

So, against that backdrop, I would like to turn this summit meeting into an occasion where we add a new introductory chapter for our renewed Japan-U.S. cooperation, through which we effectively utilize our robust alliance for the peace, stability, and prosperity regionally—namely, in the Asia-Pacific—and also, eventually, globally.

In our joint vision statement, which was released during my visit to the United States back in April, both of us confirmed that we will collaborate with each other through Japan's policy of what I call proactive contribution to peace, based on the principle of international cooperation and the U.S. rebalance policy. We

also confirmed that we will further cooperate in ensuring regional peace, stability, and prosperity. So I would like to have a candid discussion with you, Barack, today on specific ways to materialize such cooperation. In addition, I very much look forward to having a discussion in addressing global challenges, including climate change.

*President Obama.* Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:38 p.m. in the garden tent at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila hotel. Prime Minister Abe spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at a Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative Town Hall at Taylor's University in Subang Jaya, Malaysia November 20, 2015

*The President.* Hello, everybody! Everybody, have a seat. Thank you so much. Well, good afternoon. This is a—[*applause*]. Thank you! This is a very good-looking group. [*Laughter*] I want to thank Carrie for the introduction and your outstanding work to empower women in Singapore. Give Carrie a big round of applause. It is wonderful to be back in Malaysia. I want to thank everybody at Taylor's University for hosting us. Give them a big round of applause. And I want to thank the Government and the people of Malaysia for their hospitality and leadership this year in hosting ASEAN. So *selamat petang*. [*Laughter*]

I was just at the APEC summit in the Philippines. [*Applause*] The—well, we've got—the Philippines are in the house. And so I just landed a few minutes ago, and this is my first stop. Summits like APEC and ASEAN are important, and I meet with all these leaders, and we take pictures, and we talk about all kinds of things. So I don't mind spending time with older people like me. [*Laughter*] But one of the things that I love doing most on these trips is the time I spend with young people like you, because your energy and your idealism and your optimism—because that reflects the future and the promise of the ASEAN region.

I'm not going to give a long speech because this is a town hall and I want to spend most of my time in a conversation with you. I did one of these when I was here in K.L. last year. Once again, what I really want to do is take your questions, have a conversation about your hopes and your ideas, how you see the future. But I do want to briefly explain why I believe a partnership with America is so important.

As you know, I've got a strong personal connection to Southeast Asia. I spent time as a young boy in Indonesia. My sister Maya is—[*applause*]—Indonesia is in the house. And my sister Maya is half-Indonesian; she was born in Jakarta. My mother spent years working in rural villages in this region, empowering women. And so the rich tradition of the Pacific—the food, the people, which—I like the people, and I really like the food—[*laughter*]—this is part of who I am and how I see the world.

But even if I didn't have that special attachment, I would still know that the United States has to be a partner with Southeast Asia. It's critical for our shared future. It's home to so much of humanity, home to some of the world's fastest growing economies. And that's a key focus of my foreign policy: deepening en-

agement with nations and peoples in this region.

And we've been very successful over the last several years, making great strides. We've strengthened our alliances. We've deepened our partnerships with emerging countries and institutions like ASEAN. We recently negotiated the landmark Trans-Pacific Partnership to grow our economies and support jobs in each of our countries. Together, we're working to stand up for human rights and democracy. And I want to commend, in particular, the people of Myanmar for their participation in last week's historic election. It is another critical step in their transition to a more peaceful and prosperous and democratic Myanmar.

But as important as they are, security alliances and trade agreements are not enough. Governments and even businesses don't have all the solutions. We've got to have a relationship that's from the bottom up, not just from the top down, not just among the most wealthy or powerful, but also from ordinary people who are trying to give opportunity to everybody. And so that people-to-people relationship is what's really important, and relationships between young people within the region and with the United States is what's really important. Connecting to each other, understanding each other can have a profound impact, whether it's a student exchange program or Yuna doing a duet with Usher. *[Laughter]*

Now, think about it. Here in the ASEAN region, 65 percent of the population is under 35 years old—65 percent. That's like 600 million people. That's a lot of people. Young people like you are going to define the future of this region for decades to come. And thanks to technology and social media, you're more connected to each other than ever before, you're more connected to the world than ever before. I can barely keep up with you. I've got to get help from Malia and Sasha just to figure out how to use the phone. *[Laughter]*

And perhaps more than any generation in human history, you have the power to change your communities and your countries and the world. And at a time when we face enormous global challenges—from the environment and

climate change to empowering women, to income inequality and small-business development—we have to have your talents, and we have to have your skills.

A lot of us have been thinking about the horrific attacks in Paris. And when you think about the terrible vision of those who carried out those attacks, and you contrast that with the young people who are represented here, who are building things and helping each other and creating businesses and opportunities for themselves and for others, and when you think about the incredible potential of ASEAN as a place of religious diversity and ethnic diversity, you can set an example, not just to stand up to violent extremism, but to build interfaith dialogue, promote tolerance, and to combine an appreciation of your own culture and traditions with the modern world.

And for all these reasons, 2 years ago, we launched YSEALI, the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative. And the goal is to empower young people like you with the skills and the resources and the networks so you can turn your ideas into action. And since then, our YSEALI network has grown to more than 55,000 members across 10 ASEAN countries. We're still growing. We've held nine regional exchanges. We're offering workshops and online networking and hands-on training. We started a grant competition to support you as you work together across countries to tackle regional issues like climate change. I want to commend Malaysia for its new partnership with the Peace Corps to create a Malaysian volunteer corps that works in underserved communities in other ASEAN countries. That's part of the spirit of YSEALI.

And as part of our YSEALI Fellowship, we've now welcomed more than 300 young people from across ASEAN to the United States, with another 200 who are coming in the next 6 months. So these Fellows study in American universities. They experience our State and local government. They work in our nonprofit sector. They intern in major U.S. companies. I welcomed some Fellows to the White House. And then, they take these experiences home, and they apply them to their

communities. And they're not just learning from the people that they're working with in the United States, they're learning from each other as part of network.

So they come back, they're launching their own businesses. They're advocating for an end to human trafficking or expanding women's rights, fighting corruption, promoting transparency and good governance. The point is, every day, the young men and women of YSEALI are making a difference across this region.

And just as important as the tools and the skills that you're gaining is the connections that you're creating, because as part of the YSEALI network, you're forging friendships that you'll draw on for a lifetime. And you're sharing ideas and learning from each other. Because when you're trying to turn that idea into a business or start a new civic organization or even running for office, it helps to have people who understand the kind of change that you're trying to make and who you can go to for help and encouragement. And maybe they have some experiences that are relevant to what you're trying to do. So, as young people, you have to stand together.

And that's why YSEALI is so important. Because, of all the challenges and threats that the world faces, I am absolutely confident that young people like you, with your passion and drive and commitment, you can make a difference. And I know you will. You already are.

So, before I open it up for questions, one of the things I want to do is just call on a few people who've been part of the YSEALI network so they can give you just some examples of the great work that they're doing. Also I want some of the older people here to hear about the wonderful things—[laughter]—YSEALI is doing. So I've got three individuals that I want to call on first, and then I'm just going to open it up and we'll have a good conversation.

So the first, we're going to have Htoo Kyaw Win from Burma who's working on behalf of human rights and civil society organizations as part of the transition to democracy. So go ahead, please—do we have—by the way, do we have microphones, or—here we go.

