



*Kementerian Pembangunan Wanita,  
Keluarga dan Masyarakat*

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

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**KIWANIS ANNUAL CHILDREN'S PARTY**

**SUNWAY LAGOON THEME PARK, SELANGOR  
18th JANUARY 2015**

## INTRODUCTION

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to record my heartfelt thanks to the Organizing Committee for inviting me to deliver the keynote address at this year's Kiwanis Annual Children's Party. This is the 17<sup>th</sup> annual party organized with the kind sponsorship of Sunway Lagoon Theme Park and Sunway Resort Hotel & Spa to give more than 500 the less fortunate children the opportunity to enjoy the food and various games in the theme park

2. So let me take this opportunity to congratulate Kiwanis Malaysia and Sunway for organizing this meaningful party that will bring joy and fun to the children. I would also like to congratulate Kiwanis Circle-K members from Southern University College and Help University who are present as volunteers to ensure this event will be a successful party.

3. It was Mark Twain who said that '*kindness is the language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see*'. The act of kindness demonstrated by Kiwanis Malaysia and Sunway will definitely touch the hearts of these children, and it is my fervent hope that more corporations and NGO will come forward to emulate this selflessness and compassionate effort to spread kindness and joy to the less fortunate children, the destitute poor and marginalized group.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

## **EMBLEM OF HOPE**

4. I was informed by The Governor of Kiwanis Malaysia that the Kiwanis International was founded in January 21, 1915 in Detroit, Michigan (USA) and this year is their 100th year of service to children and communities globally. This is indeed a commendable achievement and you are truly a towering giant in this field.

5. In Malaysia, Kiwanis is synonymous with their contribution to society in helping less fortunate children, including orphans, Down Syndrome and autistic children. My heartfelt congratulations to you and a team of dedicated Kiwanis staff on this effort that will bring hope and improvements to the lives of the less fortunate children.

6. If the dove is the emblem for peace, then I would place Kiwanis as the emblem of hope. The compassion and philanthropic spirit of Kiwanis to help the less fortunate children is like a beacon that illuminates light and hope to the world of these children. The programmes implemented comprising education, training and rehabilitation have equipped them with basic skills and knowledge that will help tremendously to integrate these special children into mainstream society.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

## **CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**

7. In Malaysia, the children population is estimated to be almost 9.9 million which is equivalent to 33% of the country's population. Therefore, my Ministry is responsible to ensuring a comprehensive child protection system for the Malaysian children. As a state party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Malaysia is committed to uphold the rights set out in the CRC in respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of children. I am proud to say that we have achieved great success in the protection and promotion of children's rights.

8. This commitment is not only limited to ordinary Malaysian children but to the less fortunate children as well. The TASKA OKU pilot project implemented in 2013 is one of the good examples for our commitment in ensuring an inclusive society. Therefore, the effort undertaken by Kiwanis in helping these less fortunate children are in line with the objective of the National Policy on Children and its Plan of Action which focus on children's survival, protection, development and participation. As such, the children shall enjoy a holistic development in a more conducive environment as provided for in Convention on the Rights of the Child. The National Child Protection Policy and Plan of Action ensure that every single child in Malaysia is protected from all forms of neglect, abuse, violence and exploitation.

Distinguished guest, ladies and gentlemen,

## **SOCIAL INNOVATION**

9. The Ministry and its agency, the Social Welfare Development are entrusted to plan and execute welfare aid and programmes to children who is one of our seven target groups. Our delivery system provides them with welfare service, financial aid, shelter institutions, health care and education as well as rehabilitation programme.

10. I strongly believe that the time has come for us to review such a delivery system and to craft an innovative strategy that will incorporate the NGO, philanthropy foundation, social purpose organizations and individuals as our strategic partners to assist us in our delivery system in order to provide excellent quality of welfare service to our target group. We seek new BIG IDEAS from NGO, social purpose organization and individuals who are passionate and committed to providing and implementing new social solutions to solve the problem.

11. Under the bold and new approach of social innovation which will be undertaken by my Ministry, I believe that the solutions to social issues and challenges in Malaysia can be found at the grass roots. The Ministry is looking for these BIG IDEAS that are creative, results-oriented programs and impactful in helping us to re-brand our delivery system. We seek the establishment of

smart collaboration and partnership with NGO, philanthropy foundation, social purpose organization and individuals to provide alternative solutions to the welfare needs of this vulnerable children group including children with disabilities and our target group comprising the elderly, single mothers, and the poor.

12. What we want from these NGO, philanthropy foundation, social purpose organization and individuals is the spirit of social entrepreneurship in using creativity and innovation to seek solution to social issues and welfare needs of target group. Social entrepreneurs are people with passion to solve a social problem, have an idea for a solution and endowed with entrepreneurial spirit and strong resolute will as well as resourceful to act and make it real.

13. This social innovation approach means that we are seeking community-driven solutions to help us plan and implement alternative welfare service and activities that will generate greater impact to the target group needs with less cost. It is a bottom-up approach in seeking solutions and not the old top-down approach where the Ministry and its agency decide and determine the solution and programme. We need to have this paradigm shift in exploring solutions as the days where we have the answers to all social issues are over. The best ideas and solutions can be found in those who are at the grass-roots.

## **CONCLUSION**

14. Lastly, let me once again congratulate the organizing team comprising Kiwanis Malaysia, Sunway Lagoon Theme Park, Sunway Resort Hotel and Spa for making this event a reality. And I wish all the children, volunteers and helpers who are here today a joyous and wonderful day.

Thank you.