progress together with other states in the country.

**(b) Ensuring imported technologies benefit society**

- There is a need for the Government to ensure that technologies brought into Malaysia are transferred and that they benefit the local community.
- Technologies that improve food production should be encouraged as a means of helping the poor who are involved in food production, as this would in turn help to increase their income.
- Caution should be exercised to ensure that technologies brought into the country do not overlook or neglect ethical issues; for instance, genetically modified food and cloning are not approved.
- It was further proposed that country-specific indicators relating to new technology should be given a longer time frame to allow the technology to mature in Malaysia.

**(c) Public-private partnership within Malaysia**

- Concerns were raised about the possible impact of public-private partnership on human rights—for instance, the effect of public-private partnership on basic human needs such as electricity and water.

- It is incumbent upon public–private partnerships to ensure that the rights of local communities to participate in development are not denied. Likewise, the Government should ensure that local communities benefit from such partnerships.
- It was recommended that universities develop business incubators to encourage undergraduates to form a business before graduating from university. Under this project, which requires the assistance of the private sector, two or more under graduates will initiate a business enterprise while studying; upon graduating, these students will already have employment and a source of income.

**(d) *Linking local food producers to consumers overseas***

- It was recommended that local food producers be linked to consumers outside Malaysia. This is currently being done in Africa, whereby African farmers are linked to consumers in Britain and the Netherlands.

**(e) *0.1 per cent development aid from Malaysia***

- It was recommended that, as an advanced developing country, Malaysia should set an example to more developed countries by providing a total of 0.1 per cent of its GDP as development aid for poorer countries, in the hope that more developed countries would realize their duty towards these countries.
- Similarly, it was proposed that private corporations contribute a percentage of their profits to human development as their duty to society.

## **8 Addressing cross-cutting issues of MDGs in Malaysia**

**(a) *Good governance and corruption***

- It was strongly recommended that issues of good governance and corruption be addressed as part of the country-specific MDGs to ensure that society benefits from any human development policies and programmes.
- It was also proposed that indicators to assess good governance be developed within the country-specific MDGs.

**(b) *Refugee protection***

- There is a need to include refugee protection and human rights in the development agenda of Malaysia.
- Migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees form a significant part of today's complex global landscape but they need special protection, given their particularly vulnerable background.
- Malaysia needs to set mechanisms in place, through which asylum-seekers and refugees can be identified in order to provide them with the international protection they deserve and to grant them a basic standard of treatment.
- Refugees and migrants at large are not a threat; on the contrary, they can be viewed as a resource which, if managed well, can make valuable contributions to the success of Malaysia.

**(c) *States of emergency***

- It was recommended that two states of emergency be revoked.
- It was argued that these perpetual states of emergency are inconsistent with the Government's claim that Malaysia is a politically stable nation with continued economic growth.

**(d) *Concrete programmes to improve social policies***

- It was recommended that concrete programmes and projects be implemented to deal with social issues that impact on human development.
- It was pointed out that although there are social policies to address such issues, concrete programmes that reflect these policies have yet to be implemented. Currently, only small-scale programmes are available and these are implemented in an ad hoc manner.

**(e) *Review of existing laws***

- It was recommended that repressive laws that violate international standards of human rights must be reviewed and harmonized with the Government's obligations under international treaties.

**(f) School dropouts among pregnant teenagers**

- It was recommended that issues relating to pregnant teenagers being forced to drop out of schools by school administrations be addressed.
- It was argued that in line with provisions made by various international human rights instruments, everyone has the right to education. This includes pregnant teenagers. Therefore, pregnant teenagers should be encouraged to continue their studies instead of being forced to drop out of school.

**(g) Registration of children out of wedlock**

- It was recommended that further efforts be made to encourage the parents of children born out of wedlock to register their children to avoid problems in enrolling them for primary school.

**(h) Sustainable consumption amongst developed countries**

- There is a need to acquire cooperation from developed countries in controlling consumption of natural resources.  
It was argued that excessive consumption of natural resources amongst developed countries will ultimately dry up natural supplies. Developed countries need to control consumption at a sustainable level without, however, compromising quality of life. Developed countries should also assist developing countries by granting access to their natural resources to less developing.

