

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE
OPENING OF WAY ASIA CONFERENCE AT THE
AUDITORIUM OF THE UNIVERSITY KEBANG-
SAAN, KUALA LUMPUR ON 14TH AUGUST, 1972

Mr Chairman, Honourable Ministers, General Ali Moertopo,
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a very happy occasion indeed for me to be with you and I wish to thank you most sincerely for the honour you have given me. I would like to welcome the overseas delegates to our country and I am sure your Malaysian counterparts are only too eager to show you around and see how our people go about with their daily life.

It is now almost twenty three years since I attended, as a representative of Malaysia, the W A Y Conference held in Brussels which ratified the Charter of W A Y . It was at this Conference that give birth to W A Y . In this long period, many changes have taken place in W A Y , both in its role and activities. Nevertheless, I noted that the objectives are still the same. They still give hope to the aspirations of responsible and progressive youths of the world. W A Y is still pointing the way to peace and progress.

In the world of today, where international relations are no longer exclusively relations among governments, W A Y in its own way, have made many successful attempts to bring about closer relations among people as individuals and in voluntary associations. These relations comprise the exchanges of youth leaders and other young people, the distribution of literature and books, international contacts in culture, sports and international gathering such as this. These activities, when properly co-ordinated would help to spin the threads that bind people together.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In our generation, where science and technology have shrunk our physical neighbourhood, no event is wholly unrelated to us, and no crisis is wholly foreign to us. Today, inter-dependence has replaced solitary individualism as the central fact of our lives. In the context of the vast ideological distances which divide us, the path pursued by W A Y has special significance.

I would just emphasize one point—the ideological camps have become more responsible today than ever before. The people in all these camps have shown a greater desire for peace than for war, for co-existence than confrontation. They have reflected the need for co-operation than isolation. W A Y, I believe, could play its role in helping the governments of the world to realise this objective through a greater co-operation among the youths of the world.

During the last three decades, we in Asia have seen with despondency and despair continuous dark clouds looming across the horizon. We have witnessed so many conflicts and tragedies. We have been victims of super-power conflicts; in some cases of our own miscalculation or misadventure. Nevertheless, after each tragedy, we become more concerned of the need for peace. In fact, Khmer, Laos and Vietnam had never known peace at all since the ending of the Pacific War. Undoubtedly, peace could not emerge if we are not prepared to rationalise our similarities; and if we are not interested to narrow our differences. Yet, history need not repeat itself if we are determined enough to find our own solution. We must have a new approach to this age-old problem.

I have on many occasions repeated that need to neutralize the region of Southeast Asia as a region of freedom, peace and stability. The people, and particularly the young men and women of this region, and for that matter of Asia and the world, long for peace and the taste of its sweet fruits. I am sure the delegates present here share the view of the people of Malaysia that we are always prepared to go with you onto the fields of peace, so that all our Asian brethren will one day share together a new era of happiness and enlightenment in this world. Let us, therefore, proceed on our way, with careful but imaginative planning that is necessary to ensure peace and justice and progress for all the peoples of Asia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I do not wish to waste your time with the exposition of the need to have a decent world order. In our view, the issue is essentially whether an organisation like yours will be able to play a more positive role to help other world organisations to bring about peace and maintain it for all times. An organisation of this nature has opportunities to serve youth of Asia and the world which are limited only by the capacity of its members to work together and to keep on working together. And in this respect, you have a limitless scope.

Asia is a paradox. It is a conglomerate of young nations, yet at the same time, it is the centre of many old civilizations. The youthfulness of Asia is perhaps reflected in the magnitude of its problems—economics, politics and social. Many of the nations of Asia have just liberated themselves from colonial rule. Most of them aspire for "better standards of life in larger freedom". These aspirations are the goal of their rising expectation and the promise of their political independence.

In a decade and half since Asia has been liberated from the yoke of colonialism, the search for the answer to the revolution of rising expectations has taken many different paths with many different results. Some have succeeded even if somewhat limited. Not a few followed the path to disaster and ruin. Amidst this search, the new Asia is confronted with yet another problem—that of a growing youth population. With this comes the inevitable paradox where the youthful expectations have risen faster than the capacity of their respective governments to solve the existing aspirations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe the time has come for us to review the situation and to draw a line between the needs and passions of man. It is not an easy line to draw. The principle that the state is responsible for providing the basic needs of the individual would perhaps be a useful guide in determining the formula to meet the revolution of the rising expectations. At the same time, it is vital that the revolution of the rising expectations should be adequately matched with the "revolution of rising responsibility".

The need for a rising standard of responsibility is more evident today because of the complex problems facing every Asian nations, coupled with the "youngness" of the population of these nations. These young people who would be in charge of their national governments tomorrow must realize the danger of diminishing responsibility in a world of increasing expectation. I am sure you all agree with me that nothing could be solved through negative actions and decisions. I am sure you all agree with me that rising expectations of youth cannot be solved through shortsightedness, indifference and lack of imagination. I am sure that we all are in agreement that the success of any nation depends on responsible leadership and actions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The ugly book burnings in Nazi Germany a generation and half ago as a political instrument are things of the past. Today our young men and women are saddled with greater responsibility to help their country's young government to solve the almost insoluble problems of development. The participation of youth in Consultative Council as in Malaysia is a rationalisation of responsibility and leadership. This is, in a nutshell, the issue facing youth organisations of the world today. I am positive if W A Y could initiate a "revolution of rising responsibility" to match the "revolution of rising expectations" unleashed by political independence, the prospects for the better and more balanced development will take place. This need is more urgent in a multi-racial country, diverse in social system, in economic orders and in political creeds such as found in Malaysia.

On this note, Ladies and Gentlemen, I declare open the 1972 W A Y Asia Conference.



Tun Abdul Razak bin Hussein kelihatan sedang menerima Dokumen Ejaan Baharu daripada Y.B. Menteri Pelajaran Encik Hussein Onn pada 16hb Ogos, 1972 di Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kuala Lumpur.

(Gambar Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia)