

IP SPEECH

It is a joy for me to be standing in front of you today in Sendai. Thank you for choosing me to serve you as your International President for Y's Men International over the coming year.

I have chosen my theme "building today for a better tomorrow" to reflect much of the great work going on behind the scenes and to ensure that YMI is ready for what the future will bring.

YMI is a medium-sized organisation formed to serve the YMCA, the communities in which we live and each other. Ties with the YMCA have been strengthened over the past year in so many ways: the first coming at IC18 in Yeosu where YMCA staff were invited to attend the IC to find ways for us to work more effectively together. Another significant event occurred when Jose Varghese came to be our ISG. Being employed by the YMCA for over 20 years, Jose has been able to create an environment in which his past experience can now be used to shape and enhance our future.

It is a very exciting time to be involved in YMI. Much has happened over the past year already as IPIP Moon Sang-bong has encouraged us to think that “Yes, we can change”. In our world, change is something inevitable and doesn’t always happen in the way we imagine. The Legacy Project was an idea that started as something small, but has now grown into a much larger concept as the year progressed. Plans were put together to form a Legacy Project to honour Founder Paul William Alexander. ISG Jose combined the Towards 22 goals and the Legacy Project into the new “Challenge 22” program, enabling members to visualise the steps needed to achieve the goals and targets which have been set before us for about 10 years.

There are now three years left for us to work towards achieving what is laid out before us. And then, what a joyous time it will be in Hawaii and around the world as we celebrate reaching 50,000 members and having clubs in over 100 countries throughout the world. Right now, I am very pleased about the current growth spurt that is occurring as opportunities present themselves, especially with the YMCA. Our own Area, Asia Pacific, is making good

strides in efforts to consolidate membership. Connections have been formed in several countries in Europe and in Latin America and other growth is happening in Africa resulting in 10 or more new countries being involved. Many leaders in India have also been sponsoring clubs and achieving growth, resulting in outstanding growth there too.

Each Club President has received information about Challenge 22 this year, outlining several tasks for each club to work on. I am looking forward to reading about your club's most memorable project that was planned, to hear about your current community work and the clubs which you have sponsored. This will have the effect of bringing vibrancy and new life into YMI while at the same time passing on a valuable legacy to be carried forward.

I have a great team of Area Presidents for this coming year. Their work ethic and level of enthusiasm have impressed me already at MYM and RDE training sessions as well as in the recent ICM meeting. The goals and targets that we have set together are challenging but I know that they will do their best to achieve them with the help of their

teams at home. Most are already working hard towards having a successful year. Dwight Eisenhower reminds us that “there are no victories at bargain prices!” I am thankful for the diversity and uniqueness in the composition of this group, which provides great support for each other, the IEOs and ICM members.

I am thankful to be part of a committed IEO team, IPIP Moon Sang-bong, IPE Poul-Henrik Hove Jakobsen, ISG Jose Varghese and IT Philips Cherian. IHQ staff too are efficient, informative and helpful at all times, sharing the experience and knowledge of having supported many leaders over the years.

Thanks also to my special family, my home club and friends for their encouragement and support which has enabled me to take on this role with confidence. I know also that I am here for a purpose and that my faith will provide the strength and wisdom for what lies ahead.

Blessings to you all