



MALAYSIA

Permanent Mission to the United Nations, New York

**NATIONAL STATEMENT
BY THE HONOURABLE MR. ANWAR IBRAHIM
PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA**

**AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF
THE 78TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, 22 SEPTEMBER 2023**

Assalamualaikum wbt. & Salam Malaysia Madani

Izinkan saya, bagi pihak negara dan rakyat Malaysia mengemukakan pandangan ke arah keamanan dan kesejahteraan sempena Perhimpunan Agung Pertubuhan Bangsa-Bangsa Bersatu di New York, September 2023.

Mr. President,

1. When this august assembly was established almost 80 years ago, the world was still reeling from the horrors of a catastrophic bloodletting that our nations resolved should never be repeated. A decision – profound in wisdom, magnanimous in intent and bold in ambition – was made so that the General Assembly would become the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.
2. A decision that manifested no less than the very strength and courage of our convictions. By giving equal voice to the sovereign nations of the world, the founders of the United Nations pursued a vision of a more democratic world, predicated on the dictates of equity and justice. This was a vision that consigned to the past the predations of the strong over the weak, of the rich and powerful over the poor, and the marginalised, and of the big powers over the rest. That vision, in my opinion, has been utterly shattered to pieces.
3. Today, we find that the major powers and those that aspire to greater international status are increasingly casting the United Nations aside for smaller, supposedly more efficacious platforms. As the powers that continue to pay lip service to the imperative of multilateralism, we see the emergence of minilateralism instead, effectively becoming fragmented configurations of power.

Mr. President,

Overall state of world affairs

4. We are living in a deeply polarized world. We are seeing major power rivalry unfolding with consequences that would negatively impact nations, especially the smaller ones, in the regions of conflict. The upshot is that we are confronted with a geopolitical and geostrategic dilemma. While the major powers continue to assure that a binary choice is not being imposed, the reality for many is that it is the only choice offered. Unchecked, this will ultimately lead once again to a world where the masses are unrepresented, where the few rule over the many, and the many resent the few.

5. The lofty ideals and principles enshrined in the UN Charter call upon nations to resolve their disputes through peaceful means, and refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and sovereignty or political independence of any state.

Ukraine

6. We condemn unequivocally the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This conflict in Ukraine, for example, underscores the imperative to make peace and settle differences amicably through negotiations. Nevertheless, time is not on our side, and owing to the protracted failure to deal with this Russian- Ukraine crisis, I urge for a concerted multilateral effort led by the UN to resolve this.

7. We cannot choose our neighbours, but we can choose to live in peace with them. And peace cannot happen without the cessation of hostilities by all parties. It is imperative for all parties to return to dialogue and resolve their differences through the negotiation table.

8. The extent of the Ukraine conflict has radiated throughout the world as food prices have skyrocketed leading to shortages and hunger, further malnutrition, and despair. As in other conflicts elsewhere be it in the Middle East or Southeast Asia, forced migrations take place, piling on the problems of refugees and statelessness.

Mr. President,

The Occupied Palestinian Territory

9. In the Middle East, the politics of dispossession continues with a vengeance with more illegal settlements being built, stripping Palestinians of land that rightfully belongs to them. This constitutes a gross violation of international law. It also poses an insurmountable obstacle to a two-state solution, not to mention the continued killings.

10. There is also flagrant hypocrisy in dealing with the issue of Palestine. The international community must speak up against the atrocities committed towards the Palestinians even as they so vehemently speak out against human rights violations, injustice and abusive regimes.

Afghanistan

11. On Afghanistan, Malaysia remains deeply concerned with the dire humanitarian situation in the country. This is especially so given that the country is grappling with its third consecutive year of drought and a devastating locust infestation that severely undermined wheat harvests.

12. On our part, Malaysia is committed to continue its existing people-to-people relations with Afghanistan, including through the provision of humanitarian aid.

13. However, we remain resolute and firm in our call on the authority of Afghanistan to reverse their exclusionary and discriminatory policies against women and girls. Denying their right to go to school is a violation of the teachings of Islam, not to mention the United Nations Charter and the multilateral framework of human rights. They are also profoundly detrimental to the future of Afghanistan.

Mr. President,

Myanmar, ASEAN and the Asia Pacific

14. We are deeply horrified by the continued post- coup violence and instability in Myanmar. This is currently among Southeast Asia's biggest strategic and humanitarian challenges in recent years. The barbarism and depravity inflicted upon the people of Myanmar is indefensible, and goes against the values and principles shared by the peoples in the region and globally.

