

## **Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul Speech**

After receiving the LWEW (Leading Women Entrepreneurs of the World TM) award in 2004, I have learnt to open my eyes to the world and found out that there was still a lot in life that I didn't know. To open myself, I have met great people from multi nationalities. Through new friendships, I have learnt new ideas, new perspectives, new opportunities and new motivation to pursue my new goal. In order to keep up, I need to have a constant process of making myself relevant to the world. In order to do so, non-stop learning is the core. But most of all I have realized that there is the urgent call for all of us from around the globe to eliminate misunderstanding and to create linkage to bridge all different mosaic of cultures and nationalities together and to take up the social responsibility in order to tie our world of diversity for a common future of tomorrow.

Two weeks ago I was invited to attend a Global Action Forum under the theme of Arab-Asian Dialogue in Singapore. It was a gathering of 200 minds of young dynamic businessmen half from Arab and the other half from Asian countries to learn from each other and to brainstorm for the realistic action. It was a very unique, thought provoking and new learning experience for me. One would have expected to hear discussions about business opportunities, energy, trade, new investments, real estate etc from such network of people from business profession. But instead the objectives of the meeting were to create "joint development of future generation of both world" and "partnership of the same souls". On the panel H.R.H. Prince Faisal of Jordan had stressed on the importance of education, health and social security for both parts of the continent, how to create a long term partnership but still keep the honor of each other's culture, how to unite and co-exist in peace w/ sustainable growth.

From the same event H.E. Sr. Minister Goh Chok Tong of Singapore had endorsed that "bridges" of different cultures should be created. 2000 years ago "Silk Road" was trade route linking these 2 parts together. So "new Silk Road" of old time friends could be revived and supported. The challenges we would have to take would be reconcilability how to keep up with modernity & change while preserving our traditions and cultures. And at the same time how to maximize human resource and customize the potentiality of each others. We needed to prepare new generation across the regions and around the world to have good education like Math, English and Science as well as Honor System, Social Responsibility and the understanding of all different cultures. With the current political challenges in some parts of the world, the terrorism which was the world long term threat, all nations should join hands and hopefully the young leaders we had created would be the one who shaped up the future of 21<sup>st</sup> Century of Unity and Sustainability.

So therefore what I would like to share with you today will stress on the character and role of the "new leaders" in ourselves and in the next generation we have to educate. New leaders must understand this new social compacts, the global challenges and how the world is moving. New leaders must have clear vision because they are navigators. New leaders must mobilize resources from old time resources within the community to today resources from around the globe using the technology of ICT to link them all into one.

New leaders can be created by implanting “thought leadership” to do social work for the less fortunate. This will equip ourselves and our youth with knowledge and understanding of the world to bridge the divide of differences while keep each culture identity. Thought leadership comes before economy development. It helps to create direct communication between the 2 nations. Innovation will come after. Thought leadership reaches more people. It reaches across and down to get better understanding of each other problems and context. Then transparency will be realized. New confidence will be born. Sustainable relationship will flourish. It will bridge “hearts” of all souls into one world of peace and harmony.

This “thought leadership” was the main subject we had brainstormed at the Arab-Asian Dialogue to come up with a realistic joint “thought leadership” project we could do together. Finally we had decided to launch some programs and I had to be responsible for “teacher exchange” project between Middle East and Thailand. The unknown world of Arab people to me had totally been changed within those 2 days of Forum. Through this meaningful activity, I had learnt that we were different in religions and cultures but sharing the same “heart” of human being.

LWEW events also share the same spirit. When LWEW came to Bangkok for their 2006 Annual Celebratory Event and Gala and their 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary last March, it was a great success and most memorable for all parties, the new honorees, the old honorees, the Thai honorees and most of all the city of Bangkok, Thailand. The new honorees were well honored. They received the award from Princess Ubolrat and the Gala event was televised. The old honorees were being appreciated for they had the chance to give speech to Thai students, teachers and young entrepreneurs in our LWEW seminar the day after the event. The Thai honorees were glad that Thailand had been well perceived and admired by those influential international ladies who could become the best ambassadors of Thailand to all their countries to reflect the right image of this country and its people.

LWEW is a not-for-profit organization that represents some of the world most powerful and successful female entrepreneurs by identify, honor, promote and encourage female entrepreneurial excellence. Since 1997, over 300 women representing more than 56 countries have been inducted as honorees. LWEW’s vision is to “make a difference” to the global awareness and culture of “entrepreneurial women in business”. Our organization provides an exclusive forum for honorees to exchange ideas and network with like-minded individuals, but we are also inclusive of the global business community as a whole and committed to providing a valuable legacy for future generations of women. Our focus is on maximizing the opportunities of the present with a view toward making a difference in the future, particularly for the generation of tomorrow. In keeping with this Cheryl Womack Chairperson of LWEW has laid the groundwork for “Take the Next Step” grant that aims to promote new business opportunities for today’s women and create a valuable legacy for future generations including a free seminar from our outstanding past honorees to inspire students, teachers and young entrepreneurs of the host country.

In 2004 when I flew in to Sydney to receive this award, I was wondering whether I had done enough to deserve it and why they had to require us to fly there and attend the whole 5 day events. The answer came after spending days and nights among new and old honorees who also flew from all parts of the world chatting, networking,

dining, visiting exclusive places and homes of the dignified locals. I had learnt many great life stories. I had learnt that despite different nationalities, we did share many common problems and failure and most of all the fighting spirit to survive, to go on, to overcome, to achieve whatever dream we had. What was more important than success in business was friendship for life we could get from new friends we had met there. The inspiration and knowledge I had received had influenced my life to do more for the others and to dare to take another “new steps” until today.

In conclusion I would like to summarize to you all to use this network of BPW International Conference to open yourself up to the world. Take initiative to constantly learning from the Conference and your friends of BPW to make yourself relevant. Be a new leader using “thought leadership” to bridge all nations together, to touch people and to create new generation of understanding through social works and education. With new confidence and faith for one another, sustainable growth and global development will come. All of these are the role of new leader lying in all of you. Then peace, happiness and prosperity will come.

Thank you