*Journal of Human Rights and Democracy*  
Editor Htoo Kyaw Win. Thank you so much, Mr. President. And you said that recently the congratulation for our election. Yes, it's a pleasure time for me, this time, it's a better time for me. Even that over 10 years ago said, I cannot imagine that I will be here now, because, as you know, Myanmar people have been staying under the military regime for a long time. But after 2010 elections, as you know, Myanmar is a little bit, I mean, the transparency, and some settle. So I joined—I mean, 2013, I founded the Myanmar Knowledge Society that is a publication house which focuses on the human rights and democracy issues. I am one of the editors of the *Journal of Human Rights and Democracy*. That is a very factual journal of human rights in Myanmar after 2010. And then, last spring, I joined, I mean, the YSEALI program that accepted to say the ACYPL program—the American Council of Young Political Progress. So I applied to the program. So I was in Washington, DC. I was working in the Amnesty International as my internship. And there, even I didn't have, I mean, friends across the ASEAN country. But after I applied this program, I've got now so many ASEAN countries, especially my friends from the Indonesia. We always talk about their transitional period. And we, Myanmar people, always compare with the, I mean, transitional period and democratization process in Indonesia. We always talk about Indonesia. So I can learn some knowledge and ideas and experience from my friends from Indonesia. So that is why I'm in the YSEALI program, inspire me too much: before, after very, very difference for me.

So I do encourage you guys, we would go on in the future. And the, by the way, I really thank you, Mr. President, because I think I noticed that actually one of your policy—I mean, engagement policy I admire most because you use this policy as a test—Myanmar—I mean, more transparency and open to the democracy. Just now, recently, our historic and successful election had been. So that is one of the outcomes of your engagement policy. And the other outcome is me and my friends from there, Myanmar.

One of my friends from here, he is the—actually the former political prisoner. We were working politics, for governance here. He was sentenced to prison—me too. Now, he's now studying in the Australian National University. His subject is political science. Now, I am in Myanmar—human rights defender for him. I am the chairperson of that for us.

Yes, thank you. My program just provided initiatives across the country. Now, I am working for promoting the human rights and democracy in Myanmar—not only Myanmar, but also the world, especially the Southeast Asian region. Thank you so much.

*The President.* Fantastic. Well, thank you, Htoo Kyaw. That was an outstanding presentation. And we are feeling optimistic about what can happen in Myanmar, in part because of young people like you.

Next, we've got Choon Sian Choo from Malaysia who is training young people in entrepreneurship.

*LifeChamp Chief Executive Officer Choon Sian Choo.* Thank you, Mr. President. And it was such an honor to be here. My name is Choon Sian from Malaysia, and I'm the founder of this youth development organization called LifeChamp. So, in Malaysia, we have the highest household debt in ASEAN—[inaudible]—ASEAN. And with our youth piling up massive college loans, college loans at a young age, and eventually, they resort to seeking credit counseling. So what we do through our Young Money Master program is to teach them to have good money habits, good money beliefs, teach them some money management skills, personal financial planning, and how to do their investment.

So YSEALI program has helped me tremendously in my endeavor. So, through YSEALI, I was flown to Washington, DC, to participate in a global summit, whereby, I get to learn. I joined the financial inclusion track, which I got to learn from some of the world's best minds on how I can structure the more effective financial education curriculum.

So, upon my return, I took the ideas and came back and restructured my program to improve my curriculum. And eventually, YSEALI

helped me to launch a series of campaigns and workshops nationwide to reach out to the underprivileged children, underprivileged students to teach them about to be more money-smart. And the other way we do is, we always have to talk about entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship as well.

So I want to thank President for such a marvelous initiative. And before—because of that, I learned, and I benefited. I thank you so much.

*The President.* Thank you. Thank you. That's outstanding.

So, finally, we've got Chindavone Sanlath from Laos, who is dedicating herself to protecting the environment. Chindavone.

*YSEALI Institute on Global Environmental Issues Alumna Chindavone Sanlath.* Thank you very much, Mr. President. I am very, very happy to be here today. I am Chindavone, a YSEALI alumni from Laos PDR. I was born in one of the most remote parts of Laos. And my father passed away before I was born. And because of my background, I never thought that one day I would be able to help my community to make some changes to my community. Because of YSEALI, now my thoughts changed.

Being a part of YSEALI expanded my thinking and enabled me to see the challenges facing my community and empowered me to be a part of the solution. I'm now working with a project called Forest Law Enforcement, Governance, and Trade, which aims to promote legal timber trade and sustainable forest management. I have already been able to apply the lessons I learned in Montana to help improve forest management in Laos. YSEALI is my life-changing chapter. Thank you very much.

*The President.* Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. So you can tell, just talking to these young people, the incredible things that they're already doing. I am wondering, was it cold in Montana? [Laughter] Did you have a big coat?

*Ms. Sanlath.* No.

*The President.* No, when you were in Montana, did you have to wear a big coat? Or was it—

*Ms. Sanlath.* Oh, no, no—

*The President.* It was okay? All right, you're tough. Because Montana is cold. [Laughter] But the—maybe, I guess if it was in the summer, it was okay. Yes, the—it's beautiful there.

But this just gives you some sense of the incredible work that's already being done by so many of these young people.

So, with that, I want to open it up for questions, comments, ideas. And what—[laughter]—here's what I'm going to do, though, is I'm going to call—I'm going to go boy, girl, boy, girl. [Laughter] That way we can make sure that it's fair. I'm also going to take off my jacket because it is a little warm. [Laughter] And I know you may ask me some tough questions, so I want to—[applause]. Okay, so let's see who's going to go first.

The—I'm going to call this young lady right here, in the green. And if you can please introduce yourself first and then the question or the comment.

Q. Hi. Thank you, Mr. President. My name is Elizabeth, and I'm from Indonesia.

*The President.* Hey, *apa kabar?*

[At this point, the questioner responded in Bahasa Indonesia, and no translation was provided.]

*The President.* Dari mana? Jakarta?

*Climate Change/Alternative and Renewable Energy Sources and Technologies*

Q. Jakarta. Well, recently, you had a discussion about the role of the entrepreneurs to tackle climate change. So my question is basically—because some of us here are entrepreneurs. We are not yet political leaders, but we are entrepreneurs. So what is your expectation from entrepreneurs, young fellows, YSEALI for the climate change?

*The President.* Good. The—

Q. And also—

*The President.* Yes?

Q. [Laughter] Yes, for the upcoming U.N. climate change in Paris, whether you are optimistic about the result of that.

*The President.* Good. What kind of business do you want to start?

Q. Now I'm in the energy and environment, so I'm working—

*The President.* Do you already have a business going—

Q. Not yet.

*The President.* —or you have an idea that you want to do?

Q. Not yet. I have an idea about what to create.

*The President.* Excellent. Okay.

Q. Thank you. Yes.

*The President.* Thank you. The—well, first of all, I think that so many of the young people here understand why climate change is so important. The science is very clear that because of the carbon emissions that we send in, mostly from the use of fossil fuels—oil, gas, coal—the temperatures worldwide, on average, are getting higher. And that begins to change weather patterns. The oceans begin to get warmer. The ice in the Arctic begins to melt. And you get a feedback loop that as things get warmer, that creates even more of a trend towards warming.

