

**SPEECH OF HIS EXCELLENCY DATUK SERI MOHD ALI MOHD RUSTAM,  
THE CHIEF MINISTER OF MELAKA  
AND  
CHAIRMAN OF WORLD YOUTH FOUNDATION  
AT CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP *ON* DISASTER RISK &  
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT  
AT MELAKA STRAITS HOTEL, ON THE 11<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2008. TIME: 8.00PM**

**REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE CHIEF MINISTER OF  
MELAKA: YB. DATUK CAPT (R) HAJI ABDUL KARIM BIN SULAIMAN.**

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BISMILLAHIRRAHMANIRRAHIM.

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH.

AND A VERY GOOD EVENING TO:

YM DATO' RAJA RUSLAN BIN RAJA SAMAH, AND  
YBHG DATUK SUHAIMI IBRAHIM  
THE TRUSTEES OF THE WORLD YOUTH FOUNDATION

PRINCIPAL FACILITATORS  
DR. IFTEKHAR AHMED, VISITING ACADEMIC, FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE,  
BUILDING AND PLANNING, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

MS. CLAIRE O'BOYLE, TUTOR AND PROJECT MANAGER,  
UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE,  
ROYAL MELBOURNE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (RMIT), AUSTRALIA.

MR RAVINDRAN NAIR.

DONORS, SPONSORS, GUEST, PARTICIPANTS ,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

SELAMAT DATANG AND A WARM WELCOME TO THE HISTORIC CITY OF  
MELAKA!

SINCE HIS EXCELLENCY DATUK SERI HAJI MOHD ALI BIN MOHD RUSTAM,  
THE CHIEF MINISTER OF MELAKA / CHAIRMAN OF WORLD YOUTH  
FOUNDATION IS NOT ABLE TO BE WITH US TONIGHT, IT IS MY HONOUR TO  
DELIVER THIS SPEECH ON HIS BEHALF. HE SENDS HIS BEST REGARDS TO  
EVERYONE IN THE WORLD YOUTH FOUNDATION, PRAYING THAT THIS  
MEMORABLE FUNCTION WILL EXPOSE THE MINDS OF OUR YOUTHS TO  
CURRENT GLOBAL ISSUES ESPECIALLY THE IMPACT AND INFLUENCE OF  
NATURAL DISASTERS ON LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

IT IS WITH GREAT PLEASURE TO WELCOME ALL OF YOU TO THIS  
**INTERNATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP ON DISASTER RISK &  
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT.**

I AM HAPPY TO LEARN THAT 80 PARTICIPANTS FROM 22 COUNTRIES  
BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18 TO 30 YEARS OLD HAVE TAKEN PART IN THIS  
FOUR - DAY INTERNATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP.

THIS INTERNATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP “**ON DISASTER RISK & ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**” IS A FOLLOW UP OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES ON ENVIRONMENT AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT HELD IN AUGUST 2006 AND THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT HELD IN AUGUST 2005 IN MELAKA, MALAYSIA ORGANISED BY THE FOUNDATION.

OVER THE LAST FEW DAYS, YOU HAVE BEEN TRAINED ON :

***DISASTER TERMS AND CONCEPTS:*** OVERVIEW OF TERMINOLOGY AND CONCEPTS ASSOCIATED WITH DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT;

***DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK:*** INTRODUCTION TO THE APPROACHES AND MODELS OF DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT AS PER CURRENT PRACTICES.

***ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT TERMS AND CONCEPTS:*** OVERVIEW OF TERMINOLOGY AND CONCEPTS ASSOCIATED WITH ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT.