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### ANNEXE 1 Millennium Development Goals: Targets and Indicators

Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger			
<b>Target 1:</b>	Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day	1a	Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day <sup>a</sup>
		1b	Poverty headcount ratio (% of population below the national poverty line)
		2	Poverty gap ratio (incidence x depth of poverty)
		3	Share of poorest quintile in national consumption
<b>Target 2:</b>	Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	4	Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age
		5	Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption
Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education			
<b>Target 3:</b>	Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	6	Net enrolment ratio in primary education
		7a	Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5
		7b	Primary completion rate
		8	Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds
Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women			
<b>Target 4:</b>	Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015	9	Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education
		10	Ratio of literate females to males of 15-24 year olds
		11	Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
		12	Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament
Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality			
<b>Target 5:</b>	Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	13	Under-five mortality rate
		14	Infant mortality rate
		15	Proportion of 1 year old children immunised against measles
Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health			
<b>Target 6:</b>	Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	16	Maternal mortality ratio
		17	Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases			
<b>Target 7:</b>	Have halted by 2015, and begun to reverse, the spread of HIV/AIDS	18	HIV prevalence among 15-24 year old pregnant women
		19	Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate <sup>b</sup>
		19a	Condom use at last high-risk sex
		19b	Percentage of population aged 15-24 with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS <sup>c</sup>
		19c	Contraceptive prevalence rate
20	Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14		
<b>Target 8:</b>	Have halted by 2015, and begun to reverse, the incidence of malaria and other major diseases	21	Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria
		22	Proportion of population in malaria risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures <sup>d</sup>
		23	Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis
		24	Proportion of TB cases detected and cured under Directly Observed Treatment Short Course (DOTS)

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Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability			
<b>Target 9:</b> Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources	25	Proportion of land area covered by forest	
	26	Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area	
	27	Energy use (kg oil equivalent) per \$1 GDP (PPP)	
	28	Carbon dioxide emissions (per capita) and consumption of ozone depleting CFCs (ODP tons)	
	29	Proportion of population using solid fuels	
<b>Target 10:</b> Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation	30	Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural	
	31	Proportion of urban and rural population access to improved sanitation	
<b>Target 11:</b> By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers	32	Proportion of households with access to secure tenure	
Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development			
<b>Target 12:</b> Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system  Includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally	<b>Official Development Assistance</b>		
	33	Net ODA, total and to LDCs, as percentage of ECD/DAC donors' gross national income	
	34	Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation)	
<b>Target 13:</b> Address the special needs of the Least Developed Countries Includes: tariff and quota free access for LDC exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPC and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction	35	Proportion of bilateral ODA of OECD/DAC donors that is untied	
	36	ODA received in landlocked countries as proportion of their GNIs	
<b>Target 14:</b> Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing states (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly)	37	ODA received in small island developing States as proportion of their GNIs	
	<b>Market Access</b>		
	38	Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and LDCs admitted free of duties	
<b>Target 15:</b> Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term	39	Average tariffs imposed by developed countries and agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries	
	40	Agricultural support estimates for OECD countries as percentage of their GDP	
	41	Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity	
<b>Target 16:</b> In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth	<b>Debt Sustainability</b>		
	42	Total number of countries that have achieved their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)	
	43	Debt relief committed under HIPC initiative, US\$	
	44	Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services	
	45	Unemployment rate of 15-24 year olds, each sex and total <sup>a</sup>	

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<b>Target 17:</b>	In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries	46	Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis
<b>Target 18:</b>	In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications	47	Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population
		48a	Personal computers in use per 100 population and Internet users per 100 population
		48b	Internet users per 100 population

**THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS** and targets comes from the millennium declaration signed by 189 countries, including 147 Heads of State, in September 2000 ([www.un.org/documents/ga/res/55/a55r002.pdf](http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/55/a55r002.pdf)). The goals and targets are interrelated and should be seen as a whole. They represent a partnership between the developed countries and the developing determined, as the Declaration states, “to create an environment—at the national and global levels alike—which is conducive to development and the elimination of poverty”.

