Mr. President,

The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) welcomes the comprehensive Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Mr. Olivier De Schutter.

Malaysia is popularly seen as an agriculturally productive Country that is able to generate abundant food supply. In this light, access to food is seldom viewed as a major human rights concern in the Country. However, SUHAKAM is concerned that many fail to realise that other than their availability, the full enjoyment of the right to food is heavily dependent on society’s ability to access those food sources.

Moving forward, SUHAKAM underscores the need for the Malaysian Government to eliminate the persisting pockets of deprivation, so as to ensure that all segments of society have adequate physical and financial access to nutritious food. Urgent priority must therefore be given to vulnerable groups who face the highest risk of being deprived of the right to food, such as indigenous communities, refugees and asylum seekers.

SUHAKAM further shares the Special Rapporteur’s view that serious consideration must be given by policy makers towards ensuring self-sufficiency
for staple food, sustainability of food production as well as social safety nets in the face of possible challenges that may be posed by the increasing volatility of the market and the natural environment.

In the pursuit of achieving a high-income nation status by 2020, policy decisions are often influenced by determinants that seek to attain the highest level of macroeconomic growth, with little regard to human rights. Therefore, a human rights-based approach to development is instrumental to strike the right balance between development and the fulfilment of human rights principles, leading to greater prosperity and quality life throughout the nation.

Finally, SUHAKAM urges the Government to consider positively the Special Rapporteur’s recommendations to guarantee the full realisation of the right to food in Malaysia.

Thank you Mr. President.