

Opening speech HamRadio 2018

Richard Middelkoop

World JOTA-JOTI Organizer

World Organization of the Scout Movement

Kuala Lumpur

Meine Damen und Herren, liebe Radio Freunde,

Zuerst möchte ich mich bedanken beim DARC Vorstand und die HamRadio Organisation für die Einladung zu HamRadio 2018 und die Möglichkeit hier namens das Welt Pfadfinder Verbandes WOSM ein Paar Wörter zu sagen. Recht herzlichen Dank dafür.

Ich werde jetzt auf English weitergehen für unsere internationalen Gäste.

Dear radio friends,

What on earth is a Scout leader from the World Scout Bureau doing here on stage of an amateur radio gathering, you might ask. Well, I am wondering myself. Or perhaps not.

Allow me to take you a few moments into the world of Scouting, and it will become clear where our links are.

The World Organization of the Scout Movement is the largest youth movement on the globe. With 45 million members in 224 countries and territories. It has no distinctions on culture, religion, ethnic background, nationality, gender. Sound familiar already?

What binds us Scouts, is the same vision, the same non-formal educational methods, the same goal to make something better out of this world and create understanding between people of different backgrounds. Symbolized by the same scarf we are all wearing.

The amateur radio community has no distinctions on culture, religion, ethnic background, nationality, gender. And by connecting radio amateurs together somehow, we create an understanding between people of different backgrounds.

What binds us radio-amateurs, is the interest in the same hobby, be it antennas for the one, electronics for the other, contests for yet another. Symbolized by the radio call sign we all worked so hard to get.

Similarities were already recognized in the early 1920's, when both Scouting and Amateur Radio were in their early days. Inevitably, these similar formed, yet so different organizations had to meet somewhere, it seems. In fact, they did and this resulted in what we now know as an annual activity called the Jamboree On The Air, or JOTA for short.

I have the privilege to lead the JOTA event on a global scale from our international Scouting headquarters in Kuala Lumpur and it is not without pride that I may state Jamboree-On-The-Air is the largest annual youth gathering in existence on Earth.

There is nothing else like it. We connect over 1.5 million youngsters together for 48 hours in one weekend in October. The World Organization of the Scout Movement has set the target to make this event available to more youngsters than ever before and thus we are looking to grow it to 3 million participants by 2020.

Several tens-of-thousands radio amateur make this possible for the young Scouts each year. And I am sure a lot of you here in the audience are amongst them. On behalf of all these Scouts, I want to extend a warm and big *“Thank you”* to you all. You introduce the youngsters to radio, its techniques and its magic. And connect them to places they may never have heard from before.

Last year in Japan, a young girl-Scout from Bolivia walks up to me after we had just contacted the International Space Station directly from the camp. And she says: “Richard, I have just talked to an astronaut. How can I explain that to my mom and dad; they will never believe me”. It made a lasting impression on her. This, my friends, is what we do with Amateur Radio.

Through the JOTA event, young (and older) Scouts start to realize they belong to a world-wide community of Scouting. They exchange all sort of wild ideas and visions with other young adults in the next town, in the neighboring country or anywhere else in the world. These young adults learn to work together to shape the world of tomorrow. That is what we do in Scouting.

Over the years we have seen many radio amateurs become involved as Scout leaders themselves. Even more so, we have seen quite a lot of Scouts and leaders getting their own amateur-radio license. And you are even looking at one at the moment, I may say.

We bring people together, we bridge distances and cultures, we connect Scouts. This is what we do together in Radio-Scouting.

HamRadio 2018 will be a great inspiration to you these coming days, and I challenge you all to be QRV next October in the largest Adventure of Youth Amateur Radio; das größte Abenteuer der Jugend Amateur Funk. See you there.

Thank you / Danke sehr !