***GREEN GROWTH FRAMEWORK:*** DEBATES ON DEVELOPMENT VS. ENVIRONMENT WITH SPECIFIC FOCUS ON CLIMATE CHANGE.

THESE SESSIONS WERE ALSO COMPLEMENTED BY DOCUMENTARY FILMS, GROUP EXERCISES AND A FIELD STUDIES INCLUDING A VISIT TO THE MELAKA RIVER. I UNDERSTAND THAT MOST OF YOU HAVE SNAPPED PHOTOS AND SHOT VIDEOS AND DOCUMENTED THE DIVERSE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER HIGHLIGHTING THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF BUILDINGS, INFRASTRUCTURE AND PATTERNS OF USE OF THE

RIVER BY PEOPLE DWELLING IN THAT AREA.. YOUR FINAL EXERCISE WAS BASED ON THE MELAKA RIVER FIELD STUDY VISIT.

ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND THE NEED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IS PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING THE HUMAN RACE AND LIFE ON THIS PLANET. THERE IS ALSO A RISING FREQUENCY OF DISASTERS WITH THE MOST RECENT ONE IN CHINA AND MYANMAR. THESE DISASTERS ARE OFTEN LINKED TO ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND INADEQUATE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES.

AWARENESS OF THESE PHENOMENA IS NOT LACKING AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE NOWADAYS. HOWEVER, HOW THEY ARE TO BE MANAGED AND WHAT ARE THE EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES ARE LESS WELL-KNOWN. WHAT CAN SERVE AS INSPIRATION FOR YOUTHS TO WORK TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE AND DISASTER RISK FREE FUTURE? AND HOW CAN VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES BE PROTECTED FROM THE IMPACT OF NATURAL AND HUMAN-INDUCED HAZARDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE, THESE ARE SOME QUESTIONS YOU HAVE TO ASK YOURSELVES.

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE THE FIRST RESPONDERS IN ANY DISASTER. HENCE, PROMOTING THEIR DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TRAINING AND EDUCATION, AS ARCHITECTS AND AGENTS FOR CHANGE IS A MUST. NON - GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS ( NGOS ), FOR EXAMPLE, THE WORLD YOUTH FOUNDATION, PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN THIS PROCESS. DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT ( **DRM** ) MEASURES CAN REDUCE VULNERABILITIES IN THE COMMUNITY. WHEN SUSTAINED OVER A LONG TERM, **DRM** MEASURES CAN MAKE A COMMUNITY BECOME DISASTER RESISTANT AND RESILIENT.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS INTERNATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP ARE:

- ▶ TO CREATE AWARENESS AND ENCOURAGE GREATER EDUCATIONAL PRESENCE ON ISSUES PERTAINING TO DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT.
- ▶ TO EMPOWER YOUTHS TO USE EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION AS KEY TOOLS TO ACHIEVE **MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS)**.
- ▶ TO EXAMINE EXISTING APPROACHES AND PROVEN SUCCESS STORIES ON ENVIRONMENT CONSERVATION, I.E AWARENESS AND PREVENTION PROGRAMMES
- ▶ TO UNDERSTAND, INVOLVE AND DIALOGUE WITH YOUTH ABOUT ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY

TRAINING WORKSHOPS LIKE THIS ARE A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO BUILD NETWORKS AND FORGE FRIENDSHIPS AMONG YOUTHS FROM DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES ACROSS THE GLOBE. YOU HAVE THE CAPACITY TO BRING ABOUT POSITIVE CHANGES FOR OUR PLANET.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

**‘THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL 7’** CALLS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY WHILE ENCOUGARING GOVERNMENTS AND NGOs TO ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE IN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES.

**THIS IS CRUCIAL AS BASED ON *THE WORLD YOUTH REPORT 2007*, 1.2 3 BILLION YOUTHS AGED BETWEEN 15 TO 24 CONSTITUTE S 18% OF THE WORLD’S POPULATION.**

I AM PROUD TO SAY THAT THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN PROACTIVE MEASURES TO ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS BESIDES ADOPTING SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT POLICIES AND LAWS, THE GOVERNMENT ALSO ENCOURAGES THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY.