And if we don't stop the amount of carbon that we send out and we don't find new ways of creating energy, then you'll see the oceans rise, more extreme weather events, more drought, more flooding, bigger hurricanes, typhoons. And it could have a devastating effect on countries all around the world. And probably, the biggest effect will be on poorer countries who don't have as much infrastructure to protect themselves.

So this is not just an environmental issue, but it's also a development issue. And once it starts, it's hard to reverse. So this is—this has to be one of our highest priorities, but it's a hard issue to deal with because it doesn't happen right away. All right? It happens gradually. And so people always think, well, that's something we don't have to worry about now. But if we don't get started now, we're going—it's going to be too late.

So we have to be wise and think about the future. And young people especially, you have to care about this a lot, because if you don't do anything about it, you're the ones who are going to have to deal with it. I'll be gone. [Laugh-

ter] You'll—but you'll have to deal with it, and your children and your grandchildren.

So business has an important role to play in this because, first of all, a lot of the carbon pollution is created by industry for energy production, for electricity production, power plants, transportation. And one of the things that we're trying to do is to encourage companies to both become more efficient so that they're using less energy, which means that they can produce the same amount with less electricity or less oil or less gas. Also, transition to new energy forms, like solar or wind that are clean. And create, through research and development and new products, new ways of producing energy.

So when I was in the Philippines, I was with Jack Ma, who was the founder of Alibaba, and that's a huge company that is really the leader in e-commerce in Asia. But I was also with a young woman who had just invented a lamp that she—that could generate energy with sea water. So she could just take one cup of water and two tablets of salt or take seawater potentially from the ocean, and it would create 8 hours of light, instead of using kerosene. So she's now trying to get funding to manufacture and distribute this lamp that she has created.

And business is going to be critical in dealing with climate change, because sometimes—especially in poorer countries—people think, well, we don't have to worry about the environment because, first, we have to develop and create businesses and become wealthier, and then, we can worry later about the environment. But part of what I'm trying to persuade business is that you have start now, and there's business opportunities. You can make money in clean energy, instead of using dirty energy.

And more and more businesses, I think, are beginning to realize that there's no contradiction. And the same is true in countries as well. You look at a country like China that has developed so fast, but now they can't breathe in Beijing because the pollution can be so bad, and they're starting to realize that if they want to sustain their development, they've got to start using different production models. And businesses can help to design new ways of manufacturing and new ways of developing energy. So

we really want to encourage businesses to get involved, and they can make money doing it.

The most polluting industries are typically the old-fashioned industries, the old ways of doing business. I know that people here, for example, have been dealing with the smoke from the peat fires, right, in—that are coming over from Indonesia. Well, the palm oil industry, that's not a high-value industry. I mean, that's not something that's going to develop a strong middle class and business opportunities over the long term. It's just a classic extractive industry or commodity industry. And in the modern economy, you want to be inventing new products and services rather than just figuring out what you can take out of the ground. And so I'm encouraging both governments and businesses to start thinking about the opportunities of clean energy.

In Paris, our hope is to get all the countries to agree that they will set targets for reducing carbon emissions. It won't be the same for every country. More developed countries, they should do more. Less developed, they don't have to do as much because they haven't contributed so much to carbon pollution. But everybody has to do something. And what we want to do is have each country try to create incentives for businesses, whether it's tax breaks or investments in research so that businesses can work alongside communities to try to solve the problem. And I feel optimistic that we'll get it done. It won't be as strong initially as it needs to be eventually, but if we start now and everybody agrees that this is important and we do something, then I'm confident that we'll be able to solve the problem. Okay? Okay? *Terima kasih*. Yes?

All right. So it's a young man's turn. This young man in the blue tie right here. Yes, you. Hold on one second.

Q. Oh, you hold it? Okay, thanks. So good afternoon, Mr. President. My name is Alfeus. I'm from Malaysia.

*The President*. Did you say Elvis?

Q. Oh, sorry, no, not Elvis. Alfeus.

*The President*. Alfeus, okay.

Q. Nice to meet you Mr. President.

*The President.* Because I was thinking it was—we had Elvis in the building. [Laughter]

Q. Okay, so—

*The President.* Alfeus. That's a cool name.

#### *Transparency and Accountability in Government*

Q. Thanks. The same as yours. [Laughter] Okay, so—yes, so my fellow YSEALI cohorts and I are actually results of your vision, so thank you for that. And we are very glad to have you here with us talking about democracy and freedom of speech. Malaysia is currently embroiled in a political scandal. And its fall—and its failed justice system can bring no rights. Therefore, as thankful as I am for this, I would like to take this opportunity to ask you for your assistance in raising this issue to the Prime Minister of Malaysia and encourage transparency and independence of operations—[applause]—thank you—of the Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission, Public Accounts Committee, the Bank Negara, and all media organizations. So thank you.

*The President.* Good. Okay. The—well, I will do it. [Laughter] So I—now, I admit that I was going to do it anyway, but now that I hear it from you, I'm definitely going to do it. But see, now, keep in mind, the United States, we always have to be a little careful because we're such a large country and we have a lot of influence; I think there are times sometimes when people say they don't want us meddling in their internal affairs. And we—the United States has to have some humility because there have been times where we did the wrong thing. There have been times where we have problems in our own country. Right? And so we will want to go tell other people what to do, but then back home, we're not always doing what we say we should do.

But I do believe that there are basic values that we all share. And one of those values is that countries work best when everybody has a voice that can be respected and that the press is able to report on what is happening in current affairs and people can organize politically peacefully to try to bring about change and that there's transparency and accountability. And when you look at which countries have

done best in terms of development, typically, over time, those countries that have some accountability and some measure of personal freedom tend to do better, and those countries that don't, have more problems.

So whenever I meet in international forums like APEC or ASEAN, whenever I meet with individual leaders, I try to encourage them to move more in the direction of transparency, accountability, to empower people so that they can participate in civic life. And I always want to be honest with people whenever I talk to folks, that that doesn't mean that we don't do business with countries sometimes, just because we have shared security interests or economic interests. If I—I have to meet with President Xi of China, even though I may not agree with his—the approach of his Government towards human rights, because China is such a big country. And on something like climate change, if we don't cooperate, then we won't solve the problem.

There are occasions everywhere in the world where I will meet, and the United States has a relationship and cooperates with a country, even though their human rights record may not be good. But I want to assure you that in all of those meetings, we always raise these issues. And part of what we're trying to do also is to create an international—international support for these issues.

So one of the things that I did at the U.N., for example, was something called the Open Government Partnership. And the idea behind the Open Government Partnership is that every country each year makes a pledge for what they're going to do to make them—themselves more accountable, more open, more transparent, to root out corruption. And not everybody starts out at the same place. But just by encouraging people to put out plans, even if they don't always meet the plans right away, it raises the standards and the sights of people and encourages people to aspire to improvements.

And the—it's just like democracy. When we were hearing about Myanmar, and they talked about Indonesia as an example. Well, Indonesia, when I was living there as a child, was not a democracy. Right? It was basically you had

President Suharto, and you had the military, and there weren't elections every few years.

And it didn't happen right away; the transition took some time. But as long as we keep on encouraging that kind of change, I think we really can make a difference. Okay?

