MELAKA YOUTH DECLARATION

Adopted at the 1st Melaka International Youth Dialogue

"Towards a Global Community"

We, the 277 young people from 45 nations, participating in the inaugural Malacca International Youth Dialogue convened by the World Assembly of Youth, have gathered in Malacca, Malaysia from June 25 to 27, 2001;

We have engaged in Dialogue under the theme *"Towards a Global Community,"* focusing on Globalization and its influences and implications on youth;

We recognize the World Bank's definition of Globalization as the process of growing interdependence of countries worldwide through the increasing volumes and variety of cross-border transactions, in goods and services of international capital flows, and also through the more rapid and widespread diffusion of technology;

In addition to this definition, we also note a rapidly increasing interconnectedness of individuals, social groups, communities, and nations, particularly through universalizing the capitalist market ideology, but also as a result of other dominating forces like democratization and cultural imperialism;

We recognize with concern the negative trends towards homogenization of culture at a global level and some loss of cultural uniqueness and individuality at a local level;

We recognize also that there is an inequitable distribution of wealth and resources throughout the world, and that this perpetuates the cycle of poverty in less developed regions. We believe that this is a specific result of economic exploitation of the developing world by developed countries;

We acknowledge nonetheless the potential for harnessing the more positive aspects of globalization such as the enhanced potential for multilateral participation, cooperation and collective action at both micro and macro social levels, as well as the potential for fostering positive global change through integration of ideas and solidarity of purpose;

We highlight the need to move away from limiting and universalizing ideas and forces, and towards recognition and celebration of difference and diversity through action and ideology under the philosophy of 'think globally, act locally' in addition to 'think locally, act globally.'

We recognize that globalization is an unavoidable phenomenon of the modern world with the potential for far reaching negative implications on the individuality and integrity of human society and culture. We believe nonetheless that such negative aspects are only a part of globalization that can be steered through unity in diversity to be a more positive world force for co-operative change.

THEREFORE WE RECOMMEND THAT ALL PEOPLES, GOVERNMENTS AND ORGANISATIONS:

1. Recognize the need to address at a local level, and to extend to all levels, through inter-cultural dialogue issues of cultural oppression and the lack of equity in cultural expression:

- Providing exchange programs focusing on cultural diversity and the arts;
- Developing a school curriculum that introduces all aspects of the local culture so as to foster mutual cultural understanding and appreciation;
- Encouraging multilingual appreciation through various means such as education, entertainment and in the media as a method of cultural exchange and promotion;
- Promoting the celebration of the richness of local cultures through their increased exposure in the mass media.

2. Urge education on youth action movements, cultural awareness and the principles of the universal declaration of human rights through all available media channels:

- Recognizing that education exists on many levels including dialogue, discussion, the sharing of ideas, personal interaction among individuals from different backgrounds, traditional academic channels, via the internet and other free and open forms of media;
- Realizing that globalization contributes to education by providing mechanisms that will foster the spread of information through channels of information communication technology;
- Recognizing that issues such as cultural oppression, slavery and other forms of economic exploitation, discrimination due to ethnicity, religion, gender relations, class, as well as the lack of empowerment of youth have become highly static issues due to ignorance and lack of awareness;
- Fostering the education of youth in order to bring down the barriers created by ignorance and lack of awareness;

- Encouraging cooperation between youth for the spread of information relevant to youth.

3. Realize the corporate nature of the media, and henceforth encourage the youth to be actively critical users of the corporate media network:

- Urging the implementation of initiatives that raise awareness of the corporate nature of mass media, with the purpose of educating youth to be a sensible and discerning audience;
- Seeking to enhance the role of the youth in influencing the content of mass media by giving critical feedback;
- Urging the mass media network to practice social and ethical responsibility in the determination of its contents.

4. Strongly encourage youths to join youth organisations:

- Recognising that youth play an important role in contemporary society – they are the co-leaders of today;
- Realising that there is further need for securing equity of youth participation in the decision-making process at all levels;
- Recognising with concern the lack of awareness about the existence of youth organisations;
- Appealing to youth organisations to further promote themselves;
- Imploring governments to provide greater support for youth through the funding of education schemes and community awareness programs to promote youth activities and initiatives;
- Encouraging greater networking between youth organisations at various levels;
- Highlighting the important role of talks, workshops, performances, and other multimedia activities within education systems in motivating youth to join youth organisations.

