



(Check against delivery)

Statement by Malaysia

**Agenda Item 7: Concrete steps to advance minority political participation
and to build capacity of minorities to participate effectively
2nd Session of the Forum on Minority Issues of the Human Rights Council,
12 & 13 November 2009**

Thank you Madam Chair,

My delegation takes the floor under this agenda item to make some observations and express our appreciation to the Secretariat of the forum for preparing the draft outcome document of the forum.

Madam Chair,

2. As a parliamentary democracy with a federal system headed by a constitutional monarch, comprised of diverse ethnic, religious and cultural communities, Malaysia continues to be blessed with relative peace and harmony. Central to the Malaysian project of post-independence nation-building has been the institutionalization of fundamental values such as mutual understanding, tolerance and acceptance among our various communities.

3. As a consequence of colonial policies, Malaysia continues to grapple with uneven development manifested among others, in the geographical and demographic distribution of its diverse population. However, through the adoption of an inclusive approach, minority communities including the indigenous communities in Malaysia enjoy full and meaningful participation not only in the public, political sphere but also in the private, economic sphere.

Madam Chair,

4. My delegation could in principle support the draft outcome document of the forum, given that its recommendations also speak to the universalisation of the earlier mentioned values of understanding, tolerance and acceptance. That said, I wish to iterate that while recognizing the need to build capacity of stakeholders, such efforts should not be at the expense of marginalizing the role of Governments. Indeed, in Malaysia's experience, the Government had and continues to play a key role in facilitating the participation of all stakeholders in the political process, including through capacity-building and education. My delegation is of the view that Government should be seen as a partner rather than as an adversary.

5. Finally, while acknowledging the importance of the promotion and protection of the civil and political rights of minorities, my delegation would emphasise the importance of pursuing a balanced approach which equally emphasises economic, social and cultural rights.

I thank you, Madam Chair.

GENEVA

13 November 2009