IN THE THE 9<sup>TH</sup> MALAYSIAN PLAN – A TOTAL OF **RM 1.13 BILLION** HAS BEEN ALLOCATED FOR ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION PURPOSES.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

**MELAKA’S VENICE OF THE EAST.**

I’M PROUD TO SAY THAT MORE THAN **RM 300 MILLION** HAS ALREADY BEEN SPENT TO REHABILITATE AND BEAUTIFY THE HISTORIC MELAKA RIVER. THE RIVER WAS ONCE KNOWN AS ‘THE VENICE OF THE EAST’ DURING THE 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY MELAKA SULTANATE EMPIRE. HOWEVER UNCONTROLLED DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROPER SEWAGE OVER 600 YEARS HAD RESULTED IN HEAVY POLLUTION. NOW WITH THE BEUTIFICATION PROJECTS ALONG THE RIVER, TOGETHER WITH THE DEEPENING AND CLEANING WORK DONE TO THIS RIVER, THE STATE GOVERNMENT OF MELAKA HAS MANAGED TO ATTRACT MORE AND MORE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS. BASED ON THE REPORT RECEIVED, A TOTAL OF **25,607** TOURISTS HAVE EXPERIENCED THE MELAKA RIVER CRUISE FROM 24<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2008 TO 8<sup>TH</sup> JUN 2008. WITH THE INCREASE NUMBER OF TOURISTS COMING TO MELAKA, THE DREAM HAS ALREADY COME TRUE TO THE STATE GOVERNMENT OF MELAKA TO MAKE THE MELAKA RIVER AS A CENTRE OF ATTRACTION TO ALL TOURISTS. FOR YOUR INFORMATION, THE MELAKA RIVER PLAYED A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE DURING THE ERA OF MELAKA SULTANATE (1400-1511), PORTUGUESE

INVASION ( 1511-1641 ), DUTCH INVASION ( 1641-1824 ) AND BRITISH COLONISATION ( 1824 –30<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 1957) IN THE CONTEXT OF BOOSTING ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF THE STATE.

THE RIVER OF MELAKA WAS CONSIDERED AS A HEART FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN MELAKA, WHERE THE PORT OF MELAKA WAS CONSIDERED THE BUSIEST PORT IN SOUTH EAST ASIA DURING THAT ERA. ACCORDING TO THE RECORDS OF **DUARTO BARBOSA**, A PORTUGUESE, IN THE 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AND EARLY 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY, HE WROTE:

“THIS CITY OF MALACCA IS THE RICHEST SEAPORT WITH THE GREATEST NUMBER OF WHOLESALE MERCHANTS AND ABUNDANCE OF SHIPPING AND TRADE THAT CAN BE FOUND IN THE WHOLE WORLD.”

**TOM PIRES**, ALSO A PORTUGUESE WRITER, WROTE:

“IN THE PORT OF MALACCA VERY OFTEN 84 LANGUAGES HAVE BEEN SPOKEN, EVERY ONE DINSTINCT.”

BASED ON THIS RECORD, IT IS CLEARLY STATED THAT MELAKA DURING THE 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AND EARLY 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY WAS A CENTRE FOR COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES WHEREBY THE MERCHANTS FROM ALL CORNERS OF THE WORLD FLOCKED TO MELAKA TO TRADE AND DEAL WITH ALL SORTS OF MERCHANDISE, ESPECIALLY FROM MELAKA AND THE INLAND AREAS.

IT WAS SAID THAT DURING THE MELAKA SULTANATE’S REIGN, NEARLY 2000 SHIPS ANCHORED AT THE MELAKA HARBOUR, MOVING THE MERCHANDISE, ESPECIALLY SPICES AND PRECIOUS METALS SUCH AS TIN AND GOLD.

I AM ALSO PROUD TO INFORM YOU THAT MELAKA HAS THE HONOUR OF BEING THE COUNTRY'S ONLY "SUSTAINABLE CITY" FOR 3 CONSECUTIVE YEARS FROM 2005 - 2007. FULL MARKS IN HOUSING, URBAN ECONOMY AND LAND USE CATEGORIES HAVE HELPED THE STATE CAPITAL TO EARN ENOUGH POINTS TO SECURE A PLACE AS A SUSTAINABLE CITY . (AS REPORTED IN NEW STRAITS TIMES NEWSPAPER ON THE 18<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2007 ).