- <sup>a</sup> For monitoring country poverty trends, indicators based on national poverty lines should be used, where available.
- <sup>b</sup> Amongst contraceptive methods, only condoms are effective in preventing HIV transmission. The contraceptive prevalence rate is also useful in tracking progress in other health, gender and poverty goals. Because the condom use rate is only measures amongst women in union, it is supplemented by an indicator on condom use in high-risk situations (indicator 19a) and an indicator on HIV/AIDS knowledge (indicator 19b).
- <sup>c</sup> This indicator is defined as the percentage of population aged 15-24 who correctly identify the two major ways of preventing the sexual transmission of HIV (using condoms and limiting sex to one faithful, uninfected partner), who reject the two most common local misconception about HIV transmission, and who know that a healthy looking person can transmit HIV. However, since there are currently not a sufficient number of surveys to be able to calculate the indicator as defines above, UNICEF, in collaboration with UNAIDS and WHO, produced two proxy indicators. They are the following: a) Percentage of women and men 15-24, who know that a person can protect herself from HIV infection by “consistent use of condoms”. b) Percentage of women and men 15-24 who know a healthy looking person can transmit HIV. Data for this year’s report are only available on women.
- <sup>d</sup> Prevention to be measured by the percentage of children under 5 sleeping under insecticide-treated bednets; treatment to be measured by percentage of children under 5 who are appropriately treated.
- <sup>e</sup> An improved measure of the target is under development by ILO for future years.

**ANNEXE 2** Fundamental Links Between Human Rights and the MDGs

<b>Goal 1</b> Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft guidelines on a human rights approach to poverty reduction strategies</li> <li>• Article 11 and General Comment (GC) 12 of ICESCR</li> <li>• Articles 24 para. 2 and 27 para. 3 of the CRC</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 2</b> Achieve universal primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articles 13 and 14, and GC 11 of the ICESCR</li> <li>• Article 28a and GC 1 of the CRC</li> <li>• Articles 5 and 7 of the CERD</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 3</b> Promote gender equality and empower women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEDAW</li> <li>• Articles 3 and 7 para. a (i) of the ICESCR</li> <li>• Articles 3, 6 para. 5 and 23 para. 2 of the ICCPR</li> <li>• Article 2 of the CRC</li> <li>• GC 25 of the CERD</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 4</b> Reduce child mortality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articles 6 and 24 para. 2a of the CRC</li> <li>• Article 12 para. 2a, GC 14 of the ICESCR</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 5</b> Improve maternal health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articles 10h, 11f, 12 para. 1, 14b, and GC 24 of CEDAW</li> <li>• Article 5e (iv) of the CERD</li> <li>• CG 14 of the ICESCR</li> <li>• Article 24d of the CRC</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 6</b> Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International guidelines on HIV/AIDS and human rights</li> <li>• GC 14 of the ICESCR</li> <li>• Article 24c of the CRC</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 7</b> Ensure environmental sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Safe drinking water:</b> ICESCR: draft General Comment and GC 14</li> <li>• <b>Slum dwellers:</b> ICESCR:GC 4 and GC 7</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 8</b> Develop a global partnership for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article 1 para. 3 of the Charter of the United Nations</li> <li>• Article 2 of the ICESCR</li> <li>• Article 4 of the CRC</li> </ul>

Source: UNHCR website at <http://www.unhcr.ch/development/mdg.html>

**ANNEXE 3** Opening Remarks by Tan Sri Dato' Ramon V. Navaratnam

UNDP Resident Representative, Fellow Commissioners of SUHAKAM, Dato'-Dato', Datin-Datin, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Welcome to today's high-level policy dialogue. It is really nice to see so many friends at this discussion of MDGs and beyond. It is also gratifying that so many senior people are here. This leads me to ask the following question: Why do we need this dialogue on MDGs?

Firstly, the Economic Planning Unit (EPU), together with the UNDP, has come out with an excellent report on Malaysia and the MDGs. The last chapter of that report is entitled 'Challenges Beyond the MDG Targets'. We at SUHAKAM thought it would be a good idea to consult the UNDP about organizing a workshop or dialogue on what constitutes 'beyond' as neither SUHAKAM nor the UNDP dares to presume that we know what 'beyond' means or should be. So we called in a group of people—all experts in their own right—to help us determine the scope or parameters of 'beyond'.

Secondly, from the UNDP and other participants' point of view, we need to emphasize the human rights aspect in development, i.e. we are not interested in development for development's sake nor in economic growth or distribution on its own but rather we want to relate the various issues in development to human rights.

Thirdly, what is so special about human rights? Well, as you know, there is a whole range of international conventions protecting the rights of children and women, as meeting the basic needs of the people is a fundamental principle of human rights.

But what I think makes the difference between meeting basic needs and enjoying human rights is the quality of life attained. We can provide education, health, and water but is it quality water? Is it quality education? Are we reaching out to the marginalized groups, the deprived groups, the pockets of poverty?

Fortunately, Malaysia has achieved many of the MDGs. In a way, we are a peculiar country. We are developing but not yet developed, and I think it is fair to say that we are about the most advanced developing country. However, though we can achieve the status of developed country, we will still suffer from poor quality differences, for example, poverty in Terengganu, Kelantan, Sabah, and Sarawak.

