

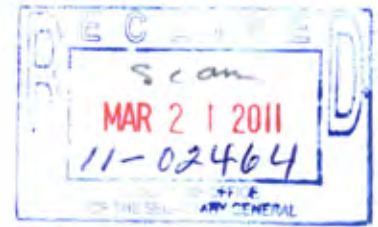
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UNITED NATIONS



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Office of the Resident Coordinator Of The United Nations
System's Operational Activities For Development in Malaysia



31 January 2011

Dear Debbie,

DSG

Greetings from the UN Country Team in Malaysia!

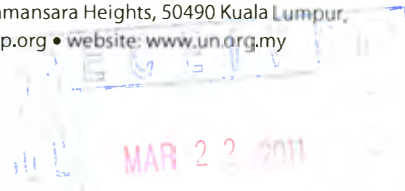
The UNCT in Malaysia is pleased to report on its accomplishments in 2010 which were considerable. The UNCT met six times, including for a two-day retreat. 2010 has been a successful year with significantly increased financial contributions from individual UN agencies who have contributed to the successful achievement of the activities outlined in the 2010 UNCT Workplan through which the UNCT aligned its work with some of the most important national development priorities, consistent with our modest resources and the comparative advantages of each UN agency.

On 25 February 2010, the World Food Program (WFP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Malaysia for the establishment of a UN Humanitarian Response Depot for the Asia-Pacific Region to be located in Subang. As a result, WFP was invited to become a UNCT member. It formally joined the UNCT in September 2010. UNIDO, a non-resident agency, through its Bangkok regional office requested UNCT membership. The UNCT agreed, subject to its fulfillment of certain criteria. While it has agreed to those criteria in principle, we await implementation and a final decision in early 2011.

Country Situation Analysis

Political stability in Malaysia came under moderate threat following the March 2008 general election, as the Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition, which is led and heavily influenced by its largest component party, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), faces greater challenges to its grip on power. The March 2008 general election revealed that UMNO could no longer count on the strong support of the majority of Malays. The Government also realized that there is a need to address the wide range of challenges the country faces for the near and medium term. Indeed, it is fair to say that Malaysia is at simultaneous, multiple crossroads: economic, political and socio-cultural.

On the economic front, despite having a well regulated financial sector, Malaysia's economy remains one of the most vulnerable in Southeast Asia to the continuing impact of the global financial and economic crisis. Malaysian GDP growth, quarter on quarter, slowed in the second half of 2010 while its exports also grew at a much slower pace in 2010 than many economists had forecasted. UNCTAD's World Investment Report 2010, reported that FDI to Malaysia in 2009 fell 81% to US\$1.4 billion from US\$7.3 billion in 2008, the worst performance in the region. Malaysian FDI, however, recovered significantly in 2010, to reach US\$7 billion. The national budget for 2011, while having positive aspects, is widely believed to have failed the economic transformation test since it does not convincingly or seriously seek to address key structural and systemic challenges facing the country. Undertaking critical structural reform measures appear to have been postponed till at least after the next General Election which is expected to take place either in 2011 or 2012, well before they are due (a General Election need not be called before March 2013).



In this context and in order to identify its most appropriate role in the medium-term, I have commissioned, with UNCT agreement, a report entitled "*Malaysia: Possible Scenarios for the Medium Term 2011-2015*". The report will be completed in February 2011 and will serve as the basis for future strategic planning by the UNCT at the UNCT Retreat in 2011 and beyond.

Progress in UN Reform and Strengthened Coordination

Based on discussions at its March 2010 retreat, the UNCT in Malaysia agreed on a coherent strategic workplan with substantive joint programmes that are aligned with national priorities. The plan responds to many of the Government's high priority areas as outlined in the 10th Malaysia Plan and the Government and Economic Transformation programmes. The UNCT was successful in securing significant financial contributions from individual resident UN agencies, non-resident UN agencies (UNAIDS, OHCHR), as well as donor countries (Embassy of the Netherlands in Malaysia) for implementing important parts of the 2010 Workplan.

MDGs and beyond – The UNCT successfully coordinated and completed the MDG Study at a disaggregated level in Malaysia in cooperation with the Government. The updated national MDG report analyzes MDG attainment in Malaysia, at both an aggregate and disaggregated level, and an earlier draft was used as a significant substantive input for the 10th Malaysia Plan (2011-2015) which was announced in June 2010. The report is undergoing editing and is expected to be finalized, printed and launched in early 2011.

