

**THE OCCASSION OF THE CONFERMENT OF A PROFESSORSHIP AWARD BY THE
KYRGYZ STATE UNIVERSITY**

KYRGYZ STATE UNIVERSITY BISHKEK, KYRGYZ, 16 JULY 1996

I am delighted to be here today on this special occasion. It is indeed a great honour to be invited by this August University and to be conferred the esteemed professorship award. As the premier institution of higher learning in the Kyrgyz Republic, this University inspired a great deal of awe and respect and it is a particular privilege to be welcomed here.

2. Universities as centres of higher learning have always had a special place in my heart. I have been associated with institutions of higher education from quite early in my public life. Universities inspire a genuine search for knowledge, encouraging the habit of reading, research, thinking and understanding of a vast range of the most complex and arcane subjects. As a rule, universities always strive for excellence in teaching, research and development and although they pursue knowledge, creativity and research in a rarefied environment, their work, teaching and contribution often impact upon society in a most positive and constructive way.

3. The remarkable thing about universities is that they are concerned with and give equal importance to developments of the past, present and the future. Apart from the arts and humanities they are concerned with the theoretical and applied sciences in an unrelenting quest for knowledge. As is sometimes the case, this unrelenting quest for knowledge goes beyond the ethics of society. It is therefore important that we all emphasise that although for the sake of knowledge is good, knowledge for the good of mankind is better. Let us not waste our talents on knowledge that is irrelevant to society.

4. As citadels of higher learning universities cannot operate in isolation and cannot be removed and remote from society. They have to be sensitive to the aspirations and needs of society. At the same time they have to inspire the quest and thirst for knowledge and research. Being in developing countries the role of the universities in producing professionals, educators and good technocrats is even more important. Our universities must always be conscious of their particular relevance to developing economies.

5. I have no doubt that the Kyrgyz State University, with the fine academic tradition that it has established over the past four decades of its existence, will continue to strive for the highest levels of achievement. The work and research that this University carries out will transcend national, geographical and sometimes even metaphysical boundaries. With the

facilities that are available today they are exciting prospects for the Universities in the Kyrgyz Republic to be in touch with centres of higher learning in other countries. I trust there is scope for this University to cooperate with the Universities in Malaysia and establish linkages that will prove mutually beneficial. I personally hope these linkages will come to fruition soon. I wish Kyrgyz State University success in its academic, research and experimental endeavours.

6. On the positive note, I have great pleasure in accepting the Professorship Award of this University.