Even in Kuala Lumpur, there are pockets of poverty which are easily overlooked, such as those in Kampung Kerinci and Kampung Medan. Another phenomenon that has an adverse effect on the quality of life is urban poverty. In a developing country, this becomes more significant because of rural-urban migration.

My fourth point is that it is important to develop a strategy on the MDGs and beyond and to relate it to human rights for incorporation into the Ninth Malaysia Plan. I understand that the first draft of the Plan is almost finalized but we should still be able to give our input at this stage. It is not too late.

The fifth point I would like to make concerns the reason for holding this dialogue. We need this dialogue in order to develop our own targets and indicators in keeping with our own situations and specific needs. What the UNDP has provided is a whole range of goals, targets, and indicators that are applicable to a vast number of developing countries. As an advanced developing country, our needs are different and we do not have to be guided by indicators which are meant for the majority of developing countries, many of whom are the less developed countries (LDCs).

My final point is that it is interesting to note that Thailand and Vietnam have already developed strategies for MDGs and beyond. We have perhaps been lagging behind but we can make up for lost time by coming up with a definite plan of our own on MDG plus, as people like to call it, or MDGs and beyond. And I think we will be able to set a high standard of what it means to go beyond the MDGs.

I believe, in conclusion, that this meeting and its outcome, including the report that we hope to produce with the help of the UNDP, will mark a watershed in our social, economic, and planning process. We have, as a rule, been concerned with traditional methods of development to the exclusion of other issues. These issues were discussed at the UMNO general assembly. It is good that such issues are allowed to be discussed in an open and transparent way as this not only helps to highlight the anxieties of the people and any mistakes we may have made but also reminds us to uphold fundamental human rights principles at all times. It is especially important not to lose sight of these principles as we progress towards achieving the MDG plus targets. Thus I would like to remind you that as we move on, we should not neglect the lower or lowest income group (approximately 30 per cent of the population) because they are the ones who tend to be forgotten or marginalized.

So let me thank you once again for coming and preparing to spend half a day here in informal discussion. If you wish to make your own submission later, please feel free to do so and we will put it in our report.

Thank you.

**ANNEXE 4** Introductory Remarks by Dr Richard Leete

Thank you very much, Tan Sri Ramon. Good morning, everyone.

Selamat pagi dan selamat sejahtera and a very warm welcome to the commissioners, distinguished Tan Sri-Tan Sri, Dato-Dato, colleagues, and participants.

I am not going to talk for very long and I am not going to go over any of the ground that Tan Sri Ramon has gone over except to correct something that he said. The MDG report is, in fact, a product of the EPU, many government departments, as well as all of the UN entities here in Malaysia, with many inputs from the NGOs. It is really a sort of composite report, reflecting broad participation, rather than the product of any one particular group.

I would like to start by sharing with you my thoughts about what I expect or hope to see as the outcome of this morning's dialogue. First, I don't see it as yet another report. The Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010) is already well advanced on the road to completion, so what we want to get out of this dialogue is a joint memorandum that we will submit to the EPU containing our views and recommendations on various issues that we hope will be taken into consideration in the final draft of the Plan. It is crucial to keep in mind that we are not looking at another 25-page report. We are looking for a short statement on going beyond the MDGs, in particular from a human rights perspective.

I have been associated with two Malaysia Plans here in Malaysia—the Fifth Malaysia Plan and the Sixth Malaysia Plan. In those days, if you were to mention human rights, you would not be in the good books of some people and there would have been questions about you. At that time SUHAKAM was not yet born. However, even today I still go to meetings; Tan Sri Ramon was alone with me, and when we mention human rights, somebody will ask, 'Well, we like what you say, but isn't human rights for other countries, not for us?'

I believe there are still people here who are in denial about the work of the Human Rights Commission, or about the need for Malaysia to go further down this line of recognizing that individuals have rights, that governments have obligations as duty bearers to protect those rights, whether they are the rights of women, children, migrants, or whoever.

Nevertheless, I detect a change in the political climate of today and a lovely openness among most of the ministers in the Prime Minister's Department to the introduction of new ideas. Indeed, the Prime Minister himself, Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said over lunch a few days ago that he welcomes new language in the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

Thus, what I feel is that if we submit just another report, the chances are that no one will read it. But if we submit a memorandum with concrete recommendations under specific headings, in language that is explicit, concise, and to the point, there is some chance that it could become part of the Ninth Malaysia Plan. And this is what we are going to do today.

