

**MALAYSIA'S NATIONAL STATEMENT
AT THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
TO COMMEMORATE THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE UNITED NATIONS
21 SEPTEMBER 2020**

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished Representatives,

It gives me great pleasure to address this high-level meeting to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations.

Allow me to first congratulate you Mr. President, on your election as the President of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. I wish you all the very best and a fruitful presidency. I wish to also extend our appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, for his commitment and able leadership during a challenging 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly due to COVID-19.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Earlier this year, the United Nations launched the UN75 initiative, inviting people around the world to share their aspirations, hopes and priorities for the future. Nearly 40,000 people responded to the UN75 survey within the first 3 months of its launching. While the interpretation of the findings may differ according to respective national circumstances, the message and direction that our people have shared are clear.

This is not to say that the international community has not paid attention to those issues. On the contrary, we have worked especially hard on them over the years. The Paris Agreement, for example, was a milestone achieved by nations in combating climate change – a culmination of international efforts that began at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. We also have a host of instruments and conventions on human rights most of which took many years to formulate. Such instruments govern and regulate our actions in order to allow all of us to progress. Unfortunately, in recent years we have seen certain countries disregarded such agreements. We hope that this stops. We must take heed of what our people want and hope for.

The UN75 survey came at a time when the world was just beginning to witness the spread of this deadly Coronavirus, which is why I am delivering my speech in Malaysia. It has taken so many lives and has exposed the true capacity and effectiveness of our healthcare systems. The socio-economic impact has been just as severe. On this, we must ensure that once a vaccine is found, it must be accessible to all nations and peoples. There should not be any discrimination

whatsoever. We must remember that since COVID-19 does not discriminate, our response should not too.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The United Nations remains the only global institution that all of us can claim ownership. While we acknowledge that the Organisation has done quite well in many areas in its 75 years of existence, especially in promoting social and economic development, we need to be honest and recognise that the UN has somewhat failed to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”. Many people are still suffering due to conflicts, which remain unresolved in various parts of the world. The United Nations must improve in this aspect. To do so, we believe that the organisation must be reformed.

The United Nations is needed now more than ever. However, the organisation needs to be better equipped – not just with political latitude, but with the continued support of its Member States to respond to some of the most glaring problems the world is facing.

Seventy-five years since its existence, the time is right for the United Nations to take stock of its achievements; improve on its weaknesses and remove all obstacles that prevent its continued progress. Malaysia welcomes the adoption of the Declaration for the Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations today. We sincerely believe that today’s Commemoration presents a golden opportunity for the international community to do better. Let us not miss this opportunity. Let us move forward together in building the future we want and the United Nations we need.

With this, I thank you.

TAN SRI DATO' MUHYIDDIN MOHD YASSIN
PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA