

WORDS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF PERU, MR. ALAN GARCIA PEREZ, DURING A MEETING WITH YOUNGSTERS PARTICIPATING In the National Gathering “Development Yes, Drugs No”

Golden Room, Government Palace, June 2, 2007

Mr. Alejandro Vassilaqui, Director of CEDRO.

My dear youngsters, more than one thousand young activists, soldiers fighting for a healthier life, for a disciplined and hardworking life and for a greater country, our Peru:

It is with deep satisfaction that the President of your country welcomes you to the Golden Room. You have come from more than 60 different cities all over our country displaying the real core of our young population, the unbendable spirit of a youth that will not give up before evasion, indulgence and drugs. I thank you Mr. Vassilaqui, and I thank each and every one of you and the people you represent, for oxygenating this Government House, for bringing in this new youthful atmosphere which is the foundation for the construction of a new Peruvian destiny.

Just like you, we are committed to undertaking an active and firm battle against drugs, against cocaine; we want a homeland free of the easy temptation to use drugs, which little by little has managed to erode and pervert many youngsters. And we also want a country that is clear from the global accusation of being the producer of this poison, of cocaine, and drugs in general.

We have stated that we will not only combat drugs through the eradication of illegal crops, but also prosecuting the dealers who produce the drug, who sell them in or outside our boundaries, prosecuting any and all who supply drug dealers with chemicals and acids necessary to produce the drugs, prosecuting any and all who benefit economically from the drugs and those who hide behind formal businesses laundering the drug lords' money. Ours is a full-blown battle against all the drug fronts.

But our achievements would be few if we did not have youngsters just like you who are the bearers of a healthy youth, who are the essence of a new Peru. I know that you will be spokespersons of the young people, no matter where you go, in order to achieve a cleaner drug-free country, thus centering your efforts in building a greater and better Peru.

The fight against drugs undertaken by the young people is very important, perhaps even more crucial than the fight undertaken by adults, because when a youngster just like you engages in a battle against this scourge, he/she is choosing a different life: a willful life.

The person that chooses the road of evasion, indulgence and the momentary distraction brought about by drugs lacks this discipline and this spiritual force.

When I was younger I saw many youngsters with enormous potential self-destruct because of their use of drugs – some were soft drugs and others hard drugs, but in the end they were all drugs. And I saw how these substances crumbled and destroyed their abilities and their will. You have chosen the path of willfulness and spiritual force in order to build, not to destroy.

Life is all about discipline. Drugs destroy and alter the spiritual discipline of your life; they condemn and confine us into a mediocre life, steering our lives instead of letting us be the leaders. Each and every one of us can be a leader who is in possession of wisdom and a geniality that cannot remain asleep but rather must be built upon with effort. This is why we truly hate drugs, because they are the easy way to avoid and escape the difficulties of life.

We must confront these difficulties and defeat them. We must all demonstrate throughout our lives our spiritual force; unfortunately, drugs destroy this force. That is why I am so pleased to see youngsters like you; and I congratulate CEDRO for creating awareness in all of our country to actively combat drugs.

I congratulate you on these meetings which I am sure will allow all of you to reinforce your will to fight drugs, but mainly to know each other. You come from 60 different cities; do not ever lose touch, keep in contact, make friendships, form a new generation that is willing to help each other and create a healthy youth, for the good of our beloved Peru.

Cheers for Peru!
Cheers for our youth!

Lima, June 2, 2007