

**CITATION ON
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE HONORARY GRADUAND
YANG AMAT BERHORMAT TUN DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD
BY PUBLIC ORATOR PROFESSOR CHONG YAP SENG,
DEAN DESIGNATE, NUS YONG LOO LIN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE,
13 NOVEMBER 2018**

Madam Halimah Yacob, President of the Republic of Singapore and NUS Chancellor

Honorary Graduand Yang Amat Berhormat Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad

Distinguished Alumna Yang Amat Berbahagia Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Haji Mohd Ali

Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong and Mrs Goh

Ministers

NUS Chairman

NUS President

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

This morning, NUS is privileged to welcome to our campus a distinguished alumnus and truly outstanding individual, a leader who embodies visionary excellence and unwavering dedication to public service, a statesman who over the course of a long and remarkable career, has forged a modern and economically thriving country and placed it prominently on the global stage. Along the way, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad of Malaysia has played and continues to play a key role in the development of bilateral relations between his country and Singapore.

His links to Singapore go back to the time when he was a medical student here at the King Edward VII College of Medicine, which is the forerunner of the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine. Tun Dr Mahathir graduated in 1953 with an MBBS. It was also here that he met his future wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Haji Mohd Ali, a fellow medical student. The rest, as they say, is history!

It is for very good reasons that Tun Dr Mahathir is referred to as the architect of modern Malaysia. As Prime Minister from 1981 to 2003, he oversaw the rapid modernisation and growth of the country, reducing poverty and increasing overall, general prosperity. His long stewardship at the helm of government gave Malaysia the political stability needed for economic growth and development. Foreign investments were welcomed, while the tax structure was reformed and trade tariffs reduced and various state-owned enterprises were also privatised.

Under his leadership, Malaysia prospered economically. Its manufacturing sector grew, the middle class expanded, literacy rates rose as did life expectancies. The country's steady growth was also an inspiration to many other developing countries and some sought to emulate Malaysia's success.

Anyone visiting Malaysia during Tun Dr Mahathir's long leadership would not have failed to be struck by the physical transformation taking place in the country. The series of major infrastructure projects initiated by his government in the 1990s included the development of Putrajaya as the home of Malaysia's public service, and the Bakun Dam in Sarawak, the largest hydroelectric dam in Malaysia. Another major project, the Multimedia Super Corridor, launched in 1996, to develop an area measuring about 15km by 40km south of Kuala Lumpur into a multimedia hub, was, according to Mr Jack Ma, the inspiration that led to the creation of the Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba.

When the International Monetary Fund's recommendation to Malaysia to trim government spending and raise interest rates exacerbated the situation in the country during the Asian financial crisis of 1997, Tun Dr Mahathir took the decisive step to reverse this policy course by increasing government spending and pegging the ringgit to the US dollar. The result confounded his international critics and the IMF — and led to Malaysia recovering from the crisis faster than its Southeast Asian neighbours.

Tun Dr Mahathir, Malaysia's longest-serving Prime Minister and the world's most senior elected statesman, returned to helm his country's government earlier this year in a stunning demonstration of his abiding love for Malaysia, and his desire to enhance growth and prosperity for his countrymen. He is, in many eyes, a living example of bold leadership and steadfast resilience.

In conferring the degree of Honorary Doctor of Laws on Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, NUS salutes his visionary excellence and exceptional leadership of one of Southeast Asia's most vibrant countries.

Madam Chancellor, may it please you to confer on Yang Amat Berhormat Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws. Thank you.