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

THE STATE GOVERNMENT OF MELAKA IS ALSO VERY SERIOUS IN TACKLING THE PROBLEMS FACED BY YOUTHS. IN THE YEAR 2007 AND 2008, THE STATE GOVERNMENT OF MELAKA HAS SPENT **RM 849, 587.00** FOR YOUTH ORGANISATIONS IN MELAKA, i.e. **RM438,957.00 FOR THE YEAR 2007**, AND **RM410.630.00 FOR THE YEAR 2008**. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TOO, HAS ALLOCATED ABOUT **RM9,319,254.56** TO YOUTH ORGANISATIONS FROM THE YEAR 2004 TO THE YEAR 2008, i.e. RM 691,321,12 FOR THE YEAR 2004; RM 961,175.00 FOR THE YEAR 2005; RM 1, 749,833.44 FOR THE YEAR 2006; RM 3,592,731.00 FOR THE YEAR 2007; AND RM 2,324,194.00 FOR THE YEAR 2008. WITH THE MONEY SPENT FOR THE YOUTHS, BOTH FROM THE FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT OF MELAKA, WE HOPE THAT ALL THE YOUTH LEADERS IN MELAKA WILL WORK TOGETHER AND ATTEMPT TO CURB ALL SOCIAL ILLNESS WITHIN THE YOUTH COMMUNITY. IN FACT, WE TRUST THE YOUTH LEADERS AND WITHOUT THEM, YOUTHS WILL BE FEEBLE-MINDED AND WEAK BOTH MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY. HOWEVER IT'S ALREADY BEEN PROVEN THAT WITH THE ALLOCATIONS GIVEN TO THE YOUTH CLUBS IN MELAKA AND THROUGH THE ACTIVITIES PLANNED BY THE YOUTH LEADERS IN MELAKA, THEY SEEM TO BE FAR SIGHTED, VISIONARY AND RECOGNISE THEIR VALUE AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE STATE. FOR ME,

YOUTHS, AS A MAJOR GROUP IN THE TOTAL POPULATION OF MELAKA, SHOULD PLAY A POSITIVE ROLE TOWARDS ACHIEVING A 'DEVELOPED-MELAKA BY THE YEAR 2010'. THE STATE GOVERNMENT OF MELAKA REALLY FEELS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THEIR POSITIVE ATTITUDE IN THIS CONTEXT. WITHOUT THEIR ROLES, I FEEL, THE GOVERNMENT'S AIM TOWARDS A 'DEVELOPED MELAKA BY THE YEAR 2010' WILL NOT BE REALISED.

I CAME TO KNOW THAT THE FOUNDATION BECAME A MEMBER OF THE AUSTRALIAN BASED **CLEAN UP THE WORLD** ORGANISATION WHICH HAS **35 MILLION VOLUNTEERS IN MORE THAN 100 COUNTRIES.**

THE PROGRAM IS AIMED AT INSPIRING INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITIES **TO CLEAN UP, FIX UP AND CONSERVE THE ENVIRONMENT.**

IN OCTOBER 2008, THE FOUNDATION WILL HOST '**THE 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL NATIONAL LEVEL CLEAN UP MELAKA**'. I WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO JOIN THE FOUNDATION IN ORGANIZING THE CAMPAIGN AND WELCOME YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT AND CONTRIBUTION IN BOTH CASH AND KIND.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE RELEVANT MINISTRIES AND CORPORATE COMPANIES AND INDIVIDUAL DONORS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS TRAINING WORKSHOP.

WITH THAT, I HEREBY **DECLARE** THIS INTERNATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES ON ENVIRONMENT AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT 2006 **OFFICIALLY CLOSED.**

THANK YOU.

WABILLAHITAUFIKWALHIDAYAHWASSALAMUALAIKUM  
WARAHMATULLAHIWABARAKATUH.

Dsa/..