Gender - The UNCT through the work of the Gender Theme Group continued its gender related advocacy efforts with various stakeholders in order to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. There was enhanced advocacy and action aimed at removing the country's reservations to CEDAW which will help to fast track gender equality in Malaysia. Partly as a result, on 19 July 2010, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development announced Malaysia's removal of reservations to Articles 5(a), 7(b) and 16(2) of CEDAW. The Gender Theme Group also conducted several advocacy activities and engaged with relevant government agencies, CSOs, and parliamentarians to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. This has helped build the capacities of national partners in the areas of gender mainstreaming, gender responsive budgeting, and issues related to violence against women.

The Embassy of the Netherlands in Malaysia provided financial support for the organization of two workshops on CEDAW. These were aimed at the media and youth. A roundtable meeting was also organized with various stakeholders to discuss a joint strategy in 2011 which would help to promote the mainstreaming of the CEDAW into national policies and advocate for the removal of the remaining reservations to it.

Human Rights and Development - In 2010, the Human Rights and Development Theme Group worked in close partnership with the national human rights institution (SUHAKAM) and human rights NGOs in support of a human rights based agenda which included strengthening the capacity of the national human rights institution. The UNCT had regular meetings with the new Board of Commissioners of SUHAKAM. The Theme Group also initiated several activities such as: the preparation of a *UDHR publication* in collaboration with SUHAKAM, highlighting human rights issues in Malaysia; completion of a preliminary mapping exercise on human rights CSOs in Malaysia; and the organization of a multi-stakeholders dialogue on Human Rights Day 2010 to discuss various national human rights concerns in Malaysia.

The Theme Group and the UN Resident Coordinator's office also provided substantive and logistical support to the mission of the UN Human Rights Council's Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to Malaysia between 7-18 June 2010. The objective of the visit was to assess the situation of arbitrary detention in Malaysia, and to make appropriate recommendations to the Government and the UN's Human Rights Council. The Working Group's report is due to be tabled for discussion at the Human Rights Council's March 2011 meeting.

Other Coordination Efforts – The newly constituted and renamed UNCT Communications Group has resulted in greater collaboration and coherence on the UN's main messages in Malaysia. It has also resulted in greater media related support to major UNCT events and the activities of the three Theme groups, which, together, have increased both the visibility of and awareness about the UN's work in Malaysia.

The UNCT successfully provided support for the organization and coordination of the 2nd *Global Model UN Conference* in Kuala Lumpur between 14-18 August 2010. The conference was jointly hosted by the Government of Malaysia through the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the United Nations' Department of Public Information (DPI). The theme of the 2010 conference was "*Towards an Alliance of Civilizations: Bridging Cultures to achieve Peace and Development*". It simulated a General Assembly Summit on intercultural dialogue and was attended by approximately 400 youth aged between 18 and 24 years from more than 50 countries.

To support national efforts to promote inclusive inter-faith dialogue, the UNCT sponsored 20 local students to attend the *International Consultation on "Faith, Shared Wisdom and International Law"* (3-7 Oct. 2010) to share and learn from experiences on inter-faith work in Malaysia and other parts of the world.

The UNCT celebrated *UN Day 2010* in late October. It reinstated the UN Person/UN Organization 2010 award to acknowledge the work of an individual/organization in Malaysia that is seen as upholding the ideals of the UN in an exemplary manner. *Datin Paduka Marina Mathathir* was the recipient of the 2010 award. She was recognized for her work and contributions to gender equality and women's rights, particularly Muslim women's rights, and for being a strong advocate for HIV and AIDS related issues in Malaysia and internationally over a long period of time.

Coordination Efforts on HIV and AIDS

The UN HIV/AIDS Theme Group worked in close partnership with the Ministry of Health, the Malaysian AIDS Council, UNAIDS, other Government agencies, international organizations and Malaysian CSOs, to develop and finalize the ***National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS (2011-2015)***, and provided technical support for the development of the country proposal for Round 10 of the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Malaysia's country proposal was successful and was approved in December 2010. The amount approved is USD 4.67 million for the first 2 years. The Theme Group also provided technical support for the development of the 2010 UNGASS Country Progress Report and reviewed national progress under the activities of the National Strategic Plan on HIV and AIDS for 2006 - 2010.

