

12th Melaka International Youth Dialogue

“Health, It’s My Right!”

Closing Ceremony Speech by President of WAY

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today we bring an end to the 12th Melaka International Youth Dialogue. We have once again had a purposeful dialogue as ministers, delegates and participants from all over the world.

This has been a joint undertaking and a motivating experience where different sectors were involved in a demonstration that solutions for the health problems require the concurrence of other sectors, in many instances more important. It is in this context, important to highlight that this dialogue is co-organised by the Melaka State Government, Malaysian Youth Council, and the Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia.

As we leave this place today, every one of us should ponder upon these questions and carry them to our respective land of nativity:

- Do we now have a better sense of the health challenges facing the youth?
- Have we conceptualized meaningful strategies to respond to the challenges?
- Will we be in a position to advise our governments, policymakers, work institutes and organizations appropriately?

Presentations made in this dialogue were of utmost importance, highlighting the challenges and new prospect of facing them in this time.

We noted that education is the key to bridging the gap of inequalities in the health sectors. The two; education and health are interlinked and lack of knowledge or understanding of critical issues such as disease prevention and control leads to poor health monitoring and the death of many civilians. Our youth in urban and rural areas, even those marginalized, need to be fed with information to curb the spread of diseases and increase human capital. Without proper education it becomes hard for most to keep body, spirit and mind together in a healthy way.

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We discussed the need for the young people to take care of their health to live both productive and rewarding lives and be our leaders tomorrow. It was highly noted that young people need to live responsible lives in addition to understanding their entitlements to rights. Rights come with responsibilities. For you to enjoy the fullness of your rights you need to act dutifully towards your nations and be a part in implementing health regimes and policies in the nations.

There is a higher need to live a balanced life so as to engender balance in our families, societies and in groups. Many are times there is gender inequalities in the health sector. More men are given better treatment than women especially in rural areas and these practices are still prevalent today. Young Women are increasingly becoming physically inactive making their bodies prone to diseases.

Again we discussed the roles and responsibilities of different sectors and among others was the obligation of the government towards protecting the rights of youth health. We noted that governments should provide basic quality health services to all young people regardless of social status. Programmes provided by the government should ensure universal non discriminatory access to services by the youth.

Other issues discussed were the elimination of sexual abuse among young people in all sectors, be it in working environments, at home or in the community. WAY does not encourage discrimination against those that are infected with deadly diseases, physically disabled and the rural based and marginalized youth. Many times we see cases where people are denied medical attention, employment and education due to their status or physical state. Confidence in the community needs to be instilled back.

Through it all, I can now confidently say we now have a shift in mentality, a renewed paradigm on health as a right of each. I believe the approach adopted; the “**Declaration**” at the close of this dialogue will just start a new thinking, that the health sector need to extend open doors to our community and actively work with the multiple sectors, locally and internationally to address the many health challenges

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still faced by millions of young people all over. Every sector in the community has been accorded with ideas to include in their policies and maintenance.

Deliberations during the last 3 days have been awesomely rich and important part of the building of the consensus that this is the way to go assemble expertise from different sectors and devise innovative ways of finding solutions to health problems envionring us, solutions that are sustainable and adaptable to the local context.

But the big question still remains. What responsible action are you going to take to implement the ideas brought forward in this dialogue as a young person? The youth should get involved and participate through National Youth Councils’ and organizations in their respective land of residence. From this time forth, WAY should be seeing and hearing testimonies of the great works of youth, health service centres being overwhelmed by the wave of change the youth are bringing, the young educating their peers’ and volunteering through organizations to raise awareness on good healthy living. The youth should be encouraged to co-partner with WAY, NGOs, governments and private sectors to fulfil social responsibilities and enhance sustainability.

With much that has been said, I therefore hope I’m interpreting your thinking well when I say the spirit of the 12th MIYD should be pursued, the final recommendations implemented to the betterment of our local health systems. The World Assembly of Youth is more than happy to assist you in doing so.

I therefore thank the participants for their time and patience during this dialogue and everyone who has made themselves present from the beginning to the end. I also appreciate the organisers and sponsors for their kind assistance. My team at WAY, the secretariat and its volunteers have once again made me a proud president, I am grateful for your invested efforts to make this event memorable.

Thank you all and have a wonderful trip back home. Hope to see you again next year.

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