

Good Morning ,

HONORABLE TAN SRI MOHD ALI RUSTAM
CHAIRMAN , WORLD YOUTH FOUNDATION

MR. ROBB STEWART
SECOND SECRETARY
HIGH COMMISSION OF CANADA IN MALAYSIA

DATO' LIM SUE BENG

INVITED GUESTS

MEMBERS OF PRESS

PARTICIPANTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

GOOD MORNING !

WELCOME TO THE INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON CHILD MARRIAGE:
“STRENGTH IN UNITY, GIRLS ARE NOT BRIDES –
A GLOBAL YOUTH PARTNERSHIP TO END CHILD
MARRIAGE”.

YOUNG WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD ARE
NOW SPEAKING UP AND ARE ASKING THAT

THEY BE GIVEN THE SAME RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES AS MEN TO PARTICIPATE ACROSS ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY, INCLUDING ECONOMIC AND DECISION MAKING.

THEY ARE ASKING FOR GENDER EQUALITY !!

IN 2015, WORLD YOUTH FOUNDATION, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS MILLENNIUM CAMPAIGN AND STAMFORD COLLEGE MALACCA CONDUCTED THE FIRST EVER MY WORLD GLOBAL SURVEY.

IN THE SURVEY, **ABOUT 5.2 MILLION** YOUTH WHO RESPONDED OUT OF THE **8.5 MILLION** PEOPLE SURVEYED MARKED EQUALITY BETWEEN “MEN AND WOMEN” AS THE **5TH OR 6TH PRIORITY OUT OF THE 16 OPTIONS.**

THIS EVENT IGNITES A GLOBAL CONVERSATION TO EXPLORE THE POWER OF YOUNG PEOPLE AN HOW THEY CAN MAKE A

POSTIVE CHANGE TO STOP CHILD MARRIAGE AND ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY.

CHILD MARRIAGE IS A MANIFESTATION OF **GENDER INEQUALITY**, REFLECTING SOCIAL NORMS THAT PERPETUATE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST GIRLS.

CHILD MARRIAGE AMONG GIRLS IS MOST COMMON IN SOUTH ASIA AND SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, AND THE **10 COUNTRIES WITH THE HIGHEST RATES ARE FOUND IN THESE TWO REGIONS.**

ACCORDING TO THE ORGANATION GIRLS NOT BRIDES, EVERY YEAR **15 MILLION GIRLS ARE MARRIED AT A VERY YOUNG AGE, AS CHILDREN.**

IF THIS TREND CONTINUES, IF ORGANIZATIONS, GOVERNMENTS AND YOUTHS ALL OVER THE WORLD REMAIN SILENT, **BY 2030 AROUND 16.5**

MILLION GIRLS WILL MARRY AS CHILDREN EVERY YEAR.

ALTHOUGH CHILD MARRIAGE IS ENTRENCHED IN TRADITION AND CULTURE, WE STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT CHANGE IS POSSIBLE.

THIS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IS JUST ONE STEP THAT AIMS AT MULTIPLYING CONCRETE ACTIONS AGAINST CHILD MARRIAGE.

THIS ACTIVITY, AS SEVERAL OF THOSE THAT WYF WILL BE DEVELOPING THIS YEAR, TAKES PLACE WITHIN A WIDER FRAMEWORK: THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS 2030. AMONG THESE, SPECIFICALLY: **SDG4 EDUCATION, SDG5 GENDER EQUALITY, AND SDG17 PARTNERSHIP.**

THE IMPORTANCE OF ADVANCING ON THESE THREE GOALS IN PARALLEL IS RELATED TO THE INTERCONNECTION AMONG THEM.

THE UN WOMEN'S YOUTH AND GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY HIGHLIGHTS THE LEAPs FRAMEWORK THAT CALLS UPON:

A) **LEADERSHIP** - STRENGTHENING YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

B) **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**: PROMOTING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND SKILLS

C) **ACTION**: FOSTERING ACTION TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS

D) **PARTNERSHIP**: PROMOTING PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUNG WOMEN, YOUNG MEN AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS

AS LAKSHMI PURI, UN ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL SAID **“YOU CAN’T ALWAYS BUILD A FUTURE FOR OUR YOUTH, BUT WE CAN BUILD OUR YOUTH FOR THE FUTURE, AND IN THIS CASE FOR PLANET 50-50 .**

WE THANK ALL FOR YOU FOR COMING AND BEING A PART OF THIS IMPORTANT CONVERSATION.

CONVERSATIONS LIKE THIS ARE IMPORTANT AS WE TRY TO BREAK STEREOTYPES THAT HAVE BEEN CREATED THROUGH AGE OLD SYSTEMS OF PATRIARCHY WHICH IS DEEPLY EMBEDDED IN SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN NEED TO BE ON THE FRONTLINES OF THE FIGHT OF GENDER EQUALTY AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOU FOR STEPPING UP AGAINST GENDER INEQUALITY AND CHILD MARRIAGE.

LET US TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO GROW AS AN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND CREATE NETWORKS THAT LEAD TO PROGRESS, GENDER EQUALITY, BETTER EDUCATION AND YOUTH PARTNERSHIP.

THANK YOU.