

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CONVOCATION 2000, 31 JULY TO 6 AUGUST 2000
WU KWAI SHA YOUTH VILLAGE,
HONG KONG

REPORT TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION 2000

INTRODUCTION

Every two years, there occur these few days in the Y'sdom calendar that are earmarked for the youth. These days see them coming together, from all over the Y's world bringing with them experiences, ideas, concerns and of course, visions for the future. The millennium youth convocation took place in the serene atmosphere of the Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village in Hong Kong. The representatives came in from 29 countries ranging from Aruba to United States of America, fanning across 29 administrative regions of Y's Men International.

HISTORY

It had all got started, with the 1986 Youth Convocation held in Aarhus in Denmark. The convocations at Kyoto (1988), Minneapolis (1990) and Oslo (1992) helped youth strengthen the foundation of the youth movement and also devise strategies for the road ahead. The International Youth Convocation held at Singapore in 1994 saw the crystallisation of these ideas and the adoption of '*sure fire*' plans for success. The spark, which was long there, got ignited and the journey began with dreams leading the way. Changes were brought at the top so that the youth did have their own representatives in command, the International Youth Representative (IYR) in the International Council and the Youth Intern (YI) at the International Head Quarters. It was proved that the youth were indeed the heritage of this organisation and of course its commitment for the future. The dreams were transformed to vision at Fredericton, Canada in 1996. They readied themselves to learn, implement and impart knowledge, with the road ahead firmly in focus. The difference they brought about in the Y's world was there to be seen in 1998 at Helsinki, Finland. Here they renewed their pledge of being positive in commitment and practical in action towards the growth and development of the youth movement. Youth Y's Men's clubs started in different areas were instrumental in spreading the ideas and ideals of Y'sdom. This heralded the arrival of a dedicated core group willing to spread the message of our organisation far and wide. Different, they were for sure. But the common Y's spirit they had in them, encouraged them to forget their differences and participate together for the building of a brighter future. The youth were bent upon making a positive difference to the Y'sdom movement. History tells us that they did.

FOCUS

These convocations have brought in to focus the diversities abounding in this world and the need to rise above them to see the greater goal ahead. The importance of the ideals of equity, solidarity, shared responsibility, tolerance and support and above all appreciating the other viewpoint has been proved. The 147 *free souls* that came together in Hong Kong abounded in diversities from culture to ways of life. The seven days of the convocation saw them, cutting across the barriers of geography and history and participating towards the building of a brighter future. Here they were, hand in hand and firm in belief too!

PROJECTS

Talk about the various projects undertaken by Y's Men around the world, we see the vitality of the youth adding new dimensions to the great work our organisation is doing. Ranging from blood donation campaigns and supply of essential medicines, free lessons for the under privileged who cannot afford regular school, raising public opinion against child labour, conducting programmes like food festivals, fashion shows, cultural evenings to help with fund raising, assisting in relief work during times of natural disasters etc. The youth feels that the adoption of the flagship project '*Say No to Violence*' is a step in the right direction, as it would give a much needed focus to the Y's Men projects being organised in various parts of the world. There is a great deal of work being done. But still there is a lot more to do. We the youth thank you, the dedicated Y's Men and Y's Menettes all around the world for having encouraged us and supported us all through our learning phase and for giving us the chance to bring in a positive difference in to our organisation.

CHALLENGES

The new millennium has brought with it many new challenges as well as the old ones ranging from AIDS to Non Proliferation. One of the main questions being put forward is whether we have the courage to stand up to these and do what we can towards the building of a better world for the generations to come.

"No calling is more noble, and no responsibility greater, than that of enabling men, women and children in cities and villages around the world, to make their lives better".

*Kofi Annan
(21-Century Action Plan, United Nations).*

As an international service organisation with members coming in from 68 countries, it is up to us to take the lead in this fight. We need to identify our core strengths and build on them. What is needed here is a blend of the rich experience of Y's Men and the vigour of the youth. We do believe that we can stand up to your expectations and contribute to the great work that you have been doing all through these years. We do realise that: "Our way is not soft grass. It is a mountain path full of stones. But, it goes upwards, forwards and towards the sun". Together we will make it.

5 August 2000