

The Occasion Of The Conferment Of The Honourary Doctorate

Meiji University, Japan 8 June 2001

It is indeed an honour and privilege for me to be here today to receive the Honourary Doctorate conferred by Meiji University, Japan. I wish to thank the University for this Doctorate and I hope I will be able to live up to the expectations of this scholarly award.

2. I understand that Meiji University has worked very hard to become one of Japan's leading Urban Universities. This is truly remarkable. I have always had this soft spot for academia as I was once a Minister of Education. Education is one of the most important resources any country must have to develop rapidly. In fact education, especially at the university level is a significant prerequisite for the growth and resilience of the economy. Universities must therefore continue to excel in the pursuit of knowledge. Universities have a key role to play to fulfil the country's needs of a professional pool of talents.

3. I am happy to note that the distinguished recipients before me have included a few Prime Ministers of Japan, Canada and Poland as well as the President of Senegal. It is therefore an honour and a privilege to be in their illustrious company.

4. Thus it is with great pleasure and humility that I accept this Honourary Doctorate.