Q. Thank you.

*The President.* Thank you. All right. Good question.

All right. That young lady right there. You. Yes, you. Yes, you. Hold on, we've got to get a microphone.

### Agriculture

Q. Good afternoon, President Obama. Thank you for coming to the Philippines.

*The President.* No, it was—

Q. Yes, I am Cherrie. I am Filipina. So I'm a founding farmer and chairman of AGREA Agricultural Systems International, Inc. Actually, AGREA is also a partner of U.S. Embassy Public Affairs in Manila. We are helping them to send four young fellows in the professional fellowship program. And for that, what we do in AGREA, actually, is, we're trying to make farming cool, smart, sexy, and humane in the Philippines. [*Laughter*]

*The President.* Okay.

Q. Yes, because it started when I spoke in the World Economic Forum, and I said let's make farming sexy in front of our President of Philippines, and it became a headline, so I need to start inputting something in program about it. [*Laughter*] But yes, we've been helping a lot of farmers in the Philippines and now including fishermen. And I know you have a garden in the White House by the First Lady—

*The President.* Yes.

Q. —and thank you, thank you so much for that. It's a common denominator problem in ASEAN countries right now that our farmers are endangered species. They're getting older; the average age is 57 years old. And there is a diminishing interest for the young people to be involved in agriculture.

And speaking of climate change, in connection to agriculture and exponentially growing population, how do you see the importance of

young people to be involved in not just food production, but also food wastage. Thank you.

*The President.* I think that's a great question. A great question. So, first of all, although interest among young people in farming may be diminishing, if you look at the ASEAN countries, the majority of people are still making their living on the land, and you still have a lot of subsistence farming and small plots. And any country that is still in a development stage has to focus on agriculture. That's true in Africa. That's true in Latin America. It's true here in the ASEAN countries.

And it depends on the country, obviously, but typically, the first step is to help each farmer become more efficient. Because usually farmers are not—in poorer countries, they're usually not using all the agricultural technology that's available. And some of it is very simple, and some of it's very cheap, but they don't have the information. So one of the things that we're trying to do, through a program called Feed the Future, is to find farmers, help—work with countries to just give them basic seeds, irrigation practices, how do you improve your yields. And we've been able to see—because it's starting at a such a low point—farmers doubling their yields on the same amount of land with a—without a lot of mechanization, without big capital expenditures.

Once they are able to increase production, then the next step is making sure that they get a fair price. All right? And one of the things that's been really interesting is the power of the Internet to empower farmers, because in most countries these days, even in rural areas, people have a cell phone. And so part of what we're helping people to do is to find out what are the market prices for their products on a day-to-day basis on their cell phones so that they don't get cheated. They know what it's being sold—how much it's being sold in the city, so now whoever the middleman is, they know that they should be asking for a certain price for their crops, and they can start planning in terms of how their—how much grain, versus fruits and vegetables, or what have you, that they're farming. And that can also increase their incomes, not just their production.

Once you do that, then they can start buying some—for example, one of the programs we're seeing is an entire village sharing one tractor. It's sort of like an Uber for farmers. [Laughter] So the—instead of—it's so expensive to buy an entire tractor, a lot of farmers can't afford that, but if you set up a system where you can buy a tractor and then, essentially, they can rent that tractor or share—timeshare that tractor, now, suddenly, that also produces increased yields.

And then, the next stage is to think about, okay, instead of just producing the product itself, can we also then do some of the processing? And you can start putting together cooperatives, for example, for food processing so that you're moving up the value chain.

But the point is, is that when we start thinking about agriculture not just as subsistence, but also how is it interacting with the market, how are you applying technology, now it starts looking kind of sexy—[laughter]—because you can actually—a young person can, instead of moving to the city, they can stay in their village and watch slowly their standards of living improve and begin to create small businesses, and the entire community can rise even as their own prospects improve.

And so this is something that we're really going to try to focus on. And we're working with governments, but also with NGOs, to try to do as much of this work as possible.

But I think you're raising an important point. We see this in the United States as well, that a lot of young people don't think that farming is a high ambition. And we want to encourage people to recognize that working on the land is a wonderful and important thing. And if we're going to feed enough people, then we've got to have more farmers. And we've also got to make sure that they're getting good terms on loans, because oftentimes, what holds them back is just having enough capital, just a little bit of seed capital, in order to be able to do what they need to do.

So good luck. Keep up the great work.

Good. All right, let's see. Hold on. This young man in the purple shirt. That's a nice-looking shirt. [Applause] Now, why was every-

body cheering for him? I mean, he does look nice in his purple shirt, but—[laughter].

### *The President's Advice to Young People*

Q. Thank you, President, and greetings. My name is Deng. I'm from Cambodia. My question is, since many people have focused on a lot of high issues, I want to go low, so—[laughter].

*The President.* How low are you going to go? [Laughter]

Q. I have no idea. So the question that I want to ask you is that since yourself is aging toward a very senior life, and—[laughter].

*The President.* That's pretty low. [Laughter]

Q. I'm sorry, President. [Laughter] Okay, so—okay, just go straight to the question. [Laughter]

*The President.* Yes.

Q. So how do you see your kids and the young people, the young leaders as the insulin between the old people and the young people? Because from my society, the gap between the old and the young, it's very divided. So I want to see your perspective toward what is your initiative and what is your will as a President, people—a person who see a lot of problems. So what do you want to see from young people like us in the future when you get old? So what—[laughter]. I think you get my question, right? Thank you so much.

*The President.* I got your question. Sit down. [Laughter] The—well, the first thing I want from young people is to stop calling me old. [Laughter] Come on. You hurt my feelings. [Laughter] The—well, look, we all get old, it's true. [Laughter] And when I came into office, I had no gray hair, and now I have a lot. [Laughter] Although, I will tell you that I don't dye my hair, and a lot of my fellow leaders do. [Laughter] I'm just saying. I won't say who. [Laughter] But their barbers know, their hairdressers.

I think that the most important thing for young people is that they're not trapped in the past. And human progress is driven by looking at a problem with fresh eyes, with new eyes. And as you get older, what happens is, is that you just get in the habit of seeing the same thing and it becomes routine to you, normal. But when you're young, you ask—your question is, well, why does it have to be this way?

All right? Why does my community have to be poor? Why do we have to have pollution in the air? Why do we treat women differently than men when it comes to being able to go to college and get an education? Why should we discriminate against a minority group in our country?

And that's the power of young people, is asking why. Now, little kids, they naturally do that, right? When you talk to a 4-year-old or a 5-year-old, 6-year-old, you tell them to do something—"Why?" [Laughter] "Why?" And sometimes, as parents, we try to say, "Because I told you so." [Laughter] And we don't want to talk about it, right? But that impulse to ask why is actually what drives human progress. That's the reason that the steam engine was created. That's the reason the Internet was created. That's the reason that Martin Luther King was able to march and change America. That's the reason that Gandhi was able to liberate India—is because they didn't take for granted the way things are, but instead tried to dream about the way things could be.

And that's the job of young people. Old people don't do that because they're comfortable or they've become resigned or they become cynical or they're just tired or they're comfortable, and so they don't ask those questions. But young people, you have to ask those questions. All right?

