

THE WORLD YOUTH FOUNDATION AWARD CEREMONY

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK, 10 MARCH 1995

It is an honour for me to be given this opportunity to address you today. I wish to congratulate the Danish Government for its major role in promoting international youth development.

2. The hosting of this ceremony in Copenhagen today could not have been more appropriate or more timely in view of the convening of the Social Development Summit organised by the United Nations.

3. It is my hope that this Award will go a long way towards encouraging National Youth Organisations to intensify their efforts in carrying out development projects in their respective countries. The support for such activities must be continued and enhanced as youth constitutes an important human resource. I am convinced that if each country can make a small contribution to the development of youth worldwide we will be making major strides in overcoming the global problem of social tension and social disintegration.

4. The need for independent youth organisations to coordinate and support youth development must be recognised and acted upon. This could be achieved through cooperation among regional and international youth councils and youth organisations the world over.

5. In this regard, WAY can play a crucial role by accepting more Eastern European youth councils in the framework of WAY. However, we must make sure that WAY must never be a political tool. To be strong and effective WAY must remain independent and apolitical.

6. However Youth Councils can collaborate with other authorities and be reliable partners of governments in order to protect the interests of young people in their organisations.

7. A major problem facing the development of young people is unemployment. Unemployment and under-employment is a world wide problem. While there have been gradual improvements in the levels of education in most rural areas around the world, the availability of work has not matched the levels of education and expectations of rural youth. As a result there is a steady migration of young people, particularly the better educated, to move to urban areas.

8. This has drained the rural areas of the more enterprising members of society while at the same time creating problems of urban congestion and unemployment. In this context it is

important that youth programmes emphasise the policy of rural industrialisation. Youth organisations like WAY, must develop innovative approaches to disseminate practical skills through combining institutional training with apprenticeship in order to enhance the opportunities for rural youth.

9. A system of cooperation between urban industrial enterprises and newly established rural industries must be developed. I am confident that WAY can provide assistance to its members in terms of providing productive employment. Towards that end, a rural industrialisation approach can achieve not only balanced development of rural areas but also reduce problems of unemployment.

10. I take this opportunity to congratulate the winner of this WAY World Youth Award. I hope that WAY members will give their dedication and commitment in carrying out youth programmes and also be an inspiration to others. I hope that this Award will be a motivation to youth to develop values which ultimately will contribute towards the betterment of the world.