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STATEMENT BY
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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT THE FIFTH OPEN ENDED WORKING GROUP ON AGEING
NEW YORK, 30 JULY 2014

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me at the outset, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you on your election as the Chair of the Fifth Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing. We are convinced that under your able stewardship, you will be able to steer our deliberations in an effective manner.

Mr. Chairman,

2. In all spheres of life across the globe, international instruments have been established on a wide ranging of issues to protect and promote the interests, rights and needs of millions of people. But as we have observed within the existing international framework on the human rights of older persons, there are, unfortunately, gaps which require bridging. Against this backdrop, on 20 December 2012, Malaysia voted in favour of Resolution A/67/139 that calls for a comprehensive and integral international legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons. We believe an international instrument would clearly assert the rights of older persons.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The world has witnessed tremendous human development over the last three decades resulting in an increased life expectancy. In Malaysia's case, the average life expectancy increased from 68 years old in 1980 to 75 years old in 2012. This longer life expectancy contributed to a steady rise in its older persons from 6.3% in 2000 to 8.2% out of the total population in 2012 (2.4 million out of 29.83 million). It is estimated that the number of older persons will be 5.5 million when Malaysia attains its developed country status in 2020 and by 2030, older persons are expected to constitute 15% of the total population.

4. Malaysia now is relatively a young country with a young population. But we realize and recognize the necessity to be prepared and address increasing challenges

and needs of the senior citizens. This has led to the introduction of the National Policy and Plan of Action for Older Persons in 1995 and subsequently, responding to the trends of ageing population, a new Policy for Older Persons was approved by the Government in 2011. The national policy is complimented by a National Health Policy for Older Persons first introduced in 1997 and later reviewed in 2008. These policies were aimed to empower individuals, families and communities to provide friendly services to the older persons, ensure an enabling and supportive environment for the well-being of the older persons, and for a more effective, coordinated and comprehensive health care.

5. Notwithstanding the national policies established and implemented, we need to be cognizant of the fact that more needs to be done to protect the rights of the older persons. Collectively, we owe it to our elders, we owe it to our children and we owe it to ourselves to do more in advancing the interest of older persons.

Mr. Chairman,

6. Malaysia is pleased that over the next three days, we will further deliberate on the rights and care of our elders as well as the mechanisms to strengthen the rights of older persons through the enhanced implementation of the Madrid Implementation Plan of Action on Ageing. Malaysia wishes to reiterate its full commitment to address the increasing challenges of ageing population and will participate actively in the discussion of the working group.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.