Activities under the 2010 UNCT workplan for HIV and AIDS have strengthened the capacity of civil society organizations in HIV programme development and management, monitoring and evaluation. They also included support for various HIV related forums/workshops, (eg. InternationalAIDS Memorial Day; Seksualiti Merdeka 2010; Forum on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for the Transgender Community). In conjunction with World AIDS Day 2010, a national multi-stakeholders consultation was also organized to provide a platform for sharing the latest

developments and data on HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, and to commemorate more than two decades of AIDS activism in Malaysia. The Theme Group also supported a one-day seminar as part of the national level World AIDS Day programme with the theme ***“Responding to the challenge of HIV in Kelantan”***, since the state of Kelantan currently has the largest number of reported HIV cases among the 13 states in Malaysia. In addition, The Theme Group successfully completed monitoring the implementation of three projects using the UNAIDS Programme Acceleration Fund (PAF).

Security

In 2010, the UNCT under the leadership of the DO and SMT continued to maintain extreme vigilance on all security related matters affecting approximately 700 UN staff in Malaysia. The MOSS, MORSS, and Security Risk Assessment for UN staff and premises in Malaysia were also updated and approved by the SMT.

HACT Implementation

The UNCT continued its efforts to ensure HACT compliance in Malaysia in 2010. Micro Assessments were conducted on selected implementing partners by an independent Consultant and completed in September 2010. An Assurance and Audit Plan has also been developed and finalized with Implementing Partners.

Moving Ahead in 2011

The UNCT Workplan for 2011 is a natural progression from the considerable progress achieved in 2010. It is based on a substantive and coherent policy framework which responds to national development priorities, especially the 10th Malaysia Plan. It will also emphasize improving spatial and ethnic disparities in development outcomes and focus on human rights and development issues affecting indigenous peoples, women, migrants, refugees, and people living with HIV and AIDS.

The policy implications of the National MDG Study are an important contribution to the Government and should enable it to better assess the progress made on the MDG's at both aggregate and disaggregated levels. It should also contribute to accelerated progress towards full MDG achievement as soon as possible. The report should also enable implementation action, including by the relevant UN agencies, to address the gaps which have been identified at both national and sub-national levels. The recommendations from the report *“Malaysia: Possible Scenarios for the Medium Term 2011-2015”* will serve as the basis for medium-term strategic planning by the UNCT, and will assist it in identifying priority areas for UN support for the country in the medium-term.

The UNCT, through the Theme Group on HIV/AIDS will also continue to scale-up its HIV/AIDS initiatives and formulate more coherent strategies to support the Government and other stakeholders in the implementation of its National Strategic Plan for HIV and AIDS (2011-2015). In doing so, it will both prioritize support for scaling-up high-impact prevention programmes for key populations at risk through sexual transmission and provide technical support for capacity building of CSOs, sex workers and transgender advocacy networks in HIV programme development and management. The UNCT will also provide technical support to ensure Malaysia's successful finalization and implementation of the country proposal for Round 10 of the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

The UNCT will also continue to advance initiatives related to a rights-based approach to development through the Theme Group on Human Rights and Development. This will include stepping-up our advocacy efforts aimed at the Malaysian Government's ratification and signing of the many core UN human rights conventions or treaties that it has yet to support. Gender related issues will continue to be an important cross-cutting dimension in all our activities. The UNCT in Malaysia will also continue to work with national institutions to strengthen and advocate the promotion of gender equality and empowerment in the economic, social and political realm, and formulate strategies and joint action with national partners to promote the mainstreaming of CEDAW into national policies and to persuade the Government to reduce the country's remaining reservations to CEDAW.

In order to achieve all of this, the UNCT will continue to build alliances and maintain close relations with key Government stakeholders and civil society organisations, as well as with the academia, private sector, and other **regional** and international organizations. Such a strategy should also enable us to consistently and continuously advocate UN values and principles and raise the overall public profile of a coherent UN in Malaysia.

The UN Country Team in Malaysia would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the UN Development Group for the Asia-Pacific Region, as well as UN DOCO and its management and staff for their continued support for the RC Unit and UNCT in Malaysia. We look forward to receiving even greater support and engaging in greater collaboration with your office in 2011 and beyond.

With best regards,



Kamal Malhotra
UN Resident Coordinator

Ms. Deborah Landey, Director, UN DOCO

✓ cc: Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General, United Nations