

**THE OCCASION OF THE CONFERMENT OF THE HONORARY DOCTORATE  
OF HUMANITY BY THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MONGOLIA**  
ULAANBATAAR, MONGOLIA, 11 SEPTEMBER 1997

1. I am deeply honoured to be here this morning to receive the Honorary Doctorate of Humanity conferred on me by the National University of Mongolia. I would like to convey my special thanks to the Government of Mongolia and the distinguished members of the Academic Council of Scholars of the University, which have deemed me worthy of the Honorary Doctorate.
2. Besides being a personal honour for me, I am happy that the occasion is made more meaningful as it coincides with the 26th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Malaysia and Mongolia. This honour that you have just accorded me will be remembered by us as a symbol of the enhanced relationship between our two countries.
3. We are at the threshold of a new millennium. I am hopeful that the future will see a much more equitable distribution of wealth and prosperity between the countries of the world. I appreciate that the world does not owe us a living. But I do hope that the world will also not deliberately prevent us from seeking a fair share of the opportunities and the wealth of this world, including the exploitation of our own resources.
4. Mongolia is perceived by us in the South East Asia as a very remote country. It is time that we revise our perceptions. It took only seven hours to fly here. It takes 13 hours to fly non-stop to London and more than 20 hours to New York. Yet these places are not regarded as being remote.
5. It seems to me that Mongolia with its pristine beauty, its clear air, its glorious history and the relics of the past, would be a great place for tourists from South East Asia and other parts of the world. It needs only some investments in facilities for Mongolia to become less remote. Malaysia is prepared to work with Mongolia to overcome the obstacles which today gives the impression that you are remote.
6. As developing countries in an age of globalisation and rapid technological changes, there is, I believe, a strong need for us to unite and speak with one voice to ensure that our interests are promoted and views duly respected. In such a challenging environment, it is imperative that countries of the South intensify their cooperation for their mutual benefits. Countries of the South, in their efforts to develop their economies will find their path fraught with difficulties, including those imposed by external pressures. We in the East Asian region are only too aware of these attempts by outside forces to slow down our rapid economic growth as demonstrated by the recent attempts to destabilise and weaken certain East Asian currencies. Until and unless we in the developing countries resist the manipulation by these external forces, we will not be able to achieve the full potential of our countries. Hence, the urgent need for the South countries to step up their cooperation in the face of all these challenges.

7. Malaysia values its friendship with all countries, large or small, irrespective of their systems of government. We only expect mutual respect and equality. We also believe in working together towards a conducive environment for global peace, stability, and common prosperity. We are conscious that the next millennium is just around the corner, and with its dawning, it should bring new hopes as well. It is my sincere hope that all countries will strive together to build a better and more equitable world for our future generations.

8. On this note, allow me, once again to express my deepest appreciation and sense of pride for the Honorary Doctorate conferred on me today by the National University of Mongolia. I would like to end my speech with a reference to the meaning of your Soyombo:

"May all people, both ruler and the ruled, be honest and straightforward in serving the country".