Now, you then have to work. And one of the things that I always say to young people when I talk to them anywhere, including in the United States, one of the flaws of young people is, you're oftentimes impatient. And bringing about change, doing anything important typically takes time, and it's hard work, and sometimes, you'll fail initially and you'll have to stay with it. And so you can't give up. So, if you're asking the question, how am I going to—why not start a business for clean energy? Well, you have to have an idea, you have to get capital, you have to have a business plan, you have to create the business. It may not work right away. You may get frustrated. If you're trying to bring about political change, there may be a lot of risks if you're trying to bring about political change in a place like Myanmar. Are you

willing to take those risks? Are you willing to make sacrifices? What happens when it doesn't work initially? Are you willing to then get back up and start again?

And that, I think, is the most important thing. Vision is important, but then, you also have to have the persistence to keep working to make progress. And I always tell young people to have big dreams, but then also be willing to work for those dreams. It's not going to come right away. All right? Okay.

Yes, young lady right here. Here, I'm sure we have a microphone.

*The President's Advice to Young People/U.S. Political System/Racial, Ethnic, and Religious Discrimination*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. My name is Jocelyn, and I'm from Malaysia. Last year, I joined the YSEALI program in spring, and I spent 5 weeks in Washington, DC. So, after we have been exposed to a lot of different political parties' campaigns and we have been exposed to a lot of different nonprofit organizations fighting for interests of political communities in the country. So my question for you today is what are the current challenges of the United States of America as a developed country, and what are the advice that you would provide to the potential young leaders in this region to avoid the pitfalls of the challenges facing the U.S. today?

*The President.* Well, that's a great question. I mean, look, the United States in many ways is better positioned than it has ever been for leadership in the 21st century. Our economy, after the crisis in 2007, 2008, has recovered faster than almost any other country. Our—and our economy is stronger than most other large, developed economies in the world. We are producing more energy than ever before, producing more clean energy than ever before. More young people are going to college than ever before. We have expanded health care through the program that I set up—the Affordable Care Act. We have some of the best businesses in the world, incredible entrepreneurship, and we remain the leader in innovation and new ideas. And in the technology sector,

obviously, we continue to generate new ideas all the time.

But when you go to the United States, I think there are still some anxieties. And I would say that, number one, in the United States, there is a growing inequality that I think is a real problem not just for the United States, but around the world. And some of this has to do with technology is replacing low-skilled jobs and automation, and so it's harder for people, if they don't have good educations, to make a living. There's more global competition; that's putting pressure on middle class families. And when people feel economic stress and inequality, then I think the—then politics becomes harder because people are afraid for their futures and sometimes politics can become much more divided than it used to be.

Also, what happens is, when there's more inequality, the people who are powerful can influence the political system to further reinforce their privilege, and it makes it harder for ordinary people to feel that they have influence on the political process. And so people become cynical.

Now, these are all problems that can be solved, and I'm confident we will eventually solve them. But right now our political system does not work as well as it should. And when I—what I would say to young leaders, what sort of pitfalls should you avoid, I would say, number one, it is very important to avoid any political system where money overwhelms ideas. And the United States political process has become so expensive, and it lasts so long, and even though I was successful in it, I—we spent hundreds of millions of dollars in television advertising and in all the things that go into a U.S. Presidential campaign. But it's also true for Members of Congress. And when politicians have to raise so much money all the time, then they start listening a little bit more to the people who have money, as opposed to ordinary people.

And that, I think, is a danger that can be avoided by the system that you set up to make sure that campaigns are not reliant just on money. That's something to avoid.

I think the second thing is to—politics in the United States increasingly is defined by personal attacks and saying very sensational things in the media. Now, that's true for politics everywhere to some degree. But I think that for young leaders like you, as you get into politics, trying to focus on issues, and trying to debate people you disagree with without saying that they're a terrible person, I think that's something that you always have to watch out for.

Historically, in the United States, the issue of race has been very prominent. And that's not unique to the United States; every country has some divisions—not every country, but many countries have divisions around racial or religious or ethnic differences. And the young people of YSEALI, I really hope that all of you are fighting against the kinds of attitudes where you organize political parties or you organize interest groups just around ethnic or racial or tribal lines. Because when you start doing that, it's very easy for people to start thinking that whoever is not part of my group is somehow less than me. And once that mindset comes in, that's how violence happens. That's how discrimination happens. And societies that are divided ethnically and racially are almost never successful over the long term.

Now, the United States, we've struggled with this for over 200 years, but it's still an issue that comes up. And so I would guard against that here in your home countries. But the truth is, here in Southeast Asia, as everybody here knows, that same kind of tendency happens. All right? I mean, I remember when I was growing up in Indonesia, every once in a while you would have riots against the Chinese Indonesians, even though they were part of the community. But somebody would spark—start saying, "Hey, those people, that's our problem." And you'd have stores burned down and people killed.

And right now, in Myanmar, one of the big challenges that's going to have to be addressed is how ethnic groups are treated. The Rohingya, in Myanmar right now, are treated differently, even though they've been living there for generations. But there are a lot of people, because they're of a different religious faith, they

say those aren't real—they're not really part of our country. Well, that—once you start going down that line, then that's a dangerous thing. So that's the—probably the biggest advice that I would give, is to watch out for that.

You look at what's happening in the Middle East right now, those countries are in chaos, so many of them, because of this notion that somehow, if somebody worships God differently than you, that they're less than you. And people are slaughtered based on that idea. And they—and the countries can't grow. Businesses can't start. So of all the things to guard against, I think that's the biggest thing. Okay?

All right. Let me call on this guy because I like his jacket. [Laughter] That's a sharp-looking—here, hold on a second. Here. Here, we've got a microphone right behind you.

Q. Hello. Hello, Mr. President. Thank you for this opportunity. So my colleagues and my friends already asked very high and low questions.

*The President.* This is a middle question. [Laughter]

#### *The President's Mother*

Q. So I will ask you very simple, personal questions.

*The President.* Okay.

Q. So who is your most influential person in your life, and why? And does he or she reflect your current role? Thank you so much.

*The President.* That's interesting. Yes. The most influential person in my life is my—was my mother, who—she's passed away now. She died young. She died—she was a year younger than I was—I am now when she passed away. She died of cancer. But she was somebody who grew up in the middle of America in a State called Kansas. She was—my grandparents—her parents—were very ordinary middle class, working class people. They came from humble beginnings.

She—but somehow, at a very young age, she was very spirited and very adventurous. She ended up—she was White, and she married a Black man back in 1961, which is—at that time, was against the law in some places in the United States. Even though they didn't stay to-

gether, she then moved, remarried an Indonesian, and came here to Southeast Asia and, initially, was just teaching English, but over time, she became interested in how to help women in villages develop incomes. And so she spent most of her life in development work.

And she was a very kind person and a very loving person, and she believed that everybody was important. And so she would treat a very wealthy businessman the same as she'd treat a peasant farmer. And she tried to respect everybody. And she taught me that everybody has worth and everybody has a purpose. And so I think that the values that I have today—how I try to behave and how I try to treat people—is all based on those things that she taught me when I was young. And those are the same ideas and values that I try to teach to my daughters, even though they never had a chance to meet her. But I—hopefully, I've passed on some of the same things to her.

Good, okay. All right, way in the back there. Yes, you.

Q. *Selamat datang*, Mr. President.

*The President.* *Selamat datang*.

