

**SPEECH BY YAB DATUK SERI HJ MOHD ALI BIN MOHD RUSTAM,
PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD ASSEMBLY OF YOUTH,
AT THE INDONESIAN NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL (KNPI)
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

19 DECEMBER 2005

“YOUTH CHALLENGES IN THE COMING YEARS”

President of the Indonesian National Youth Council and Vice-President of the World
Assembly of Youth Honourable Idrus Marham

KNPI Head of International Relations and Deputy President of the Asian Youth
Council, Mr Nico Uskono

KNPI Central Board members

KNPI Members and staff

Invited Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen:

1. I would like to begin by thanking KNPI for this invitation to address you, and to congratulate you on this occasion of your General Assembly.
2. KNPI has been very active in the World Assembly of Youth this year. It participated in the 14th WAY General Assembly held in Windhoek, Namibia, and it also participated in the 5th Melaka International Youth Dialogue. KNPI, in conjunction with the Government of Indonesia, was party to the historic Asia-Africa Summit in Jakarta, which also resolved to strengthen ties between young people in Asia and Africa.
3. As a result of the constant support and commitment of KNPI, your current president Bapak Idrus Marham was elected Vice-President of the World Assembly of Youth. Your head of international relations, Nico Uskono, was also elected Deputy-President of the Asian Youth Council. We congratulate KNPI on these great achievements this year!
4. For the World Assembly of Youth, the year 2005 has been a turning point. We have finally completed construction of the World Youth Foundation complex in Melaka, which now houses the permanent offices of the World Assembly of Youth. With this permanent secretariat, the organisation can

now grow from strength to strength and enhance its global youth development programmes and activities.

5. We encourage KNPI to continue to be active on the international level. It is important to ensure that youth programmes in ASEAN, in Asia and the world are well-coordinated, and this is only possible when WAY members, such as KNPI, provide their continued support and dedication towards our programmes and activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

6. The title of my address today is Youth Challenges in the Coming Years. I believe that the 21st century is going to be a century of changes and rapid advancement of humankind. The 21st century is a crossroad for humankind for it is the century that will determine the future of man. With the rapid advances in technological development, coupled with the speed of globalization, the world will be a totally different place by the time we enter the 22nd century. The 21st century is therefore a century for us to make choices about the future of the world, and to be firm about the values that we want to be maintained, and those we want to be changed.
7. The major concern of nations around the world is about the political structure of the coming years. The UN General Assembly recently failed to

agree on the reforms for the UN Security Council. As long as there is no agreement, the old system of governance will continue, and perhaps this is what the superpowers are happy with. It is therefore important for developing nations, third world nations, to unite and come up with a common position regarding the reform of the United Nations, to make it more transparent, democratic and serving the interest of all mankind. The current status, where one nation can veto any resolution because of its nuclear power, is totally unacceptable.

8. We are now living in a unipolar world order where the world is governed by a few rich and powerful nations. The small nations are powerless. We saw how Afghanistan and Iraq were invaded by US-led forces, and they had governments imposed on them. Today we are seeing that there is no peace in Iraq and the Iraqi people are now worse off than they were before the US invaded their country. The US has not found any Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq, so we wonder why they are continuing to occupy the country and incriminate Saddam Hussein.
9. Global democracy is therefore a major challenge for young people. It will continue to be a major challenge unless something is done to make the global balance of power more even and fairer, to enable the small and the poor nations to be able to influence global events. The United Nations needs to be reformed and strengthened to ensure that no nation can

embark on any course of unilateral action without the support of the United Nations. All global decisions must be made in a democratic manner that is free from narrow nationalistic desires.

10. The emerging trend of ultra-nationalism, driven by capitalist greed, has given rise to a New Fascism. In the 1930s and 40s we heard of Mussolini's fascism in Italy, and Hitler's in Germany. Today we have an emergent New Fascism driven by the United States in the interests of its oil companies and its defense industries. Likewise there is a New Fascism emergent in Britain, following in the footsteps of the United States. The fact that a candidate who was popular around the world, like John Kerry, lost to President Bush, is an indicator of this new trend. President Bush won because he managed to invade Iraq and ensure a constant supply of cheap oil for the United States. There is no greater proof of a New Fascism than that. American interests are now above and beyond global interests. This is why America can refuse to adhere to global environmental agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol, because its businesses are not happy with the agreement.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

11. Whilst these global dynamics are absorbing much of the attention of world leaders, little resources and attention is being paid to the challenges that

young people are facing around the world. The World Assembly of Youth is presently undertaking consultations, research and other activities in order to obtain an international consensus on the Five Major Challenges Facing Young People in the 21st Century. Naturally, there are many challenges that young people are facing including HIV/AIDS, Unemployment, Drug Addiction, Hunger and Poverty, Access to Education, Participation in Decision-Making Process, Access to Information and Communication Technologies, Gender Equity and Environmental Conservation.

