

**SPEECH BY DONALD T. CHARUMBIRA, SECRETARY GENERAL,
WORLD ASSEMBLY OF YOUTH, AT THE OPENING CEREMONY
OF THE FIFTH MELAKA INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DIALOGUE,
MONDAY 27 JUNE 2005, MELAKA INTERNATIONAL TRADE
CENTRE**

On behalf of the Organising Committee of the Fifth Melaka International Youth Dialogue, I would like to wish a warm welcome to all delegates and participants attending this important event.

As always, it is a pleasure to see many regular MIYD attendees, including some who have attended all five Dialogues.

Much has happened since our last MIYD in June 2004, and among the good news is the success achieved by some of our WAY members in various pursuits. Namely, we would like to congratulate the WAY President, YAB Datuk Seri Hj. Mohd Ali bin Mohd Rustam, for his successful election as Vice President of the ruling party, the United Malays National Organisation. YAB Datuk Seri was also unanimously re-elected President of the World Assembly of Youth at the 14th General Assembly in February 2005.

We would also like to congratulate the Honourable Pohamba Shifeta, firstly on his election as a member of the Namibian parliament in November 2004, but also for his appointment as Deputy Minister of Youth, National Youth Service, Sport and Culture. The Honourable Shifeta was also elected a WAY executive committee member at the 14th General Assembly.

Mr Norizan Shariff was reelected secretary general of the Malaysian Youth Council, and also appointed secretary general of the Committee for ASEAN Youth Cooperation.

Our Korean brother, Dr Kwang Sun Cha, has also returned from election as Deputy President of the Asian Youth Council last week.

New leadership for WAY was elected at the recent General Assembly. Some of those present here include Mr Ernesto Kesar from Trinidad and Tobago, Mr Bhuban Pathak from Nepal, Ms Hager Abdelmouti from Sudan and Mr Hussein Al Ahmed from Yemen.

As we witness WAY leadership assuming positions of influence in government and international organizations, we can be assured that our desires as young people will be adequately represented by these emissaries of youth who are now in policy-making positions of great influence.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Melaka International Youth Dialogue is an annual event convened by the World Assembly of Youth to provide youth leaders with a platform to exchange knowledge and ideas, to interact, and to determine solutions to challenges being faced by youth worldwide. The Dialogue has been convened based on various themes. In 2001 the theme was Youth and Globalisation, in 2002 it was Youth Employment, in 2003 it was Youth and Information and Communication Technologies, in 2004 it was Youth Participation in Decision-Making Processes.

In 2005, we have selected the theme Strengthening National Youth Councils for Global Development. This theme is particularly meant to benefit national youth councils, which are the WAY membership base. By having stronger national youth councils, our developmental goals and targets will be met more easily. This theme is particularly relevant as this MIYD is occurring soon after the 14th General Assembly of the World Assembly of Youth held in Windhoek, Namibia. At the General Assembly, WAY resolved to take urgent action to revitalise and reinvigorate National Youth Councils which are facing collapse or dormancy.

We are sincerely grateful to everyone who has contributed to make this MIYD possible. Such contributors include the Melaka State Government, the Private Sector in Melaka, the Malaysian Youth Council, the Asian Youth Council, Royal Malaysian Police, Kuala Lumpur International Airport, and the many volunteers and contributors towards this event.

Finally I would also like to extend our thanks to the Chief Minister of Melaka and WAY President, YAB Datuk Seri Hj. Mohd Ali bin Mohd Rustam, for his dedication and support towards young people around the world.

I thank you.