

Penyampai : DATO SERI DR. SITI HASMAH BT HJ MOHD ALI
Tajuk : MAJLIS KONVOKESYEN UNIVERSITI PERUBATAN ANTARABANGSA (IMU)
DANPENGANUGERAHAN IJAZAH KEHORMAT DOKTOR PERUBATAN
Lokasi : SHERATON SUBANG HOTEL AND TOWERS
Tarikh : 23-08-2003

Terlebih dahulu, saya ingin mengucapkan setinggi-tinggi kesyukuran ke hadrat Allah S.W.T. kerana atas limpah kurnia-Nya, dapat saya bersama dalam upacara yang gemilang ini.

2. Saya ingin juga mengucapkan terima kasih kepada pihak Universiti Perubatan Antarabangsa (IMU) kerana memberi kehormatan kepada saya dengan menganugerahkan Ijazah Kehormat Doktor Perubatan sempena Majlis Konvokesyen IMU ke-17 hari ini. Majlis ini adalah suatu sejarah bagi saya dan suatu peristiwa yang tidak di duga sama sekali.

3. I wish to express my deep and sincere appreciation to the IMU for giving me this honour of receiving the Honourable Doctorate of Medicine. Never in my wildest dream, did I think that I would be conferred one day with such an honour.

4. Studying medicine immediately after World War II with inadequate qualification, was a hard struggle for me. In the second post war batch of medical students admitted into the King Edward VII College of Medicine, Singapore, in 1947, there were only 10 girls out of 75 students and I was the only Malay girl, going in with only Biology and Mathematics as my Matriculation subjects. Naturally, there were a lot of casualties after the First year examination and some of us were asked to leave. I was lucky to have failed but retained! 5. Medicine was not as easy as it is now with various visual aids to help students. It was a hard struggle every year but with the consistent support and encouragement from parents, family and fellow students, particularly one from Kedah, I never gave up, and eventually made it in 1955. Unfortunately, the examination nightmares stayed with me for years. It was terrible waking in cold sweat in the middle of the night, assuring myself that I have no more exams to take! I told myself that I would not go for any more degrees.

6. The best part of my life was the 23 years of service that I was able to contribute to the community, 18 years of it in Kedah. As a Malay woman doctor working through two eras, before and after independence, the experience of seeing the changes in development of the people in education, health, attitudes and awareness is so satisfying and an achievement. The Red Book of Tun Razak's Rural Development Schemes brought roads, water, electricity, infrastructure and extension personnel of different disciplines, right into the kampongs. Slowly but steadily, the changes in the people became evident.

They no longer avoid the modern medicines in Hospitals or Health Centres, the women were confident in the Jururawat Desa (Community Nurses) for deliveries and care of their infants, the husbands come to family planning clinics for the oral pills for their wives, and the family accepts the Immunisation Programs for their infants and toddlers. The success story of our Health programs is evident in the outstanding reduction in our mortality statistics today.

7. You are the most privileged group to be able to study medicine in a well-equipped University, such as IMU. Like all of you, I feel very excited and happy, but unlike you, I need not have to sit for an exam to get my MD! I consider this award as the result of my hard work 48 years ago. It was worth the struggle! 8. For you graduates, you will now look forward to a new phase of your life as a doctor. Ahead of you lies a road of more challenges, hard work and more demands on you that will further test your resourcefulness and determination. You must also not forget that you have to keep abreast with developments in medical knowledge and technology. I am sure IMU has equipped you well after 5 years of training. It is one of its education philosophies to prepare its graduates for life long learning, which is critical to patient management and career advancement. I extend my very sincere congratulations to you and your family on this joyous occasion.

9. As a Malaysian, I am indeed proud to see that many more women are taking up medicine and specialising in various fields. We need more young Malaysians to implement the programs in areas of

education and health care delivery. They have many more universities to choose from and lots more private colleges that offer training programs. These innumerable opportunities in education can only result in a more educated and professional society.

10. In this respect, I am pleased to note that the Ministry of Education is playing a pivotal role in ensuring that a high standard of quality is maintained.

This is particularly important if we are to achieve our objective to make Malaysia a centre of excellence in education. Indeed, we ought to be proud if we can reach a stage where we can play a meaningful role in assisting our friends in the third world in the training of their human resources. I am confident we can do this as I have noted that the private education industry is becoming more and more dynamic and innovative.

11. Speaking of innovation, it is my pleasure to have observed the International Medical University develop over the past decade from a college into a full-blown university. I am especially pleased to note that a Malaysian education institution is able to establish a unique partnership arrangement with more than twenty universities in New Zealand, Australia, Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland, Canada and the USA for the training of future doctors. Indeed, this is more impressive in view of the fact that some of your partners are regarded as the very elite universities in the world.

12. The establishment of IMU speaks volumes of the adventurism and creativity of Malaysia as a nation. I am also aware that the IMU also has its own five-year MBBS programme for its medical course. I am also told that the Lembaga Akreditasi Negara has very well received your senior clerkship programme in the last six months and your medical "products" are functioning effectively as doctors in various hospitals in Malaysia.

13. I believe that this philosophy of equipping university graduates with the necessary work skills is a critical issue in meeting the manpower needs of our country towards 2020. No doubt, among the factors responsible for this high standard of education must be the composition of your academic faculty, many of whom, I note, are individuals who are outstanding in their own fields and were previously from the public sector. I see this smooth transition and integration between the private and public sector as a very positive feature in continuing development of our nation.

14. The best part of my life as a politician's wife is to champion causes pertaining to family health, children's welfare, drug abuse, mental health and other issues. Indeed, I am most grateful to have received the support of innumerable people who have made my work all these years much easier. To the International Medical University, I express my appreciation for the honour that you have given me today. To the people who have supported me all these years and to my family, I dedicate and share this award with you and the people of Malaysia.