#### *The President's Accomplishments*

Q. My name is Wong, and I'm from Malaysia. My question for you today is, you have two terms as President. As you wrap up your term, what would you consider the best part, and what were the parts you wish you could have carried out? Thank you.

*The President.* Okay. The—well, the most important things I did as President were the actions I took very early on to save the economy. Because when I came into office, not only was the U.S. economy on the road to a deep depression, but the global financial system was very fragile and could have broken down had we not taken some very important steps. I'm not saying that was the most fun part, but I'm saying that was the most important part. [Laughter]

I think that the thing that I take the most satisfaction from is the health care law that I passed, because today, there are 17 million people who have health insurance that didn't have it before. And for—we're the only

developed—highly developed country in the world that doesn't have a universal health care system where everybody has access to health insurance. And we still don't have everybody getting health insurance, because the program that we set up, some politicians have blocked its full implementation in their States, and we have a complicated system of government. And the health care system generally, a lot of it is in the private sector, so it still leaves some people out.

But every day, I meet people who come up and say: "You saved my life because, before, I didn't have health insurance, and then you—I was able to get health insurance, and I was diagnosed with cancer. And if I hadn't been able—if I hadn't gone to a doctor, I would have never caught it in time." And so you feel good about that. And that was a—it was a hard fight. It was a big fight. And we got that done.

Since I'm an old man, as this guy says—[laughter]—one of the things I find is, it gives me some perspective. So the things that were hard or I didn't like, those fade in my memories. I don't think them about them as much. I don't have regrets. There are things I wish we could have gotten done.

For example, our system of immigration in America, it is broken right now. Historically, America—one of the great things about America is that we're a nation of immigrants. We—if you walk down the street in Los Angeles or New York or even in a small town in America, you don't know exactly what an American looks like. Right? An American can be African American, it can be an Irish American, it can be a Chinese American. But they're all American. And that's because we have—we're a country of people who came from everywhere. And that's been our great strength.

Right now we have a system where too many people have come, but they didn't come with the right papers. Oftentimes, it's very hard for young people who want to immigrate to get approvals. And so we tried to streamline the system, but the other party so far has been very resistant to it. I think it's the right thing to do. I think it will eventually get done. But we didn't do everything that we could.

So—but one of the things that you learn—this is what comes, the perspective of age—[laughter]—is that you do what you can. And you're never going to be completely satisfied with what you accomplish. And that's why you have young people, so that—[laughter]—we leave you something to do. [Laughter] Because if I had solved every problem, then you'd be bored, and you'd have no reason to be part of YSEALI. So all right?

Let's see. It's a gentleman's turn, right? This guy right here. Yes, go ahead. Yes.

### *The President's Management Advice*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. My name is Andendo, from Myanmar. I'm a doctor and an entrepreneur myself. Being an entrepreneur you have to wear a lot of hats at the same time. You have to do management, you have to do financial, HR. When being the President of the—one of the most powerful nations of the world, how do you know when to, like, stop yourself from juggling, and when do you know that you have to seek advice?

*The President.* Well, first of all, what kind of business are you trying to start or have started?

Q. It's already—

*The President.* Is it in the medical field?

Q. No, it's not. I call myself a multipotentialite.

*The President.* Okay. Well, that's a big word. [Laughter] What does that mean?

Q. It means that I have a lot of interests and I try to be good at everything I'm interested in.

*The President.* Okay, well, the—so you've already started a business though? What kind of business is it?

Q. Yes. I'm trying to create a booking website, but I'm trying to—there's a lot of mom-and-pop accommodations across Myanmar. But being, like, late in technology, a lot of them are not tech-savvy. And I want to bring them online and—

*The President.* Okay. So it would be a little bit like a Myanmar Airbnb.

Q. Airbnb. Yes.

*The President.* I've got you. Okay, that makes sense. It's a great time to try—to start businesses in Myanmar as things open up, because the potential for tourism there is really

wonderful. It's a beautiful country. And in some ways, the potential, if the development is planned, to retain the beauty and the charm of the country, it could be really powerful. So good luck.

I will say, though, that one piece of advice is, don't try to do everything—[laughter]—at least not all at once. I—it is true that as President I have to do a lot of things. And one of the interesting things about being President of the United States is that you're not just President of the United States. If there are problems elsewhere, people still expect you to solve them, even though they're not your country. And that's part of the leadership that—and obligation and responsibility that we have as a powerful nation.

And—but I do find that I have to focus. Because if I'm trying to know everything and manage everything, then nothing gets done. So a couple of pieces of advice. One is, you have to continually decide, what are the things that are most important and start with those. If you make a list, you have to prioritize what's the thing that has to get done; what's the thing that strategically is most important? What's the thing that will make the biggest difference if I do this well? And if you focus your attention on that, then, yes, there will be some things that don't get done, but your basic mission will be well served. You have to prioritize.

Number two, you have to delegate. One of the things that I'm pretty proud of in terms of how I manage my Presidency, but also how I managed my campaigns and past work, is I'm good at surrounding myself with really smart people. And I think the job of a leader is not to try to do everything yourself, but it's to try to organize people, each of whom have different talents and skills. Make sure that they are joined in a common vision about what needs to get done, but then go ahead and let them—give them the tools so that they can do what they need to do.

All right? It's just like a basketball team. I play basketball, so I usually use that. But it's—if you prefer soccer, that's fine. [Laughter] But any sporting team, the teams that are the best teams are the ones where each person has a

role to play and they're all working together. But I think sometimes when you—there are a lot of managers or leaders who, they don't know how to give up control to somebody else, so they want to just do everything. And then, they get spread too thin. And the people they're working for, they never develop and never feel a sense of responsibility or ownership for the project.

And as President, I can't keep up—I can't be an expert on everything. So my most important job is to identify the talent who I have confidence in, and then I put them in charge. Now, I'll give them a sense of direction. I will hold them accountable. So I expect them to produce. If they have problems, I expect them to tell me early so that we can together solve the problem. But I want to give them a sense of empowerment. And that's how you duplicate yourself. That's how you spread the amount of things you can do, is because you—you're part of a team.

Very few things—great things are done by yourself. Maybe if you're a Picasso or Mozart, you can go off into a room, and you can produce great things. But most great accomplishments, human accomplishments, they're done as a group. And your job as a leader then, is to be able to assemble to bring together people in a common vision.

And then, the third thing I would say is, you have to be able to be honest in evaluating what's worked and what doesn't work, and make adjustments. A lot of times, people go down one path, and even though they get lost and they're at a cliff, and they can't pass, but they still want to keep going forward, and sometimes, you just have to realize, you know what, this path didn't work, I've got to try something different. And so you have to be honest and constantly reevaluate and reassess what you're doing and be open, then, to new information and criticism.

That's part of the—what I was saying earlier about democracies and freedom of speech—well, that applies to any organization. If you are shutting down people from giving you suggestions or telling you what you're doing isn't working, is not smart—then, if you don't want

to hear that, then you'll just keep on making mistakes because you're not open to new information. Okay?

All right, let's see, I've got—young lady, right there. Yes. Yes. Here we go. We've got a microphone? Can we get a microphone to the young lady? Here we go, right behind you, yes.

*Promoting Sustainable Products/Trade/Singapore*

Q. Thank you. My name is Uma. I'm from Indonesia. I'm working in Center for Handicraft and Batik in Yogyakarta.

*The President.* That's a nice batik you have on.