15. The support of the international community, including the United Nations, is crucial to urge continuously and maintain the necessary pressure on the military authorities to reverse their course. In as much as the principle of ASEAN centrality dictates that the continued atrocities must end, Malaysia calls on Myanmar to immediately implement the ASEAN five-point consensus towards achieving peace and stability in the country.

16. ASEAN is navigating the rivalry between major powers in the Asia Pacific. Malaysia believes that any strategy undertaken should neither start nor exacerbate a race for dominance. Instead, such strategies should contribute to peace and stability, security and prosperity in the region.

Mr. President,

Climate Crises

17. Scientists have confirmed that the world has just experienced its hottest summer in history. We have heard the Secretary-General Guterres gravely declare that, "Climate breakdown has begun." Even Malaysia is seeing an increase in adverse impacts of climate change, increasing temperature, rising sea levels, intensified monsoons, and

erratic weather patterns disrupting livelihoods and degrading local ecosystems. As such, we have not a moment to lose.

18. Malaysia is doing its part by developing low- carbon and renewable energy roadmaps to implement mitigating and adaptation strategies. The newly launched National Energy Transition Roadmap should aid us in achieving our NDCs, as well as lighting the path towards our net zero aspirations.

19. Discussions on climate change in the absence of equity, justice, and the necessary means to assist and empower countries to undertake greater climate action is an exercise in futility.

20. We also urge the developed countries to fulfil their commitment of mobilising USD100 billion a year to support climate ambition endeavours of developing countries while recognising that trillions of dollars per annum will be needed in the near future.

Mr. President,

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

21. The 2023 SDG report has confirmed that we are falling behind, with nearly a third of the targets either at the state of inertia or worse, regressing.

22. The global economy is also projected to continue to be weighed down by geopolitical uncertainties, supply chain disruptions, increase in commodity prices, as well as challenging financial conditions. This has widened the gap between economic growth and income, leading to a continuous disparity. As the growth in incomes fail to match economic growth, households became burdened with debt. We now have the super-rich living side by side with the ultra-poor.

23. The contrast lies starkly in the things that matter: food on the table, shelter, access to quality education, health care.

24. These factors cry out for drastic, systemic reform, a total reset of the global institutions that impact our lives. Or else we will continue to face widening inequality setting apart nations and peoples.

Mr. President,

Islamophobia

25. We are concerned over the emergence of a “new form of racism” characterised by xenophobia, negative profiling and stereotyping of Muslims. This is manifested in an alarming trend of hatred, intolerance, and acts of violence against Muslims and their sanctities. We are appalled by the legitimisation of these acts under the feeble defence of human rights. Quran burnings are nothing but a clear Islamophobic act intended to

incite hatred. Inaction in the face of such blatant provocation to a religion is simply irresponsible and sends a dangerous message to humanity.

26. We must embody the values of acceptance, tolerance and mutual respect. We must promote inter-cultural, inter-civilisation, and inter-religious understanding and cooperation. We must unite our faiths in common cause to promote understanding and goodwill among our peoples, and strengthen peace and harmony among nations.

Mr. President,

27. These are indeed tall orders but that is the very reason we are here. I truly believe that no challenge, however formidable, is insurmountable if we secure the collective commitment of this global community, the member states of this august Institution. What we need is trust and the conviction to make the world a better place, the will to work together on a platform of consensus and solidarity.

Malaysia Madani

28. Early this year, I introduced “Malaysia MADANI” - a vision built on the pillars of core values that we believe are indispensable in any harmonious, thriving, and peaceful society – Compassion, Respect, Trust, Innovation, Prosperity, and Sustainability. These basic principles and moral values also apply in the context of our relations with other countries.

29. Whether it is G7, or G20 or G77, or APEC, or the world’s largest FTA, there is no denying that multilateral collaboration is the *sine qua non* for any effective and sustainable resolution to the crises that the world is beset with. In this regard, it bears stressing that Malaysia’s commitment to the UN and the multilateral system is borne out of the strong conviction that all countries, no matter how big or small, rich or poor, strong or weak, have a common responsibility towards creating a better world for tomorrow.

30. The world and our future in it is what we envision and construct it to be. Malaysia believes we can achieve this through greater trust and strengthened multilateralism. The United Nations can be the vessel to take us from despondency to a brighter future, from uncertainty to optimism, and from vulnerability to resilience.

Terima Kasih.
