

Keynote Address at Al Sharq Youth 5th Annual Conference 2019

By : YAB. TUN DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD, PERDANA MENTERI MALAYSIA

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1. First of all, I would like to thank the organisers, for inviting me to this Al Sharq Youth 5th Annual Conference.

2. It is indeed a pleasure to be present here and addressing all the young minds who in the near future are going to help shape the direction of their respective nations.

3. Whether your contributions are going to be major or otherwise depends on you totally. If you believe that giving your best to the nation is noble and a worthy cause, then your nation is blessed with a responsible and conscientious citizen.

4. It is very important that youths who will inherit the future realise that if they are able to retain their ideals and values, there is then much hope for the world, which seems to have been derailed, to get back on track and give humanity a chance.

5. In my many years as a politician and entrusted to lead sometimes, I've always tried to try my level best to fulfil requests from youth organisations and movements.

6. My reasons are quite basic – if I want to see changes made and ambitions realised, the youths are our best bet.

7. No doubt, nations in the world are helmed and managed most times by adults, some even older than me. Yes, many are experienced and qualified many times over. But as many have become desensitised, too practical, cynical and unenthusiastic, to say the least.

8. Life does take its toll on most of us and probably on you too when you reach our age. But as for now, you see the world from a fresh perspective. You may be accused of being naïve at times but that should not make you forgo your ideals and beliefs.

9. In turn, it is your ideals and values, ones that are not tainted by race or creed that reminds us of what we use to believe in, what is right and wrong and what should be done or not done.

10. The youthful exuberance helps reminds us of the energy we used to have in pursuing our ideals which were not much different than what your ideals are today. In short, you are what we were four, five decades ago. Hence, it is important for leaders to keep close to the youths.

11. Having said that, the youths are capable of destruction and carnage especially if they are misguided by wrong values and ideals. The world has witnessed some youths committing horrific, inhumane crimes that is beyond human comprehension.

12. If the youths choose to put aside their ideals and values in favour of all that is corrupt and evil, nations will fail and crumble. And these too, sadly, we have witnessed as well.

13. Before I digress, I would like to welcome all of you to Malaysia, a nation where the citizenry takes pride in its diversity – it is multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-racial, and multi-religious. Our tagline “Malaysia Truly Asia” is our way of saying that you do not have to travel throughout Asia to

discover their diversity, suffice a trip to Malaysia and you will have it all in one.

14. At the rate Malaysia have accepted requests for residency from people from other parts of the world especially from the West, the tagline Malaysia Truly Asia may be too narrow a description as we have turned global.

15. Beneath this, more than just a tourism promotional tag, as Malaysians, we take pride that we have been able to move forward despite our diversity and in fact, we have come to believe that we are quite successful as a nation because of our diversity.

16. Indeed, managing the diversity is not pleasant at times. Most times, the differences are amplified and the similarities subdued.

17. We have had our knocks and falls due to these differences but we have also managed to turn them into our strengths and reason for unity.

18. We have witnessed how other nations of which citizenry are made up of difference races and religion had suffered from intra-religious and racial

conflicts, prolonged and protracted crises that do not have any solution in sight.

19. We have our own sets of prejudices and bigotry amid our people but by and large, we have come to accept that any attempt to champion one race or religious group at the expense of the other will result in destruction of all that we have worked hard to build.

20. Instead, we keep working on our common interests and common grounds. It is not easy but we kept plugging at it and Alhamdulillah, we have managed thus far.

21. We work on the principle of fairness when we realised that equality may not provide the results; we push for compromises when we know making everyone satisfied is not possible and we fight bigotry and prejudices practices of kindness and care.

22. Our differences in religion, race, culture and customs require us to make compromises and to be accommodating. And we learn to tolerate many things.

23. Yes, some may say that it sounds good on paper and not all that we strived for had fallen into place. But they are work in progress and we are pragmatic enough to change our approaches when we know it is not taking us forward.

24. The topic of my speech is “In Search of a More Just and Stable World Order”. What I’ve shared so far is from my experience in managing Malaysia and that the youths have a pivotal role in making the world a better place.

25. But the world is not stable and neither does it look like to be so in the near future.

26. After the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq by the US-led coalition in 2001/2003, we have seen more tumult than stability in the region.

27. Iraq, once a leading and prosperous nation, is today a hotbed of violence and senseless killings and it turned into a mess after the US-led coalition of the willing decided to invade it using the mantra of regime change and democratisation.

28. Ancient civilisations or rather these cradles of civilisation are pummelled to pulp by present day powers that have styled them as the leaders of modern-day civilisation.

29. There is nothing civilised in their actions or behaviour. The only thing they can showcase is a technology capable of producing weaponry that are extremely efficient in maiming, killing and murdering people by the thousands.

30. The region had since witnessed what was dubbed as the Arab Spring, in which nations, once flourishing and stable, turning into failed states and a disastrous minefield for mankind. Nations like Syria, Libya and Yemen today provide images of a human tragedy while the rest of the world watch helplessly.

31. Their sufferings did not originate from internal strife but rather interference and interventions from external powers which obviously were doing it out of self-interest, disguised under the veil of democracy and human rights.

32. Core to all these is the tragedy we call Palestine. Apartheid, genocide, crimes against humanity, crimes of aggression and all the evil that mankind

can inflict on others are compiled in Palestine – courtesy of the barbaric, arrogant, terrorist nation called Israel.

33. Until and unless the international community is committed to find a solution to bring an end to the occupation of the land belonging to the Palestinians, the region and the rest of the world will not have much of a chance for stability and order.

Thank you.

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