

SPEECH BY MS. EDIOLA PASHOLLARI
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE WORLD ASSEMBLY OF YOUTH
AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE
11TH MELAKA INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DIALOGUE
“SHAPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENTREPRENEURS”
MONDAY 27TH JUNE 2011 AT 0900 HRS
EVERLY RESORT MALACCA, MELAKA

Ladies and gentleman,

It is a great honor to stand before you all and deliver the opening welcoming speech for the international youth event hosted by World Assembly of Youth. The Melaka International Youth Dialogue is now in its 11th year and this year we are illuminating on the theme “Shaping the Next Generation of Entrepreneurs”. The time is right for us to be dialoguing on this matter as we see the strained that is evident in the world’s economic.

At the outset, I wish to thank you for being here. I also express our gratitude for all the youth organizations, leaders, dignitaries, speakers and sponsors who have made time to be here with us. I would truly say that the spirit of the 11th Melaka International Youth Dialogue is all about opportunities, seizing them, applying and sharing them with others.

In the process of choosing the theme for this year dialogue, we had weighed carefully the different constraints that our youth have to go through and financial hardship came out to be the biggest factor.

We are looking at a generation that is self reliant, competent and innovative in all spheres of life. The youth of our time aims to see beyond what meets the eye and imagines things before they occur. They are proactive and work to remedy the hurt suffered by individuals from existing conditions.

Through the many encounters I have had with youths around the world, is that they neither looks upon the government nor waits for the government's projects to reach them before seizing opportunities; instead, they are innovators and create opportunities for themselves. They are risk takers' willing to utilize available resources at their disposal to the maximum. Entrepreneurship is very important in industrial and social growth of any country.

World Assembly of Youth has always supported any programs that will enhance the quality of life for the youth. We are willing to work with any group or organizations that are willing to sponsor our youth, to mentor them in the life skills. We have specifically chosen and invite speakers that have walked the mile as an entrepreneur. Each one of them has a different story to tell but one thing that is evident is their passion for change their economic life and to change their ways of thinking and being risk takers.

Although the theme mentions future generations, it is not limited just to the young people but it is for all of us here, who are willing to work hard and be risk takers. It is never too late to reach for success. I urge you to explore the different prospect that is available to you this week and be willing to reach out from your comfort zone and create a new awareness within yourself to find new opportunities.

THE NEED TO CHANGE AND SUCCEED.

I know that the youth are anxious to make a change. The youth have a vision; a vision for themselves and a vision for their community. What they need are opportunities to experience the journey as a business person and the guidance to make the right choices.

They need a role model, someone who is willing to listen, to counsel and to guide. Through an internship program, a sponsorship program, the youth can learn and work alongside a mentor. From that relationship, life skills for business are transferred; integrity, honesty, teamwork and tenacity are there for them to embrace and to make it their own.

I am enthused to see many WAY members organisations from different parts of the world present at this dialogue. I am grateful for the supporters, entrepreneurship educators and the young and not-so-young would-be entrepreneurs in this event. What makes us at WAY even prouder and happier is the fact that because of what we are doing together, our entrepreneurial base will now grow, the involvement and potential for our youth in entrepreneurial activities in the grassroots will get deeper, and the appreciation for entrepreneurship education and learning will become wider among us.

There are without a doubt many intelligent youth that have strong aptitude towards business, whose talents are being wasted because no one is giving them that single hope or opportunity to move up the ladder of success or anywhere near it. While we acknowledge the value of talent, hard work, patience and persistence, there is no arguing that success in life is determined largely by the opportunities that we are given.

"Business opportunities are like buses, there's always another one coming."

- Richard Branson, founder of Virgin Enterprise

In most autobiographies and write-ups of successful billionaires and celebrities, including rags-to-riches stories of known individuals, the story line is always the same: they started poor with all the attributes of squalor and uncertainty, and by sheer talent and skill were able to rise against all odds. These storylines give full recognition solely to the individuals' reach of the unreachable star thru their personal attributes alone.

What these stories do not show, however, are the streams of opportunities these successful individuals were given at some points in their lives. These people who we look up to in politics, academia and business may appear like they did it all by themselves. They were, however, the beneficiaries of extraordinary opportunities that allowed them to maximize their talents and work hard in ways others cannot.

We need to provide equal opportunity and no gender biased. When a micro credit program is establish, it should be given to all. There is no doubt that entrepreneurs build a nation. They are exceptionally significant.

Entrepreneurs must be taken seriously because they bring wealth, opportunities and talent towards development. We have to underscore the importance and the urgency of entrepreneurship among the youth globally. We must help to train them in learning the ropes of good and ethical business.

Undeniably, opportunities are too few and extremely far between. Entrepreneurship will multiply them and make them readily available for us. We therefore ask for your sincerity, passion, commitment and hard work to

facilitate the development of young entrepreneurs. Our youth do not need anything except that rare chance to make it in this world. And the chance to be an entrepreneur might just be what they truly need. Let us not fail them. Let us be the society that generously provides opportunities for all thru entrepreneurship.

Once again, thank you everyone for your presence, support and involvement. To the Secretariat staffs of WAY and the many volunteers who have been working hard behind the scene.

Happy networking, dialoguing and most of all grow in the knowledge and skills in being the next generations of entrepreneurs.

Thank you,