Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1. On behalf of my delegation, I wish to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of the Ministerial Segment of the Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference. I am confident that under your able leadership, the deliberations of this meeting will be most fruitful.

2. Tremendous changes have taken place in the socio-economic and demographic landscape of many Asian and Pacific countries since the adoption of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD-PoA) in 1994. These changes create an urgent need for more population-responsive policies and programmes.

**Broad Achievements**

3. Since the 1994 ICPD, Malaysia has taken the necessary steps to integrate population and environmental concerns in the development and implementation of our 5-year developmental plans, better known as
Malaysia Plans. With regard to ICPD goals and objectives, Malaysia has conducted an assessment of the implementation of ICPD-PoA in 2005. The non-governmental organisations (NGOs), in particular the Federation of Reproductive Health Associations Malaysia, have also conducted a number of reviews, and these include the ICPD+5 in 1999, the ICPD Ten Years On in 2005 and the ICPD+15 in 2009.

4. I am pleased to report that Malaysia has achieved the goals set in the ICPD-PoA in the areas of poverty reduction, education, gender equality, health and environmental sustainability.

Mr. Chairman,

**Poverty Reduction and Education**

5. Poverty eradication programmes have been highly effective in reducing the incidence of poverty from 8.7 percent in 1994 to 1.7 percent in 2012. With regard to education, the enrolment rate at primary schools increased from 98.6 percent in 1993 to 98.7 percent in 2011. As for secondary schools, the enrolment rate increased from 70.86 percent in 1993 to 81.91 percent in 2011.

**Gender Equality**

6. The Government of Malaysia has given special attention to education for women. This is evident in the enrolment of women doing first degrees in public universities which has been consistently above 62 percent for the period of 2009-2011. Latest, it is my pleasure to also inform you that
28,280 or 68.02 percent of 41,573 new student intake for first degrees for the 2013/2014 academic year in public universities comprises women.

7. With the increasing level of education among women, the participation rate of women in the labour force has increased from 44.7 percent in 1995 to 49.5 percent 2012. During the same period, the number of working women has also increased from 2.6 million to 4.6 million. In the professional field, the percentage of women professionals out of the total number of working women too has increased from 7.5 percent in 2005 to 14.8 percent in 2012.

8. With better educated women entering the workforce and holding key positions in the public and private sectors, Malaysia is now moving towards achieving the policy of at least 30 percent women in decision making positions.

**Health: Mortality Rates and Life Expectancy**

9. Owing to its excellent health system, Malaysia has one of the lowest mortality rates among developing countries, which is 4.7 deaths per thousand population in 2011. The maternal mortality ratio in 1997 was 44 maternal deaths per hundred thousand live births and the rate fell substantially to reach 30 maternal deaths per hundred thousand live births by 2000 and further declined to 26 deaths per hundred thousand live births in 2011 and 2012. The life expectancy at birth in the year 2010 was 72 years for males and 77 for females compared with 70 years for males and 75 for females in 2000.
Health: Reproductive Health

10. In combating HIV and AIDS, the Government of Malaysia has implemented the Harm Reduction Programme incepted in 2006 to curtail new HIV infection among people who inject drugs. As a result, the number of reported HIV cases has declined steadily. However, while the epidemic was initially dominated by transmission through drugs users, there has been a rise in HIV cases attributed to heterosexual intercourse and this phenomenon is prevalent among the younger demographic. To address new challenges, Malaysia formulated the National Strategic Plan (NSP) on HIV and AIDS 2011-2015. The NSP incorporates a multi-sectoral strategy that takes into account young people’s vulnerability and provides the delivery of first line treatment free for all patients at all government hospitals and clinics.

