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Honda Urges Malaysian Youths to Believe in The Power of Dreams *Honda Dreams Fund Helps Deserving Malaysians Realize Their Dreams Via Education*

Petaling Jaya, 4 January 2007 – Honda Malaysia Sdn Bhd and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Malaysia today announced their pledge to less fortunate students in Malaysia with the inception of the “Human Resource Development Through Education and Training for Malaysian Youths” - **Honda Dreams Fund**.

The **Honda Dreams Fund** is Honda Malaysia’s initiative as a responsible corporate citizen, which aims to provide full scholarships to 20 less fortunate youths who deserve the opportunity of a higher education or skills training. This is the vision behind the Honda Dreams Fund which was announced during a MOU signing ceremony between Honda Malaysia and UNDP.

According to the Malaysian Ministry of Education, an estimated 25 percent of the Malaysian youth are deprived of a higher education due to poverty. As a corporate citizen that believes in contributing back to the society it is in, Honda Malaysia is committed to help the talented, among these less fortunate youths, to realise their dreams and achieve a better future through education. At the same time, Honda Malaysia also hopes to be able to contribute to the human capital development in Malaysia.

During the ceremony, Mr Yasuhide Mizuno, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Honda Malaysia said, “Our founder, Mr Soichiro Honda always believed that good education goes a long way in human development and plays an integral part in realizing one’s dreams & potential. We believe that everyone deserves an opportunity and we’re focusing on the plight of less fortunate youths in Malaysia who are bright but don’t have the means or the funds to achieve their dreams and aspirations.”

“Honda Malaysia always emphasizes the importance of supporting educational programmes in our role as a responsible corporate citizen. We believe the Honda Dreams Fund would greatly encourage young Malaysians to pursue their dreams with full conviction and commitment.”

The **Honda Dreams Fund** is Honda Malaysia’s way of sharing the company’s belief, “The Power of Dreams” which is rich in accomplishments throughout its history. Much of Honda’s achievements in today’s business environment stems from simple dreams that were taken to the drawing board and materialized into real life accomplishments.

UNDP Resident Representative for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam Dr Richard Leete said, “In Malaysia, today, some five percent of the population live in poverty, and a large number of youths lack access to higher education and skills training due to financial difficulties. The income disparity between the rich and the poor, as well as between the urban and rural, is widening. Those youths from underprivileged backgrounds need help to achieve their ‘dreams’ of a better life.”

“It is expected that the private sector will play a greater role in national development challenges. As such, UNDP is delighted to be a partner with Honda in such an innovative initiative,” said Dr Leete.

Honda’s boldest step in achieving its dreams is the company’s foray into the world of Formula One (F1) racing in the early 1960s. Equipped with little technical experience in automobile racing, Honda took the challenge and was rewarded with its 1st Grand Prix win in 1964. Since then, Honda has achieved a total of 11 world championship titles in its long Formula One history.

In 1986, the company took another step at realizing the dream of creating a humanoid robot to benefit mankind. ASIMO, the world's most advanced humanoid took Honda 20 years of painstaking research and development in building a humanoid that could mimic human movements .

The development of HondaJet which stemmed from founder Mr Soichiro Honda's dream of flight and to create an aircraft designed and manufactured by Honda was the most recent achievement. The development of HondaJet took 17 years, during which the company endured many difficult challenges and struggles.

The successes of Honda today were powered by dreams and borne on the wings of challenging spirit. Honda Malaysia hopes to share its Challenging Spirit ideal that works hand in hand towards realising one's dreams through the Honda Dreams Fund.

The **Fund** will focus specifically on less fortunate youths, covering their tertiary education fees and also provide allowances to meet living expenses for the duration of their courses. Deserving candidates will have the freedom to choose their own institutions and courses.

The uniqueness of the **Honda Dreams Fund** is that it is a non-binding scholarship as Honda Malaysia believes that youths should be allowed to mould their future after they graduate.

The fund is open to Malaysians aged between 17–24 years of age who have missed out on opportunities to continue their higher education due to lack of funding. To qualify, candidates must have at least completed and passed the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) or Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia (STPM) examination.

The fund is designed to primarily help youths realize their dreams and as such, strong academic qualifications are encouraged but are not a deciding factor. Apart from that, candidates must not be receiving any bursaries or financial aid from other organizations, agencies or government.

Candidates are required to write an essay on their aspirations in realizing their dreams on A4 size paper in not more than 500 words. Application forms will appear in major newspapers beginning 6 January 2007 and the closing date for entries is 6 February 2007.

To ensure unbiased award and disbursements of the fund, Honda Malaysia will be working together with UNDP who will be managing the process. The organization will be working with an independent advisory panel comprising members from various NGOs together with UNDP and Honda Malaysia who will participate in the selection process.

Apart from the **Honda Dreams Fund** in its corporate social responsibility efforts towards Malaysia, Honda Malaysia is also sponsoring the "Save the Sumatran Rhino" programme which began in January 2006 where the company pledged RM5 million to WWF-Malaysia for rhino conservation efforts in Malaysia.

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About Honda Malaysia Sdn. Bhd.

Incorporated on 15 November 2000, Honda Malaysia Sdn. Bhd. is a partnership between Honda Motor Co., Ltd. of Japan, which owns 51% of the company, and two Malaysian companies, DRB-HICOM Berhad and Oriental Holdings Berhad, which hold 34% and 15% respectively. Since its inception, Honda Malaysia Sdn. Bhd. has been committed to achieving the "Highest Customer Satisfaction in Malaysia" in its business practices.

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About the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and our wide range of partners. Its current priority is to help all countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

To read more about the work of UNDP in Malaysia, please visit our website at www.undp.org.my

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