Q. I'm wearing the skirt batik, yes. [*Inaudible*]*]*—batik, yes.

*The President.* Yes, it's very nice.

Q. Thank you. So my office always supporting to small industries. You know that handicraft and batik are produced by home and small industries.

*The President.* Right.

Q. And now we encourage the people to use the natural dyes to color in the batik and handicraft. And also, why—the reason is because we have a lot of natural resources, and also there is the global market demand on friendly products.

*The President.* Yes.

Q. In other side—but in other side, unfortunately, the developed countries like Europe or, I don't know, maybe also U.S., United States, still export the unfriendly, sensitive dyes to developing countries. So my question, simple question: What do you think about this situation?

*The President.* Well, it's interesting. I don't know enough about, sort of, batik production. I mean, I know my mother did, but I don't—*[laughter]*—to know, sort of, the difference in the prices of dyes and what works and what doesn't. Here's what I would say, though, is you're absolutely right that in the United States, at least, people—consumers are more and more interested in environmentally friendly and organic products. And so, if you are producing things that you're using natural dyes, then that's something that you can market, and it's a selling point for a lot of consumers.

Now, the fact that countries are still selling artificial dyes into the—into Indonesia or other places, that's the way businesses work. Now, as long as they're not poisonous and they're not hurting people, you—that's not something probably that you're going to stop. But what you can do is to start marketing the fact that you use natural dyes, and that may be very appealing to people.

This brings up a larger question, which is the issue of trade. We just completed this Trans-Pacific Partnership, which brings together 12 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including a number of ASEAN countries like Malaysia and Vietnam. And trade is something that can be good and can be bad. It is good in the sense that it allows each country to pursue the things that it's best at, produce goods that are—it can do better than others, and everybody can get richer. It also can create real problems in—because it brings about competition, it can change the way things are done in each country. And if somebody from another country has a much more efficient, effective way of making a product, then the local producers can lose a lot of business, and people can be displaced from their jobs.

And we've seen this in a lot of countries. So part of, I think, the goal of every country is not to close off from trade, but if competition comes in, then the Government has to help that country adjust to this new competition and to find new ways of creating jobs and creating wealth.

And Singapore is a good example of a country that's done this very well. I mean if you think about Singapore, Singapore is a tiny, little country. It doesn't have any oil. It doesn't have any significant natural resources. But it has been very good about investing in its people, in providing them education. The Government runs itself very efficiently, and it plans—it is good in planning and thinking about, okay, if we're manufacturing this and now there's new competition and we're no longer the low-cost producer, what's the new thing we should be good at. And they help then retrain people and help companies transition into a new way of doing business.

And the truth is, is that in today's economy, countries are constantly having to change. They constantly have to transform themselves. And people constantly have to change. Because the economy is just too dynamic, it moves too fast—because of the Internet, because of transportation—you can't cut yourself off—unless you're North Korea—[laughter]—you can't cut yourself off from the world. And those countries that try typically fall behind, because they can't keep up with the ever-changing economic environment.

So this is where good government policy is important and helping people retrain and helping industries adapt, that's one of the most important roles of government in today's economy.

Okay, I've got—I've only got time for two more quick questions.

Q. You promised me one last town hall. [Laughter]

*The President.* I don't know about that. [Laughter]

Q. I'm Filipino, and you said, like, yes, I want one for Philippines, but you took the Thailand one instead. [Laughter]

*The President.* Wow! I mean, this is—

Q. I've been waiting for year now.

*The President.* He's—you've been waiting for a year? Well, okay, well, I—you've already taken the floor, so go ahead. [Laughter] The—this better be a really good question, though, since he just went ahead and announced that he's been waiting for a year to ask this question. [Laughter] One whole year. Okay, out there, you have a lot of pressure on you right now. Let's see how good a question it is.

[The audience member gestured to indicate that he had two questions.]

*The President.* No, you only get one. [Laughter] Go ahead.

#### *Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement*

Q. All right, okay, there's two questions. [Laughter] Sorry. Just one, okay. Okay, just one. One is—this is about American principles. And I believe, you know, I mean, you're at the end of the PP—TPPA agreement. Right? And

to me, from where I'm coming from, the CSOs in Malaysia, we believe that the TPPA is a very elitist deal.

*The President.* What is your name?

Q. My name? Oh, sorry. My name is Cesan. I'm from Malaysia, and I'm half-Filipino, because my dad is a Filipino.

*The President.* So you're not actually Filipino, you're Malaysian—[laughter]—who presented yourself as a Filipino—

Q. But, but—

*The President.* —and then insisted on asking this question.

Q. But I'm Asian.

*The President.* Man. All right.

Q. But I'm ASEAN. [Laughter]

*The President.* Well, just go ahead and ask your question. Go ahead.

Q. All right. So we believe that the TPPA is an elitist deal. The people has been excluded from it, even from the start. Only 5 out of 30—the clauses, or not clauses, like—

*The President.* Chapters

Q. —chapters in the deal is regarding trade. I want to take you to the context of Malaysia. In Malaysia, you have indigenous people. You have 70 percent out of the poor are women. You have so much more people who are, like, lagging in behind. Okay, and so let me just check back my notes. [Laughter]

*The President.* Well, come on, man, the—this can't be too long a question, though, because I want to get one more question in. So hurry up.

Q. Okay, so, with the expectation that rising prices in medicines and major challenges in SMEs, startups, how does this tally, this deal you say that—which is inclusive on everything—at everything, how does it tally with your principles of human rights, transparency, and equality that the U.S. stands for?

*The President.* Okay. So the—so first of all, what is true is, is that whenever you're negotiating a trade deal—and this is true for any trade agreement—if you're negotiating with 12 countries and if there's not some space for the negotiators to basically agree on the deal, but the whole time everybody is commenting on

every aspect of it, then it would never get done. Right?

In the United States, if basically every chapter was subject to various interest groups asking, well, we want more of this, or we want more of that, and the business community saying, we want this, and the labor union saying, we want that—just in the United States, we could never get it done. And then, when you try to get 12 countries together, and everybody was in on every aspect of the negotiation, it would never be finished because people would always ask for more.

And I'm not just talking—I mean, the pharmaceutical companies would want more. The agriculture sector would want more. Everybody would want something, because the nature of a trade agreement is that there's so many interests involved, right? So what we've done instead is, you close the initial deal, right? Now it's subject to review. It's up on a website. You can go and read every chapter. And people can—each country then has to ratify it, and it's subject to the approval of the legislatures or the parliaments or whatever form of government in approving or disapproving it.

I've still got to get it passed in Congress. And Members of Congress are going to read every line, and there are going to be some people who think it's a good deal and some people who think it's a bad deal. And I believe that it's a good deal and we'll get it done. But it's—there's no guarantee. So the point is that it's inaccurate to think that transparency means that you and everybody else are all in a room together negotiating the entire time in an open environment because it would never get completed, partly because each country has to give up something in order to get a trade deal done.

For example, we have to open up some markets to goods that previously were subject to tariffs. And somebody in our country is not going to like that. And—but our view is, overall, that's good. That may be helpful to Malaysia, and in turn, we will be able to sell something to Malaysia; somebody in Malaysia won't like that. All right? So that's the nature of negotiations in a trade deal.

