



**STATEMENT BY MALAYSIA
VIRTUAL DONOR CONFERENCE
ON SUSTAINING SUPPORT FOR THE ROHINGYA REFUGEE RESPONSE**

1ST PANEL – PERSPECTIVES FROM COUNTRIES IN THE REGION

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies

At the outset, I would like to thank the organisers for convening this important and timely donor conference. We hope this conference would bring renewed political support, as well as commitments and financial contributions that demonstrates a true sense of burden sharing.

2. The Rohingya have been described as the “most persecuted people in the world.” Rightly so, the situation of the Rohingya today is not much different from the onset of the 2017 Rakhine State crisis. They are still unable to return to Myanmar, their human rights are still not guaranteed, their lives in displacement continue to be in limbo, and accountability on the crimes committed against them is work in progress.

3. To date, Malaysia hosts the largest Rohingya refugee community in Southeast Asia. According to UNHCR figures in August this year, there are almost 180 thousand refugee and asylum-seekers registered in Malaysia, of which 86% are from Myanmar and 57% are Rohingya.

4. Although Malaysia has not acceded to the 1951 U.N. Convention on Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, we have continued to provide support for

refugees in the country. Despite our resources being stretched thin, Malaysia has undertaken our fair share of responsibility in hosting the Rohingya refugees.

5. The Government has taken various measures to safeguard the welfare of the refugees such as on healthcare and education. UNHCR cardholders can seek medical treatment at any Government-run healthcare institutions and are charged half the rate normally charged to non-citizens. We have subsidised as much as USD7million in terms of medical treatment for UNHCR cardholders for the period of 2015 to 2018, and an additional USD1.35million a year on refugees' basic needs. The COVID-19 outbreak brought about additional burden to the Government in ensuring the refugees and migrants, including the Rohingya are safe from this pandemic. Malaysia provided free health screening and medical treatment related to COVID-19 for all foreign nationals regardless of their immigration status.

6. UNHCR cardholders also have access to informal education and skills training through Alternative Learning Centres (ALCs) within their own community schools administered by CSOs. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, took the opportunity to see for themselves the efforts made by Malaysia in this respect, during their visits to Malaysia in April and October 2019 respectively.

7. On humanitarian assistance, Malaysia has contributed USD100 thousand through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) to assist Myanmar with the returning of Rohingya refugees, who until today are not able to return. Malaysia also runs a field hospital in Cox's Bazar Bangladesh since December 2017, at a cost of USD7million during the two years of its operations.

8. Malaysian private sectors are increasingly involved as well by partnering the Government and CSOs. Another significant development was the

establishment of the All Party Parliamentary Group at the end of 2019, a bipartisan group of parliamentarians focussing on improving the management of refugees in the country. A Joint Task Force mechanism is also in place to provide a platform for dialogue and problem solving between the various Government agencies and the UNHCR.

9. Malaysia remains committed to working closely with the UN and other relevant stakeholders to find an urgent, lasting and holistic solution to the Rakhine State crisis, including:

- (i) accountability against the perpetrators;
- (ii) citizenship for the Rohingya; and
- (iii) voluntary, safe and dignified return.

10. The longer the repatriation is delayed, the more desperate the situation will be for the Rohingya. Without a solution to the current crisis, the desperate situation of the Rohingya refugees would lead them to continue being victimised by unscrupulous human smugglers and traffickers. We also call on the international community, particularly State Parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol, to shoulder proportionate burden and responsibility sharing in the management of refugees, including opening their doors for more refugees for resettlement and relocation.

11. A sustainable solution to this crisis requires political support, a human-rights based approach and a commitment to ensuring accountability to achieve a durable and lasting solution.

Thank you.