5. Encourage greater networking among grassroots organizations, international organizations and governments:

- Advocating the early education of youth with regards to their rights and their legitimate and necessary role in their local communities;
- Urging the utilization of umbrella organizations as reference points for youth to learn about smaller and more localized organizations;
- Encouraging the utilization of the media to promote organizations from various sectors and enabling an exchange of ideas;
- Particularly seeking the involvement of youths in rural areas as well as urban areas to secure a more even representation of backgrounds;
- Ensuring information and expertise are exchanged through networking in all sectors;

- Ensuring that appropriate and relevant information gained through networking is referred to the work of policy and decision-makers.

6. Strongly urge and expect youth organisations to adhere to democratic processes of electing youth representatives, and associated consultative processes between youth and youth representatives, in order to ensure effective representation of youth:

- Noting that the processes taken in selecting youth representatives can be biased and corrupt;
- Recognizing that youth representatives who are selected through biased and undemocratic processes are not fit representatives of their organizations;
- Deploring governmental and non-governmental organizations which allow unjust selection processes to occur;
- Urging the immediate reform of governmental and non-governmental organizations which do not adhere to democratic youth selection processes;
- Strongly urging all youth representatives to consult with a sufficient cross-section of youth from their respective organizations in the aim of accurately representing the organization;
- Urging youth representatives to foster a comfortable environment wherein youth are not intimidated to approach youth representatives;
- Imploring youth representatives to take the necessary action to achieve effective communication and accurate representation of youth organizations.

7. Strongly advocate for governments to adopt a youth policy; this youth policy should incorporate the UN standard definition of youth:

- Acknowledging that there is a universally recognised standard of youth, however this definition lacks relevance without appropriate youth policy;
- Urging governments to allocate adequate resources in the aim of effectively addressing youth issues and problems.

8. Demand national governments, non-governmental and inter-government organizations to research, address and work towards a solution pertaining to the global problem of slavery by:

- Recognizing the definition of a slave as "a person controlled through violence or its threat, working without payment for economic exploitation;"
- Urging national governments, non-governmental organizations and inter-governmental organizations to acknowledge slavery as a problem that should be addressed urgently;
- Encouraging research on the factors that give rise to slavery in light of rapid globalization;

- Recognizing that public awareness is an important step in combating slavery at all aspects and levels.

9. Encourage youth to challenge the current exploitative global economic trends:

- Recognizing that exploitative economic trends include the free flow of capital that puts the interests of the investors before the interests of the local populations;
- Realizing that policies that give priority to investors' interests is actively supported by the current policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF);
- Recognizing that exploitative economic trends are of particular concern to youth as they are presently victims of the global capitalist system that impedes their potential for prosperity and creativity;
- Noting that oppressive conditions are sometimes not recognized and therefore not challenged or addressed due to established cultural, economic and gender roles perceived and constructed within societies;
- Recognizing that this can be rectified through the empowerment of the individual using education, vocational training, confidence building and awareness that is much needed to address established oppressive norms.

10. Realize that global problems such as environment, drugs, illegal immigration, poverty, health issues et cetera require cooperation on local, national and international levels:

- Urging further discourse on the local, national and international levels about various global issues;
- Mandating the World Assembly of Youth to regularly convene such youth dialogues at the national, regional and international levels.

11. Urge United Nations member nations to adhere to their commitment of providing a youth representative to the General Assembly:

- Recognizing that, in December 1996, one hundred and fifty member states of the General Assembly of the United Nations passed the resolution for youth representation of member states at annual sittings of the Assembly;
- Acknowledging that only eight member states have fulfilled their commitment to send youth representatives to the General Assembly;
- Realizing the powerful impact youth representatives would have in shaping the emerging global community by partaking in the General Assembly;
- Imploring all other United Nations member states to immediately rectify their lack of adherence to this resolution and provide a youth representative in accordance with democratic youth selection processes.

12. Urge all participants of the MIYD, as well as other youth forums, to maintain contact with the aim of coordinating global campaigns executed on a local to international level.

- Appreciating that the fostering of relationships between youth globally assists in the globalization of the youth movement;
- Recognizing that youth can add potency to their local campaigns if particular issues are addressed simultaneously by youth globally;
- Mandating the World Assembly of Youth to act as a positive and pivotal force in the global coordination of such campaigns, through regional youth platforms, national youth councils as well as international youth organizations.

Malacca, MALAYSIA
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