Now, with respect to some of the specific things that you said, I actually think it's inaccurate. So let's take the example of pharmaceuticals. No, I'm just going to give you an example. This is an area where people actually have expressed concerns because the U.S. pharmaceutical industry is the most prominent in the world. We do a lot of the research and development that invent many of the new drugs. And what is absolutely true is, is that a lot of the drug companies, once they invent a drug, they want to keep making money as long as possible on that drug. And sometimes, they want to keep making money on that drug, even though they invented it a long time ago. They want to preserve their rights—exclusive rights to make it. And they keep selling it at a higher and higher price, and they don't want generic substitutes that are lower cost. Right?

So what we did in this deal was, we said that it's—we should provide some protections for some drugs, because if you don't provide some intellectual property protection, then nobody is going to invent a new drug. Because the minute they did, then there would be a generic that was produced right away, and there would be no point in inventing it because you wouldn't make any money. All right? The same way that if you make a—if you are a singer and you make a record, but the minute you record the record, people can just download it without paying, at a certain point, that's going to hurt the music industry, right?

So we said we have to protect some. But we are very explicit in the chapter on this to say that we have to protect generics for low-income persons, for—in fact, we need to eliminate tariffs on some things like penicillin and basic drugs that have been on the market for a very long time. And over time, we actually believe that the costs of drugs are going to go down in many countries that currently have a lot of barriers in terms of those drugs.

Now, I—and here's proof that this wasn't just some giveaway to the drug companies. Right now a lot of the drug companies in the United States are mad at me because they said, how come we didn't get more protection? And what I said to them is, well, part of our job is to

promote the U.S. drug industry, but part of our job is also to be good partners with countries that have people who are sick. And we've got to make sure that they also are able to get access to drugs.

So the point is—the point I'm making, though, generally is that in this new global environment, it's what I said earlier: Things are changing all the time. And part of my principles and my values is that we have to make sure that the change is good for ordinary people, that it's good for the farmer, it's good for the young student, it's good for women, and it's good for developing countries.

But I do not believe that we can stop change. I do not believe that, for example, if we just put up a bunch of barriers to trade, that that's going to help countries grow. I don't think that if we try to stop technology that somehow we're going to be better off. I think we have to make—we have to embrace change, but then we have to figure out how do we make sure that everybody benefits from change, not just a few.

I believe in market economies. I think it's been proven that market economies are the best generators of wealth in the world. But I think that market economies also have to have some government interventions to make sure that it's fair and there's fair competition and that small businesses are not excluded by monopolies and that workers have some basic protections.

So that's the kind of balance that is reflected in TPP. And that's reflective of, I think, my policies both in the United States and internationally.

Okay, I'm going to take one last question. Okay, now, now, let's see. Let me just—hold on a second, I'm just trying to—wait, wait, wait. I want to make sure—we've heard from the Philippines, from Myanmar, Cambodia. We haven't heard from Thailand. All right. Thailand, all right. We've got to get a Thailand question.

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights/Same-Sex Marriage*

Q. Thank you so much. I'm Dara from Thailand. I'm bisexual. Yes. I have a question. Should anyone being LGBT have to go to the jail? Should anyone being different police see will have to go to the jail? I didn't know for your opinion. But how could we have a regional or international cooperation if some countries are still facing the kind of problems? Thank you.

*The President.* Okay, that's a great question. Look, the answer to the first question is simple: no. People who have a different sexual orientation are deserving of respect and dignity like everybody else, and they shouldn't go to jail for it.

Now, the—and I know that in ASEAN countries, as well as in the United States, people have different religious traditions, they have different cultural traditions. And that's fine. What I always say to people is, is that nobody is forcing you to behave in a certain way. And nobody is saying that—for example, we just had this debate about whether same-sex couples could get married. And part of the point, I think, we made in this debate was, if a church or a mosque or a temple does not recognize those marriages, they shouldn't be forced to have to marry somebody in—that's contrary to their religious beliefs. But marriage as a civil institution by the State should be available to everybody, not just some.

And so my—so the point is that government policy should treat everybody equally under the law. That doesn't mean that we all agree on everything. That doesn't mean that people cannot have their own beliefs. But it does mean that in our public spaces, in how we interact as a society, that we have to respect people have—people's differences. And as long as their relationships, who they love, is not having any kind of negative impact on you, you should respect that.

And I just—and this goes back to—this goes back to the thing I mentioned earlier when you asked me about what can we learn from the United States. I so strongly believe that the future of humanity depends on us all treating

people with respect and dignity and recognizing that whatever your religious background, whatever your ethnicity, whether you're a man or a woman, whatever your sexual orientation, you have something in common with me; that we are both children of God, that we both were put here for a reason and are deserving of kindness and respect.

And I think that, as young leaders, if you can promote those ideas in your countries, in your businesses, in your governments, if you start—in your nonprofit organizations—if you're always thinking in terms of how do we make sure that everybody is treated fairly and everybody is deserving of respect, then there's no problem we can't solve. And as soon as we lose that sight, lose that vision, and we start treating people differently because they're different than us, and we try to make ourselves more important by putting other people down, that's when bad things happen in every society. That's a universal truth.

And we can celebrate our differences. Just like people are wearing different clothes and people have different foods, people can have different beliefs and different ideas. But the one thing that I believe is universal is that you have to treat people with respect and dignity, no matter who they are. And if you do that, YSEALI, then I'm confident you'll be successful.

All right? Thank you, everybody. It was fun to be with you. Thank you. All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:13 p.m. in lecture halls 21 and 22. In his remarks, he referred to Carrie Tan, founder and executive director, Daughters of Tomorrow; musicians Yunalis Mat Zara'ai and Usher T. Raymond IV; and Aisa Mijeno, cofounder and chief executive officer, SALt. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng. Participants referred to Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia; and President Benigno S. Aquino III of the Philippines.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia November 20, 2015

*Prime Minister Najib.* Well, first of all, I'd like to thank President Obama for visiting Malaysia once again. Not only he has corrected history—we had a hiatus of almost 50 years without a U.S. President visiting Malaysia—but he's visited us twice now. [Laughter] So that's a wonderful accomplishment in terms of his commitment to not only Malaysia, but also to the region. And we are delighted at his support for the ASEAN as well as the East Asia Summit process.

We had a very good discussion on bilateral issues. As expected, we have a very similar position in terms of combating violent extremism. We both agree that we need to work closely together to make this region safer. This region is not immune from threats of violent of extremism. There are groups here operating, and there are groups here that have announced they are aligned to IS. As you know, the Malaysian Government is very clear, unequivocally,

that we are against IS, against its ideology, what it stands for. It is evil. It is against Islam. It's the perversion of Islam. And they do not represent us. So we will work very closely together with the United States and other like-minded countries to make this region safer and to combat any form of violent extremism.

We've also agreed to make Malaysia as a center for—countermessaging center. Because in fighting violent extremism, it's not only a military solution that's required, but it's winning the hearts and minds of its people. And that is why it's important for us to present the counternarrative, to present the authentic Islam, the true Islam, so that people realize that what IS represents, or tries to represent, is a total perversion of Islam. So that work is important for us, and we will continue to present what we believe is a true picture of Islam.

We also talked about the TPP, which is important. We have crossed the finishing line.