

**SPEECH BY YAB TUN DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD,
PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA
AT THE SPECIAL CONFERMENT CEREMONY
FOR THE HONORARY DOCTOR OF LAWS
AND THE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI SERVICE AWARD
HELD ON TUESDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2018, 11.00 AM AT NUS**

Madam Halimah Yacob, President of the Republic of Singapore

Members of the academic staff of the National University of Singapore

Emeritus Minister Goh Chok Tong and his wife

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Firstly, I would like to say thank you very much for the singular honour of being conferred this Honorary Doctor of Laws by the National University of Singapore. I will value this honorary doctorate for as long as I live.

Singapore of course, is not strange to me; I was here way back in 1947. At that time Singapore and Malaysia were ruled by the British as a single protectorate, but as we all know, eventually we became two separate nations.

This is an achievement for two countries. Normally when nations separate there would be violence, but in the case of Malaysia and Singapore, the separation was smooth, and good relations continue. Those good relations, I believe, have led to me being conferred with this honorary degree.

Singapore and Malaysia remain good neighbours. Yes, we do have problems, there may some competition between us, but by and large we have been able to resolve these problems in a very peaceful way.

This is something that should be noted by a lot of countries. In many countries, when there are conflicts between them, they resort to violence and wars in order to resolve their problems. But in the case of Malaysia and Singapore, we hope that we have set an example of how neighbouring countries can resolve problems between them.

I will always value my stay in Singapore. For nearly six years I was here studying medicine at the then King Edward VII College of Medicine, which as you know later on was amalgamated with Raffles College to form the University of Malaya, and upon separation, the University of Malaya was divided into two. One still remained the University of Malaya, and the other one became the National University of Singapore.

So the ties between us have been developed very early during our formative years, and I'm glad to know that even now there is cooperation between the National University of Singapore and the universities in Malaysia.

I was very impressed by the results of that cooperation, especially in the treatment of leukaemia. This affects many children and it is important that we make progress in this field. But apart from that there are other areas of cooperation between the two universities.

Research is now a necessity, and a part of the programme of all universities. Research is very costly. Sometimes there would be research that would be duplicated. But in the case of Malaysia and Singapore, again we have shown the example of how two institutions can work together in research, in order to develop something that would help society as a whole, and sick people in particular. This is something that should be given support by both governments — the Malaysian government, and I am quite sure the Singapore government also.

There are a lot of things to do now because the world is changing. We're moving into the Fourth Industrial Revolution, we are now in the Knowledge Age, we are now talking about artificial intelligence, about e-commerce and e-government. So things are quite different now from what it was when I first came to Singapore to study.

For the younger generation, acquisition of this new knowledge is absolutely essential. You have to acquire this new knowledge. But this new knowledge is not static, it's developing all the while. And it may be that if you graduate in any particular field, you may find that the jobs waiting for you require other fields of knowledge. But that should not disappoint you, because with the basic knowledge that you have acquired at the universities, you will be able to make adjustments.

As you know, the old will fade away, and the young will succeed them. The young must be prepared to take over the places left empty by the old. They must be prepared for greater feats in each nation of ours. We have to pioneer many areas, and already we have shown, that through the cooperation between Malaysia and Singapore, we have come up with many new ideas, new strategies, which contribute much towards the development of society and nations of the world.

We believe that what we do is not for ourselves alone, but for humanity at large. It is our duty to leave this world better than when we arrive. That is something that we must do if we value life itself. Life is not something that we pass through, but something that teaches us the complexities of life, and as a result of our understanding, we will develop better systems and better ideas about how life and society should be conducted.

I would like to say thank you very much for the kind words addressed about me, and I would like to say that this encourages me to continue and I hope that I will be able to contribute something to my country, to our two countries, and to the world itself. Thank you.