We have already prepared a document (not a draft of the memo) that we would like to share with you. This is a summary of the challenges emerging from Malaysia's MDG work, and it will form the basis of our deliberations. Basically, what we want to do is to flesh out the ideas under the various headings in this summary in sharper language based on our discussion today. The aim is to come up with a memorandum that we will submit to the Government, with an accompanying letter. The memorandum, will originate from the UNDP/SUHAKAM, with inputs from all the organizations which have participated in this morning's dialogue, will contain specific recommendations on the issues discussed.

Coming back to the summary of challenges for discussion this morning, I would like to point out that the issues are structured under the headings that we are going to proceed with today, without any one area being dominant over another. The issues include some areas not covered by the MDGs.

I would just like in conclusion to touch on two areas of special interest to me. One is the issue of migrants. I think that from a human rights perspective, we need to make some explicit statement about the rights of migrant children to health and education. Looking at the indicators for Malaysia, it is apparent that those for health and education reflect in part the impact of migrants. Thus, although the maternal and infant mortality levels are relatively low in Malaysia, they would be even lower without the disproportionate weight of the mortality of foreign migrants.

Another issue that merits attention, I feel, is the need to improve information. The human rights principle of equality and non-discrimination calls for the idea of improving information collection and dissemination. Datuk Mustapa Mohamed has expressed a willingness to go beyond some of the broad aggregated data. As some of you will remember from presentations I have been making, I disaggregated—using simple estimation measures—poverty rates for Sabah and Sarawak that reveal some quite shocking figures for some of the indigenous communities. So what we are trying to do here is to go beyond the MDGs in Malaysia. To this end, we need to try focus of some of the really thorny issues which have a human rights' dimension to them.

This is a dialogue and it should be an uninhibited dialogue. We have asked each of you here on your own merit as an expert professional in your area. Since this is an open, honest dialogue, we may not see eye to eye on everything but we can take note. We must try to put what I would like to describe as this rather bland two-pager into something that is much sharper but still a two-pager. And that sharpness has to come from your minds and your inputs. It is hoped that all this will be translated into a document that we will send to the Government for inclusion in the issues to be discussed in the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

Thank you.

**ANNEXE 5** List of Participants

Representatives from various government agencies, NGOs, and other organizations, as well as academicians, were invited to participate in the Dialogue. Below is the complete list of participants and their organizations:

<b>NAME</b>	<b>ORGANIZATION</b>
Tan Sri Dato' R. V. Navaratnam	Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)
Datuk Dr Raj Abdul Karim	Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)
Dato' Choo Siew Kioh	Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)
Dato' Dr Sharifah Hapsah Syed Hasan Shahabudin	Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)
Dr Richard Leete	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Malaysia
Mrs Madeline Loh	UNDP, Malaysia
Ms Linda Tham	UNDP, Malaysia
Ms Gaye Philips	United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF)
Ms Carolin Verma	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Ms Nooraini Md. Ali	Economic Planning Unit Malaysia (EPU)
Dato' Param Kumaraswamy	Transparency International Malaysia
Dr Denison Jayasooria	Yayasan Strategik Sosial
Datuk Zainal Aznam Yusof	Majlis Tindakan Ekonomi Negara (MTEN)
Prof. Dr Norma Bin Mansor	University of Malaya
Dato' Dr Narimah Awin	Ministry of Health, Malaysia
Ms Maria Chin Abdullah	Women's Development Collective (WDC)
Mr Nik M. Fahmee	Malaysia AIDS Council
Ms Josie M. Fernandez	Federation of Malaysian Consumers Association (FOMCA)
Dato' Lee Yee Cheong	United Nations Millennium Project
Ms Rathi Ramanathan	Women's Development Collective (WDC)
Ms Ivy Josiah	Women's Aid Organization (WAO)
Ms Khoo Swee Kheng	National Population and Family Development Board
Dr K. J. John	KSSB Sdn. Bhd.
Ms Linda Archibald	MENGO Support
Mr. A. N. Bhaskaran	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Malaysia
Dr Rohani Ali	Ministry of Health, Malaysia
Datuk Dr Sulaiman Mahbob	Institute Integrity Malaysia
Pn. Omi Kelsom	Department of Statistics, Malaysia
Pn. Rafliza Ramli	Department of Statistics, Malaysia