



**27th Asia-Pacific Regional
Scout Conference**
15-21 February 2022

*Adapting to a
Changing World*

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Address by WOSM Secretary-General

WOSM Secretary General's Remarks at the APR Scout Conference

Thank you and warm greetings to all.

I am joining you live from the Philippines where I arrived to be with our ALL-STARS TEAM in their delivery of this milestone event.

From snowy Chicago to sunny Manila, I send warm Scouting greetings to the delegates of all National Scout Organizations, The Chairperson of the RSC Ambassador Ahmad Rusdi, and all members of the Regional Scout Committee, Members of the WSC, Members of the sub-committees, our Regional Director JR and the APR Staff team, partners, volunteers, special guests, and all friends.

Being in the Philippines this week reminds me of our last major in-person gathering here in Manila, just less than 4 years ago.

Little did we know back then about how the world will change and about how the spirit of our Movement will once again prove that the Scouting motto "Be prepared" is not just a motto.

As it was tested under two World Wars and major events in the past 115 years, it was tested this time under a global pandemic and it once again **prevailed**.

Over the past triennium, we have seen NSOs and the Region at large demonstrate, that during the difficult times, we step up.

Just going through the Triennial Report offers a great illustration of the service and support you have provided to your communities and we keep providing to young people, this generation of youth who have been deprived of the ability to simply exercise their youth during the pandemic.

What gives me hope is that we are part of the solution and we can help the world recover because we have a winning formula in Scouting to: address youth development needs; tackle the planet sustainability question; and support our communities.

We have a method that is time-tested and adaptive to change:

Young people need skills and opportunity to belong and develop. You find that in Scouting!

The planet needs young people to lead in preserving nature and tackling climate change. And who better than the Scouts to lead these efforts.

Our method can help in bringing this generation of young people from the heavy lockdowns and endless screen times to be out, enjoy nature and learn skills for life. And you certainly find that in Scouting!

Close to 70% of the world's youth live in the Asia-Pacific Region. Scouting mirrors the world's population with almost the same percentage of Scouts in APR.

Young people in the Asia-Pacific are eager to engage and be part of designing the future that they deserve. Scouting should continue to enable them to seek leadership roles and be part of designing their educational programs.

If the Founder would be with us today, he too would say, "Ask the boy, ask the youth!"

I commend the efforts by the NSOs and the Region to engage more young people in leadership roles, especially young women and girls. But I hope we can all agree that we can do more.

Seeing the APR Conference being presided over for the first time by talented young women, shows that the time to engage young people and have them represented in the front seats, is now.

Scouting is an intergenerational Movement, we need all, the young and the not so young!

I probably now stand at the border line between the two.

So let me share with you my belief: Youth Engagement is not about having the more experienced stepping down. For the older leaders I say, **leadership has no expiry date**, and we need you to continue being active and engaged.

For the young I say, as there is no expiry date for service, there is **also no future activation date for you to lead**. Your time is now, not tomorrow, and the **Movement has space for all to serve**.

Working with young people in designing the programs and offering seats at national boards for young leaders is not a favour that we give to the young. If anything, it's in fact a favour any board can give itself to stay relevant and

connected to the young people we serve, especially when we see a drop in membership.

As the WSC Chairperson stated, our Triennial Plan of 8 key priorities adopted by the WSC builds on these opportunities and also answers these challenges. Our world is changing and our Movement has the responsibility to continue adapting and innovating.

Brothers and sisters,

As we all worked to shoulder the heavy impact of the past 2 years, I am very optimistic about the future.

During the conference, you will be able to learn in greater detail about the work we are doing to serve you. Everything we do is designed with one key principle: How we can best support our 172 NSOs in their efforts to empower more youth. Our

- Services and the improvements we will introduce to WOSM Services is all at your disposal;
- The fully revamped Data Portal will make us more data-driven in designing interventions;
- The improved BWF and Scouts for SDGs will continue to complement your national program and show our collective contributions across countries;
- Our new communication initiatives will increase our influence and show the power of Scouting;
- Our Membership Growth support will be there as we recover the membership, retain, and reach out for more;
- Our strategic partnerships such as the Global Youth Mobilization that WOSM is leading globally will enable our national organizations to access support and assume similar leading roles in the national youth policies;
- And Our plans on Sustainability and ensuring that WOSM is a global leader, is our commitment to this generation and future generations.

Brothers and sisters,

The Regional Conference offers a great opportunity to exchange ideas and sharpen priorities.

Can I take this opportunity to make a strong plea to all to act on an overarching priority for our Movement:

That is to keep young people safe from harm at all times by ensuring that we have policies, procedures, trained leaders and empowered youth to create safe spaces for all. Safe from Harm is a critical question to all of us.

At the World Scout Conference, we agreed to have a full compliance with the SfH policy by 2024. If your NSO is not in compliance yet, please table this critical issue at your next national board meeting. This issue cannot wait, and the good news is that we have a dedicated team of staff, volunteers, and consultants to support you.

All these are areas that we are working on to ensure that we keep Scouting well positioned to achieve its mission.

Before closing, let me take this opportunity to thank HE Ambassador Ahmad Rusdi for his leadership to the RSC during this extended triennium. His diplomacy, partnership and dedication to lead during this critical triennium made a huge difference.

I thank with him the members of the RSC, the Chairs and members of all sub-committees and the Consultants of the Asia-Pacific Region.

My thanks to my colleagues in the APR Support Centre of the World Scout Bureau. I am proud of them and very pleased with the transformation we have achieved in modernizing the One WSB across all support centres and ensuring that we deliver as one.

Dear brothers and sisters:

Recovery, Sustainability and Impact is the title for our triennium. Let's work together to ensure that Scouting is there to aid the recovery of this largest generation of young people, ensure the sustainability of our Movement and planet, and always work towards impact. As we sum it up beautifully in Scouting, our aim is to create a better world.

Wishing you all a great conference. Thank you very much.