

12

**COUNTRY STATEMENT BY
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MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS OF MALAYSIA
AT THE HIGH-LEVEL EVENT ON STATELESSNESS
7 OCTOBER 2019
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Madam Deputy Secretary-General,
High Commissioner Filippo Grandi,

1. At the outset, I would like to thank His Excellency Antonio Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the invitation to attend the High-Level Event on Statelessness.
2. Malaysia welcomes global efforts to tackle statelessness. Real progresses are being made across regions, some arising from pledges made during the December 2011 Ministerial held to mark the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the 1961 Statelessness Convention. However, much more need to be done. Stateless people normally suffer discrimination, stigmatised and often live in a precarious environment making them susceptible to illegal activities such as human trafficking and extremism. In this context, Malaysia's welcomes UNHCR's on-going efforts and encourages UNHCR to continue to dialogue with and provide technical assistance to States in the efforts to reduce and prevent statelessness.

The Global Action Plan to End Statelessness sets forth practical measures towards this end.

- 3. As for Malaysia, we have taken measures to reduce and prevent statelessness, in accordance with applicable international standards and relevant domestic laws. We believe that our on-going efforts bode well with the Global Action Plans particularly Action 2, 7, 8 and 10. Let me outline some:**
- 4. Malaysia is adopting more transparent procedures to facilitate applications of citizenship and to prevent Malaysian children from becoming stateless. Our revised policies will facilitate adoption process and help to curb baby-selling and smuggling. We are also taking measures to achieve universal birth registration by simplifying procedures and improving access to the process.**
- 5. In fulfilling Malaysia's obligation under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Malaysia had enacted the Child Act 2001. Subsequent amendments to the Child Act in 2016, provides protection and family-based care for every child, regardless of status and citizenship. Every child is entitled to protection and assistance in all circumstances without discrimination.**

6. **Malaysia is also committed to address situations faced by undocumented persons. A task force has been established to look into existing barriers. As a result, 1,641 citizenship applications have been approved recently. This task force will continue its work in the foreseeable future and hopefully we will be able to reduce the number of stateless people further.**
7. **Malaysia acknowledges that some sections of the population are at particular risk of statelessness. This maybe because their living conditions makes it difficult for them to register births or obtain related documents. They include nomadic and border populations. In line with the spirit of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of leaving no one behind, particularly those who are in vulnerable situations, the Government of Malaysia has sanctioned outreach programmes to encourage civil registration especially in rural and remote areas with the aim to facilitate access to social services. The implementation of the MyDaftar programme by the National Registration Department (NRD) has immensely helped those who have been living without documents. A total of 227,481 applications in 8,412 separate outreach programmes were facilitated by the Registration Department from 2012 to 2017. In the first eight months of 2019, 1,066 outreach programmes have been conducted.**
8. **Malaysia underlines that the effective utilisation of ICT can contribute to States' efforts in addressing statelessness. The Government of Malaysia has embarked on serious efforts**

towards digitalisation of civil registration including birth registrations.

9. In conclusion Mr. Chairman, statelessness is a critical problem that requires urgent international attention. Statelessness can negatively impact not only the country concerned but also the entire region. Malaysia has been dealing with this issue for a long time. Although we are not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, we have been receiving and hosting a large number of stateless people from the region especially Myanmar. And the numbers are increasing. As a consequence, we have not only been grappling with financial burden of hosting them, but having to tackle all kind of security risks and social problems.
10. In this regard, the Malaysian government remains committed to working towards strengthening our partnership with relevant parties and the U.N.H.C.R in support of efforts to overcome this problem.

Thank you.