

**SPEECH BY**  
**YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI**  
**AT THE OPENING OF THE FOURTH GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON**  
**DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION**  
**AT SHANGRI-LA'S RASA SAYANG RESORT, BATU FERRINGHI PULAU PINANG**  
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I am honoured to be invited to address and officially declare open this Fourth Global Conference on Drug Prevention.

2. On behalf of the government of Malaysia, I extend my greetings and a very warm welcome to all delegates of this conference and to Malaysia on this auspicious occasion of the Fourth Global Conference on Drug Prevention.

3. Personally, I feel proud and happy that this conference is held in Malaysia, especially in Penang as it is my home state. This conference has special significance to us, Malaysians, as we continue with our struggle to rid this nation of drug abuse and trafficking. We have also strived to find, develop and improve our anti-drug programs. I am sure that not only Malaysia but also all countries represented here will also benefit immensely from the mutual exchange of ideas, experiences and skills training.

4. Your presence here today indicates your deep concern about the drug problem that today affects so many countries in the world. As we are all aware, this problem transcends all geographical, political and social boundaries and it is also apparent that illicit production, trafficking and use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances have increased worldwide.

5. Despite intensified and collaborated efforts by the United Nations, its subsidiary bodies and various enforcement agencies worldwide, the drug situation globally has not improved. Drug abuse and illicit trafficking continues to plague every country in the world. The drug menace has proved itself, to this day, as capable undermining national security, stability and resilience.

6. You must remember that to these desperate people drug is money. There is nothing to prevent the unscrupulous and disruptive political groups, organized criminals and other evil elements from using these deleterious mind altering substances as weapons to break down the political, economics, spiritual and moral stability as well as a nation's resilience. The "profitability" of the illicit distribution and sale of drugs also lends the possibility that large-scale trafficking operations can undermine the security of a country, as we can see happening in certain countries throughout the world.

7. All of you are aware that drug abuse affects the individual, the family and the whole society. Apart from the human suffering and family disruption, there is incalculable economics burden imposed on society in terms of lost manpower, drug-related crimes and the need to provide treatment and rehabilitation services.

8. With the increase in production, the expanding markets, the diversified trafficking routes and more efficient and strong drug trafficking syndicates, it is not surprising that no nation is immune from the effects of this insidious global phenomenon. As

the drug trade becomes better organized, so must the administrators and the implementers of policies. To deal with this global menace, there must be concerted efforts and active collaboration at the cross-border, bilateral, regional and international levels.

9. Since the September 11 tragedy, there had been a global effort to combat terrorism. Similarly, may I suggest that the Governments of the world join forces and wage a global war against drug abuse. Enough had been said about the need to fight this menace on various national and international-scale. We have had an array of conferences, passed numerous resolutions and yet we are still beset by this problem. Many declarations had been made and the problem still remains.

10. Some drug syndicates, or cartels as they are known in other parts of the world, are known to have more wealth and to a certain extent, influence. There are cartels that are even willing to pay off the national debt of nations so as to be allowed to operate legally. These we cannot condone and shall never condone. We must wage war against people such as these as they do not bring any good to mankind. What they provide are products, which is evil in itself. And evil must be destroyed.

11. Drug abuse and illicit trafficking in drugs are amongst the greatest threats to mankind today. When abused, narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances become a force of evil and destroy the lives of thousands of individuals and jeopardise the security and stability of nations. Drug addiction and illicit trafficking continue to spread worldwide and almost every country in the world suffers a broad range of tragic consequences from drug abuse.

12. It is imperative that we take prompt and decisive actions to eliminate drug abuse and illicit trafficking from within our midst. For the campaign to be really successful it will require global action and the cooperation of all countries to coordinate a comprehensive strategy to eliminate this deadly menace. All countries will have to close rank and work together. The war against drugs has to be a total war. Many countries have come to realise this. I am happy to note that many countries are becoming more serious in their efforts to reduce the production, supply of and demand for drugs and to curb illicit trafficking, both at national and international levels.

13. There is growing acknowledgement among countries that crop substitution must finally lead to crop eradication and elimination. I feel that this process needs to be speeded up. Countries producing narcotic drugs cannot and should not be tardy. This is where the United States of America and other developed countries that are major donors for rural development or crop substitution in producing countries should ensure that eradication targets are met.

14. In Malaysia, experience has taught us that in order to effectively counter the drug problem action must be taken in a coordinated and integrated manner. The political leadership has to work in tandem with the administrative and judicial system in the country. There has to be clear definition of roles and responsibilities among and between government agencies, non-governmental organizations and the community. Differing values and attitudes towards dependent-producing drugs and substances should not divert us from pursuing a tough policy on addiction and trafficking.

15. There is not way a country can deal with the problem without total commitment from all sectors of society, starting from the highest level in government to the lowest person in the community and from the oldest person to the youngest person. I am sure you are very familiar with this statement. What I would like to stress here is that commitment must not only be a vocal statement. It must be an action-oriented statement of commitment. After decades of verbal commitment, we have to move away from rhetoric to action.

16. Governments must acknowledge that there is a problem. This acknowledgment represents an ownership of the problem that has to filter down to all members of the community. Only with ownership that commitment to act will be born. Ownership will create urgency within the government and the individual that action must be taken immediately for now the problem is ours and not someone else's problem.

17. The question of drug abuse is very complex; it is not possible to be solved by governments alone. The solution to this problem lies with community itself being involved. Race, age, religion and sex should not be barriers in this fight against the drug scourge. Without the participation of the community, it is impossible to tackle this drug abuse problem. We should not concede defeat to a substance which and to traffickers who we know will harm and kill people whom we love.