11. With regard to reproductive cancers which are still a concern in Malaysia, I am pleased to highlight that Malaysia has introduced a national human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccination programme. Under this programme, girls aged 13 years old who are in schools are vaccinated to protect them from cervical cancer. For girls aged 18 years old who missed the vaccination, a programme for this ‘catch-up’ group is implemented by the National Population and Family Development Board. Since its inception in July 2012 up to June 2013, 100,294 girls in the ‘catch-up’ group have benefitted from this initiative.
Mr. Chairman,

Challenges and Issues

Fertility Decline and Population Ageing

12. The total fertility rate in Malaysia has been declining steadily from 4.0 in the early 1980s to a replacement level fertility of 2.1 in 2011. Fertility decline and increase in life expectancy have resulted in significant age structural shift and population ageing. Our challenge now is to slow down the fertility decline and to address emerging issues concerning the elderly in Malaysia. With regard to these issues, the Government of Malaysia has formulated the National Policy for Older Persons in 1995 as well as its Plan of Action in 1998. Subsequently, in 2011, the new National Policy and Plan of Action for Older Persons were approved. The policy and plan of action encompasses development and reintegration of older persons in the society, in order to instil a high sense of self-worth and dignity.

Reproductive Health Including Adolescent Reproductive Health

13. The Government of Malaysia has put in place various approaches to address issues related to reproductive health matters of adolescents. The introduction of the National Policy on Reproductive Health and Social Education and its Action Plan in November 2009 has paved the way for increased access to reproductive health education, information and services for adolescents and youth, as well as responsible behaviours. A major milestone under this policy is the integration of Reproductive Health and Social Education into the National Service Training curriculum in 2011 which benefits around 100,000 school leavers each year.
14. In addition, the National Adolescent Health Policy (2001) and the National Adolescent Health Plan of Action (2006-2020) were formulated to empower adolescents (aged 10–19 years) with the appropriate knowledge and assertive skills to enable them to practise healthy behaviour and lifestyle.

15. To improve access to reproductive health information and services for youths, the government established youth-friendly centres known as Kafe@TEEN in 2005. Its concept and strategies have proven to be viable and acceptable, and with the assistance from the UNFPA, an up-scaling exercise was carried out from 2008 to 2012. Currently, there are 12 Kafe@TEEN centres nationwide, with 743,762 youth participation from November 2006 until May 2013. At the same time, mobile Kafe@TEEN was also established as an outreach programme that reaches out to more than 30,000 young people every year.

Mr. Chairman,

**Family Development**

16. In view of the changes in the Malaysian family structure and needs, the National Family Policy (NFP) was launched in 2011. This policy seeks to prioritise family perspective in all socio-economic development efforts. The implementation of this policy and its plan of action are spearheaded by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development.

17. Recognising that the family is the bedrock of society, the 1Malaysia Family First (1MF1st) movement was launched in 2012 under the National Blue Ocean Strategy (NBOS) initiatives and the National Family Policy. In
addition, the government, in 2012, declared November as the National Family Month. The government has also declared that any private company that organises family activities for their employees during the National Family Month will be given tax exemption for the expenditure.

18. The government has expanded the family and marriage counselling services to the masses through government activity centres such as 1Malaysia Family Centres, Urban Transformation Centres and Rural Transformation Centres. These services include the provision of family counselling to parolees and their families at five rehabilitation centres.

**Migration**

19. Migration has an impact on the economy, education, health, security, community and family. Due to its economic prosperity and rapid economic growth over the decades, Malaysia has become one of the major destinations for citizens of other countries. As such, policies and legislation have been put in place to address issues pertaining to international migrants. Measures taken include:

- migration policies that use health as a primary criterion for permitting migrants entry and stay for employment; and
- the enforcement of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007.
Mr. Chairman

20. Malaysia recognizes the new challenges coming from emerging issues confronting the region such as sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, international migration, and climate change. These issues must be addressed in a manner that will take into account the values and ethics that we, in this hold dear. I, therefore, hope that the declaration that we will adopt tomorrow will clearly reflect the respect for the various religions, ethical values and cultural background of the people in this region.

21. Finally, I wish to emphasise that Malaysia will give its full support in all discussions and deliberations of this Ministerial Segment of the Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference and I look forward to a successful outcome of this conference.

Thank you.

Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
Malaysia
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