

**By : DATO' SRI MOHD NAJIB TUN ABD RAZAK**  
**Venue : MAHKOTA BALLROOM II, ISTANA HOTEL KUALA LUMPUR**  
**Date : 23-09-2005**  
**Title : 2ND UNION NETWORK INTERNATIONAL ASIA AND PACIFIC  
REGIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE**

Yang Berhormat Datuk Wira Dr. Fong Chan Onn,  
Minister of Human Resources Malaysia;

Saudara Mohamed Shafie BP Mammal, President Union Network International –  
Malaysian Liaison Council (UNI-MLC) cum President, National Union Of  
Telecommunication Employees Malaysia (NUTE);

Mr. Christopher Ng,  
UNI Regional Secretary – Asia & Pacific Regional Organization,

Honorable Guests, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and a very Good Morning. I would like to wish each and every one of you a warm welcome to Kuala Lumpur.

2. It is indeed a real pleasure for me to be here and to address the 2nd Union Network International – Asia Pacific Regional Youth Conference this morning.

3. What I found impressive is that the Union Network International is a Global Union which has more than 900 affiliated unions in 140 countries around the world, representing more than 15 million members who were formerly from The Commerce and Finance International (FIET), The Communication International (CI), The Graphical International (GI) and Media and Entertainment International (MEI).

4. Hence, those before me are the representatives of the youth workforce who are crucial in playing a major role in effecting change, and influencing the direction of human resource policies globally.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. As we all know the major concerns for unions are the preservation of jobs, justice for the union members and income security. Governments have the same concerns, only that they look at all angles of the economic activity and the welfare of all citizens when decisions are made.

6. In Malaysia for example, young people between the ages of 18-25 and workers between the ages of 15-35 assume the status of Youth. As such, the government's objective is to establish a holistic and harmonious Malaysian Youth force, imbued with strong spiritual and moral values, who are responsible, independent and patriotic, thus, serving as stimulus to the development and prosperity of the Nation in line with our vision 2020.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. In order to achieve this objective, we have devised the various youth development

strategies which cover the elements of knowledge, vocational and entrepreneurial development.

8. Indeed, we cannot deny the fact that, the youth within these age group are the largest group of the work force. If we look at restaurants, retail outlets, business premises either in the manufacturing or the service sector, the youth are considered as the real back bone of industry.

9. What I want to emphasize here is that when we recognize young workers, we actually see them as a very important group at the height of their productive capacity. They form the integral part of the society and have always been regarded as partners of nation building. In view of this, the government is always very concerned and very caring on the welfare and well being of the young workers, the majority of whom are migrants from the rural areas.

10. Verily, looking towards the welfare and well being of these young workers is not an easy task. As I mentioned earlier, a holistic and comprehensive effort must be concerted to cater for them. I therefore urge all parties among others; government agencies, developers, local authorities and most importantly their own employers to look into their wants and needs.

11. Imagine what a young worker from the outskirts of the city would have to go through. High living costs, adapting to the urban culture, difficulty in finding accommodation, demanding work load and social disparity are among the problems faced by them.

12. On the other hand, whilst the government and local authorities look at the overall solution to the predicament faced by the young workers, it is incumbent upon us as a society to look at them as our responsibility and move from there on to provide the necessary remedy.

13. Thus, I am very happy to note that Union Network International has invested much time and resources to bring youth leaders from all the affiliated unions in the Asia and Pacific region to share their views and experiences. I ardently hope that they will make full use of this opportunity and the given platform to strategize their plans in order to face the challenges and realities of globalization. Inter alia, I encourage the participants to think of new ways on how governments and private bodies alike are able to contribute in enhancing the economic and social well being of all young workers in this region.

14. At this juncture, the Role of UNI- Malaysia is also praiseworthy for their major part in maintaining the Industrial harmony in this country. I am also glad to know that UNI-MLC's role in spearheading the effort to structure the unorganized workers in Malaysia. This noble task by the President himself is exemplary.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

15. Malaysia now is promoting full and effective participation and empowerment of youth in all aspects of economic, social and the cultural life of the Society. In fact, we have all the framework for the effective implementation of National policy for the Education, Training and development of young workers. For this purpose, we provide a fertile environment for the youth of this country to enhance themselves with the necessary skills and knowledge. In the final analysis, we are preparing and moving

towards becoming a developed nation; a nation of inventors and creators, not of mere consumers.

16. Meanwhile, on a regional perspective, the Asia and Pacific Region consists of Developing and underdeveloped countries, all looking for foreign Capital Investments from developed countries. Young workers employed in the outsourced entities of multinationals and other businesses will be at wits to get the best terms possible from their employers. This is something not possible pre globalization era.

17. As a matter of fact, many things are changing in the Global economic order and I can assure you that you will not be alone to tackle the problems that are arising from this rapid change. Governments in ASEAN and countries in the Asia Pacific Region are well aware of the challenges ahead. We have regular bilateral and multilateral dialogues, agreements to regulate the economic, social and cultural developments in the region.

18. Finally, once again I congratulate UNION NETWORK INTERNATIONAL – Asia Pacific Regional Organization (UNI-APRO) and UNI-Malaysian Liaison Council (UNI\_MLC) for your sincere efforts to address the problems of young workers and hope the youth leaders from unions in the Asia and Pacific region will have fruitful discussions and a successful Conference.

Thank you.