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MALAYSIA

Statement by

The Hon Dato Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi

Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia

at

The World Summit on Sustainable Development

2 September 2002,

Johannesburg,

The Republic of South Africa

Mr. President,

1. We are confident that under your able leadership, we will have a very successful meeting. I would like to thank the Government and the people of the Republic of South Africa and the City of Johannesburg, for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting, and the hospitality accorded to my delegation.

Mr. President,

2. The situation in the world today is markedly different from that in 1992 when the Earth Summit was held in Rio. Globalisation has dramatically changed the world's landscape. Exponents of globalisation chant mantras that market forces and deregulation will bring wealth and social progress. Sadly, the benefits that are supposed to trickle down to the poorest are scant and lacking.

3. The digital revolution is profoundly transforming our lives. It will fuel the engine for future economic growth. The knowledge economy and e-commerce have become new sources for future wealth. Unfortunately, developing countries that lack technological capabilities, infrastructure and adequate knowledge will not benefit from this revolution. A digital divide has been created, a divide that will further widen the gap between the developing and developed countries. If the problem is not addressed, it will be the source of future poverty in developing countries.

4. Global financial markets have become more integrated, but real economic growth has not matched expectations. Not only has global economic growth slowed, it has also become prone to volatility that has caused serious crises.

5. The efforts of developing countries to attain economic development need to be supported by the creation of a conducive international economic environment. Expectations for developing countries to build capacity are wholly unrealistic, unless the international financial architecture accords adequate protection against volatility and external shocks.

Mr. President,

6. It is disappointing to realise that ten years after Rio, the international community has failed to promote human development and reverse environmental degradation. The blame lies in insufficient resources, the lack of responsibility and political will, and the uncoordinated piecemeal approaches to achieve sustainable development.

7. To overcome these weaknesses, Malaysia believes that it is necessary to strengthen the principle of multilateralism. This is particularly true in a world increasingly defined by interdependence and interconnectivity. International agreements must be negotiated and adopted on the basis of equality, precluding unilateral action by any one State or group of States.

8. Each voice at the table must be effectively heard. Therefore, we must acknowledge that there are differences in the levels of development and capacity. In this regard, it is imperative that the principle of common but differentiated responsibility is reaffirmed and urgently translated into action. It must be integrated into all three pillars – economic development, social development and environmental protection. It is disheartening that the principle has been breached more often than adhered to.

must bridge the implementation gap by putting in place plans for concrete action. Sustainable development is ultimately a moral, political and humanitarian imperative for the international community, for all of us, without exception. It is the best insurance policy for peace and security and for the prosperity of both the North and the South. It is the best policy to ensure the safety of our one and only planet. It is our collective responsibility to take decisive action at this Summit. We must together succeed. Failure will be detrimental to us all ultimately.

Thank you.