

**Welcoming Remarks of the Hon. Dato' Seri Syed Hamid Albar,
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia
Launch of "Investing in the Children of the Islamic World" Report
21 September 2005 • New York, NY (Perm. Mission of Malaysia)**

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by extending a warm welcome to all of you to the Permanent Mission of Malaysia in conjunction with the launching of the Report entitled "Investing in the Children of the Islamic World" jointly prepared by OIC, ISESCO and UNICEF. I would like to congratulate those who have put their efforts in preparing this comprehensive Report. Their commitment and action to promote the well being of the children in the Islamic world are commendable. As Chairman of the 10th OIC Summit, Malaysia is very pleased by the follow up actions that have been taken to move the children's agenda forward.

As you are aware, the 10th OIC Summit held in Malaysia in October 2003, adopted a resolution on "Child Care and Protection in the Islamic World", and called upon the ISESCO to organize the First Ministerial Meeting on the Child in collaboration with the OIC General Secretariat and UNICEF.

I am pleased that the Government of Morocco will convene the Ministerial Meeting in Rabat from 7 – 9 November 2005. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the Government of Morocco for hosting this important Inaugural Meeting. Malaysia will be represented by the Minister of Women, Family and Community Development and I hope all the relevant Ministers from the OIC member countries will be participating in the meeting.

Excellencies,

The Meeting is expected to address a broad range of issues relating to children under four themes namely; promoting healthy lives and combating HIV and AIDS, providing quality education, child protection, and resource mobilization. These are undoubtedly, very important areas that are of interest to everybody, not only the OIC member countries as the children of today are our future. Therefore, the hosting of the First Ministerial meeting to deal with these issues on a coordinated basis between OIC and UNICEF is most timely. We have to take care of our children and we cannot absolve ourselves of this responsibility for our failure today will have far reaching repercussions on the future and well being of this world.

I am confident that the meeting will be a success and implementable recommendations will be made to enhance the capacities of the OIC member countries to promote and protect our children and at the same time fulfill our commitments to the various international conventions and agreements. No child should be left behind and we must

contribute to enable them to prepare and improve themselves in today's highly technologically advanced and challenging world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Malaysia views the protection of children, their health and education development and participation in society as important building blocks in the growth of nations, especially among the developing countries. In Malaysia, the Government has put in place various programmes and legislations to provide a conducive and enabling environment sensitive to the needs of the children and to ensure their well being.

The Government of Malaysia has established the National Advisory and Consultative Council for Children, chaired by the Minister of Women, Family and Community Development, to act as National Focal Point for children's welfare and development in Malaysia. The Council is responsible to advise the Government in matters relating to the policy and programmes in line with the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the National Plan of Action on Children.

Following the commitment made during the World Summit on Children in 1990, Malaysia has formulated a National Plan of Action on Children (NPAC) through concerted and coordinated efforts of various government agencies, NGOs, and international organizations particularly, UNICEF and WHO. Presently, we are in the early phase of implementing the Second National Plan of Action for Children, which will encompass plans and programmes for the next fifteen years.

And in line with Malaysia's VISION 2020, the second Action Plan with the theme "Caring for the Children of Malaysia" will focus on areas related to development, protection and participation of children, including those with disabilities. The Plan will help ensure that the present generations of children will grow up to be confident, responsible and caring adults.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to urge all OIC member countries and other relevant international bodies to support the efforts to create an enabling environment by providing adequate resources so as to ensure that the children will enjoy their rights. It is imperative that we work closely together on this important matter and we should place the interests of the children at the center of our work within the OIC Agenda. On that note, I now have the pleasure to launch the Report and pray for the success of the forthcoming Ministerial Meeting on the Child.

Thank you.