12. Among the more serious challenges facing young people today is the HIV/AIDS pandemic. WAY is currently compiling a book on this pandemic, and it will highlight cases of how some nations have managed to tackle this challenge. There are 10 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24 living with HIV/AIDS today. More than 25 percent of all people living with HIV are below 25 years of age. There are currently an estimated 15 million children who have been orphaned due to AIDS, having lost one or both parents to the pandemic. We now face the prospects of losing an entire generation of young people to this pandemic. The theme of the 14th WAY General Assembly was therefore “Youth Rise to Meet the HIV/AIDS Challenge,” as we realised that this was the most urgent and pressing challenge facing young people today. We are encouraging campaigns to discourage premarital and unprotected sex, to

discourage intravenous drug use, to discourage unsafe sexual and behavioural practices. By better educating young people, we can reduce their exposure to HIV/AIDS.

13. Unemployment is another major youth concern. The lack of a job leads to idleness and eventually to delinquent behaviour, crime or other social ills. International Labour Organization (ILO) figures show that youth unemployment in the world increased from 11.7 per cent in 1993 to an historical high of 14.4 per cent in 2003. While the number of youth in secondary and tertiary education has increased, labour markets in many countries are not able to accommodate this large group of skilled young graduates. This is partly due to a failure in many countries to closely link the educational system to the needs of the labour market, but is also a result of the large numbers of youth now reaching working age. WAY believes that the best way to address the unemployment challenge is to encourage youth entrepreneurship and to provide opportunities for young people to create jobs and wealth. It is time for us to think outside the box, as the world of employment has been changed by the advent of Information and Communication Technologies. Young people are well-poised to take advantage of ICTs to create jobs and to use these jobs to sustain themselves and to create income for others.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

14. A continuing global concern is the lack of youth participation in decision-making structures. There is a general lack of youth involvement in decision-making bodies such as the United Nations, multilateral bodies, governments and local government. The potential contribution of young people should be recognised and strengthened to enable youths to positively play their role in global, national and local affairs.

15. Having outlined some of the key challenges that young people are facing, it is now important to forecast some of the future trends and challenges that young people will face in the future, and to prepare for those challenges.

16. With the advent of globalization, the world is becoming a borderless place in which people and money will soon move freely across borders. We must ask ourselves, who really benefits from this? In reality, it is the rich who may become richer by using their capital to take over the economies of poor countries. However, to prevent such an occurrence, we should advocate for a fair globalization which secures and guarantees the future of people from both rich and poor backgrounds. Citizens should be able to have a share of their nation's wealth. It would never be acceptable for a foreign nation or company to have an unfair control over any country's

wealth and resources. There should be equity in global wealth and prosperity. The gap between rich and poor should be reduced.

17. Another challenge that the world faces is that of terrorism. We have seen the 2001 September 11 acts of terror. We have also seen the recent London bombings. We should never condone or support any acts of terrorism. We should also look at the root causes of terrorism to ensure that we address the key concerns, the main drivers of terrorism. If anyone is hungry, poor or oppressed, then it is very likely that that person will resort to crime, even terrorism, to bring attention to his problem. In this regard, the motivations behind terrorism should be thoroughly analysed to ensure that the root causes are identified and addressed.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

18. Young people should aspire for world peace. We should work towards creating a culture of non-violence, understanding, collaboration and partnerships. We should discard racism, intolerance, tribalism and ethnic strife. We should rise above these to become real global citizens who think globally and act locally.
19. In conclusion, I would like to encourage all young people to prepare for the future by becoming more educated, and exposing ourselves to developments around the world. WAY encourages youth exchange

programmes as a platform for enhancing understanding between young people. The best way to face any challenge is to be knowledgeable about it, and to prepare for it. Once we meet challenges we will then be aware of how to address them.

20. I would like to thank KNPI for inviting me, and I hope that your General Assembly will be a great success. May you continue to have success and prosperity.

I thank you.