

UNICEF MALAYSIA “ADVANCE HUMANITY” AWARD 2006

In conjunction with UN Country Team observation of Human Rights Day 2006

Wednesday, 13 December 2005 • Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Presentation Speech By

MS. GAYE PHILLIPS

UNICEF Representative, Malaysia

UNICEF Special Representative, Singapore & Brunei

Professor Jaap E. Doek

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Your Excellencies

Distinguished Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lina is a young, bright and vivacious twenty year old Malaysian girl. Like many other young people her age, she goes to college, has ambitions, loves hanging out with her friends, and looks forward to having a family and children in the future. Lina is also living with HIV, like 600,000 other young people between the ages of 15 and 24 years old in the East Asia Pacific region.

Twenty five years into this epidemic, the world is waking up to the reality that children and young people are the missing face of HIV/AIDS. The disease is robbing tens of millions of children of their childhood and threatening their future prospects. Of the 40.3 million people alive today with HIV infection, at least a third are young people under the age of 25. In Malaysia, new infections are doubling every three years with an average of 17 people testing HIV-positive daily. Of the 74,000 people infected in Malaysia, almost forty per cent occur in people below the age of 29.

A lack of knowledge about HIV is one of the main reasons for the rapid spread of the epidemic and its related stigma and discrimination. Cultural sensitivities often prevent an open discussion on the subject. Silence, ignorance and complacency are the biggest obstacles in the fight to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Responding to the needs of children and young people affected by HIV/AIDS entails the protection of their basic rights and the assurance of the fulfillment of these rights as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. An exercise of this nature requires joint action to ensure sustainable solutions to the problems faced by children.

The “*Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS*” Campaign launched by UNICEF and UNAIDS in 2005 provides a platform for such partnerships so that we may collectively advance action for all children and young people affected and infected with HIV and AIDS. In a globalised world, partnership with the corporate sector is key to ensuring the Campaign’s success. Businesses hold in their hands the power to make a positive difference through programs that generate awareness, provide education and galvanise support amongst their own industry circles and society at large.

To celebrate businesses in Malaysia for their social responsibility to children and young people, UNICEF Malaysia created the **Advance Humanity** Corporate Award in 2005. The Award is our way of saying thank you to businesses that demonstrate leadership and innovation in advancing humanity for children and young people, by making positive impacts to the communities they operate in. It is my hope that this Award will encourage businesses to engage with us so that we may, in partnership, find solutions for children in Malaysia.

For 2006, UNICEF Malaysia is proud to present the **Advance Humanity** Award to a home-grown Malaysian company for their dedication, enthusiasm and creative efforts to spotlight the impact of HIV on children using the high visibility and reach of the fashion industry as their platform.

Like music, fashion captures the imagination of young people. By using fashion to celebrate life, this local Malaysian business galvanized the support of its industry and created awareness about the impact of HIV/AIDS on children amongst designers, suppliers, clients and customers, many of them young people. Through a series of events and activities, they are challenging the stigma associated with AIDS and positively influencing the attitudes of their industry members and society. This year’s winner has carried the message of “Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS” to more than 1 million people in Malaysia through their direct customer reach program.

UNICEF Malaysia is proud to present our 2006 **Advance Humanity** Corporate Award to Eclipse for having the courage to associate your brand to a difficult issue and for sharing your creative talents in support of “Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS”. You have used positive trends in fashion to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and fight stigma and discrimination.

We hope that your commitment will inspire other businesses in Malaysia to take action and engage in meaningful partnerships and programs which will benefit children and young people in Malaysia.

Accepting the Award for Eclipse is their Managing Director and founder, Mr. Sonny San.