18. For us in Malaysia, we make no apologies for our laws on drugs, said to be among the toughest in the world. We make no apologies when traffickers are sentenced to death. They who dabble in the trade know fully well of the consequences of their action. Our laws are meant to protect our people, our children and our loved ones.

19. The drug problem is very much a phenomenon of the times we are living in. Changing political, economics and technological circumstances are major factors behind the increased trafficking and abuse of drugs. Trade liberalization and the opening up of borders as well rapid development in communications not only foster economics progress but also facilitate the increase in volume of the illicit drug trade and drug consumption.

20. In the Malaysian context, the drug problem remains as one of the most serious problem in Malaysia. The National Drug Information System of the National Drugs Agency has detected, in 2001, a total of 31,556 drug addicts. What worries the government, and I are sure your government too, is that most of the addicts identified are youths. Every year more than 80% of persons identified by the system are youths between the ages of 15 to 39 years old.

21. Statistics also indicate that 96.3% of the addicts are educated, with as least 6 years of education. Approximately 69% of these addicts are opiate abusers, 20% are cannabis abusers and the rest abuse Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS) and psychotropic substances. Many of these addicts are also poly - drug abusers. More worrying is the increase in abuse of ATS by the youth. ATS appears to be the drug of the 21st century. We take this ATS threat seriously as we recognize the social and health risks these drugs pose to the users. We recognise too that the abuse of ATS amongst the youth is not a 'fad' and it will not go away unless we take serious action to eradicate its use.

22. Despite enhanced enforcement efforts at the borders and within the country, drugs are still being smuggled into the country. In 2001, 277.7 kg of heroin, which is

the drug of first choice, was seized. The law enforcement agencies have also seized 1,961.5 kg of cannabis, 69.4 kg of opium, 53.3 kg of met amphetamine, 391,130 ecstasy pills and 209,368 psychotropic pills. Generally the seizures of all types of drugs in 2001 were higher than that of 2000.

23. Drug trafficking in the country remains rampant despite the provision for mandatory death sentence on those who are convicted for drug trafficking. Even if traffickers were arrested and sentenced to death or detained under existing laws, many are still willing to take the risk because of the huge financial gains for each successful transaction. In cognizance of this, the government has put in place a legislation that empowers the relevant law enforcement agencies to trace, freeze and forfeit assets of convicted drug traffickers. In 2001, RM 26.8 million worth of assets was seized. Out of this amount RM 2.2 million worth of assets were eventually confiscated through the courts.

24. The Malaysian Parliament passed the Money Laundering Act in July 2001 and it came into force on 15 January 2001. The Act provides comprehensively for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of money laundering and the forfeiture of property derived from or involved in money laundering activities. This Act does not confine to drug activities but to cover other criminal acts like kidnapping and arms sales.

25. Besides law enforcement efforts our government has given serious consideration to the preventive aspect of drug control. Malaysia attaches great importance to drug prevention programmes. It is the vision of the Malaysian government to create a drug free society by the year 2015, in line with the ASEAN vision of creating an ASEAN drug free region.

26. Since we believe that we cannot control production, it is therefore imperative for us, as a consumer country, to do our best to prevent our citizens from indulging in drug taking habit. We know from experience that prevention is expensive, takes a long time before results are seen and must involve the whole Malaysian community. To achieve this target, the Malaysian government has drawn up plans to create drug free units, starting from the smallest unit of the family, next moving on the schools, to work places, to the smallest community in a village, to the district, to the state and finally by 2015 a drug free Malaysia. We are aware that this is a very ambitious plan but we are determined to achieve this vision.

27. At the regional level, the 33rd ASEAN Ministerial meeting in Bangkok, Thailand in July 2000 agreed " .we are concerned with the threat from drug abuse and drug trafficking on the security and stability of the ASEAN region, particularly its relations with transnational crime. We urge member countries to enhance joint efforts among all affected states in combating the drug menace, especially the newly emerging drugs like Met amphetamine or ATS. In this regard we agree to advance the target year for realizing a drug-free ASEAN from 2020 to 2015 ". The commitment of ASEAN member countries to achieve a drug free region by 2015 is in line with their commitment made at the 1998 UN General Assembly Special session on drugs. By adopting this vision ASEAN Member governments are stating their determination to succeed. Similarly Malaysian by taking the stand that we will be a drug-free country by 2015 are stating out determination to succeed in our battle to eradicate the drug menace by 2015.

28. I would also like to suggest that all countries represented here today could consider emulating the example set by ASEAN to forge ahead for a drug free world. I am sure we can achieve this if we set our minds to it and our governments show commitment, and commitment in the true sense, to this cause. I, therefore, would like to urge all countries who are represented here today to make concerted efforts, based on equitable sharing of burden and obligations, to develop and harmonise international drug control cooperation to enable all countries and its citizens to enjoy a drug- free world as soon as possible. Together we can reduce the drug abuse and drug trafficking.

29. I sincerely hope that with the holding of this conference, a closer and more concrete relationship could be establish between non-government organizations and government agencies not only at national levels but more important at international level.

30. I hope that this conference will bring about achievements that would commensurate with the ideals of building citizens who will be drug free and who can influence their peers to be drug free and guiding the community participation in the battle against drug abuse and trafficking.

31. Finally, I would like to wish you a productive meeting and hope you will find time to interact positively with one another, sharing valuable experiences and of course, not forgetting to experience what Malaysia has to offer before your departure.

32. I now have the great pleasure to officially declare this Fourth Global Conference on Drug Prevention open.

Thank you.