

Transcript of speech by

YAB Dato' Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi

Prime Minister of Malaysia

at the Official Opening, Limkokwing University, Malaysia, 11 October 2004

Well, Lim Kok Wing, my dear friend. It's true when you said you have known me more than 30 years ago. It was true at that time we were trying to help other students who have left school without work. We were involved in the Malaysian Association for Vocational Training.

And we believed in young people. We wanted to help them in whatever way we could. At that time, we were just small people, though. There was not much we could do. But our interest in the young people has remained to this day.

I am deeply happy you have found your creative talent and your love for young children. And you have founded, most importantly, Limkokwing University of Creative Technology.

I believe this is the height of your achievement. And I am sure, you will do as you have promised - the university will be certainly the centre of excellence, not just the best in Malaysia but the best in the region and, hopefully, the best in the world.

When I came here just now I could not help noticing so many things

“Right from the beginning of its establishment, the university has been focusing its strategy on the creation of an international educational institution driven by creativity and innovative thinking. It succeeded in establishing a learning environment that has attracted a large number of foreign students.

Today, Limkokwing University has 4,000 students and faculty members from more than 60 countries.

Now, it is moving to strengthen its global presence by collaborating with Malaysia Design & Innovation Centre to build the campus into an international hub for creativity.”

YAB Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak

Deputy Prime Minister, Malaysia • 2004

that made me happy. There are so many young children of different colours, different heights, different shapes. And all were cheering, clapping, screaming. I said: what a mob here. Indeed, they are very happy otherwise they won't be screaming, clapping and shouting.

I am very proud that if they are happy it must be the reason that your university has given them an opportunity to realize their creative talent,



Limkokwing students from all over the world were thrilled to greet the Malaysian Prime Minister as he arrived to tour the campus. In the middle is Founder President Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dato' Dr Limkokwing.

their ability, and perhaps this is an indication that the future for them will be good and rewarding.

I was taken on a tour of this creative wonderland. There were so many things that my friend wanted to show me. I saw all of them... the products of creative talent, of creative energy, of our young people. That include of course, the members of the staff.

We went around. Kok Wing thought I was tired but I was not. When I am happy I am not tired. Then he said I had to go to his room and to

“The Limkokwing University stands out because of its founder's determination and drive for excellence, and no doubt the love for his country. The combination of his labour of love and a penchant for excellence has resulted in a centre of learning that can now be truly recognised as a national contribution.

Within a short span of time this Malaysian institution has garnered for itself and the country not only a niche for achieving creative knowledge in all its myriad forms but also filling a need that is wholesome and timely.”

*YB Datuk Seri Utama Dr Rais Yatim
Minister of Arts, Culture and Heritage, Malaysia • 2004*

wait for a while, while you guys here were getting ready. And what he did for us was to show something and it was a product - yet another creative talent. Something I never happened to see or to taste. You know what it was? You'd never guess. Durian coffee!

So it was durian mixed coffee. This is creativity and I wonder whether he is going to franchise this coffee or not. When I drank it, it was very nice. And that Professor I met - Awang Had Salleh - was also my friend for many years. We were studying together at University Malaya. And he said that perhaps for those who cannot have sugar and cream to go with their coffee, durian will provide the answer.

“I should congratulate the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology for emphasizing the training of industry-ready people. The university has taken this concept a step forward through collaboration with the government-endorsed Malaysia Design & Innovation Centre to bring industry into the campus. Such co-operation that effectively connects industry, government and the academia is essential if Malaysia is to succeed in establishing a knowledge-based economy.”

*YB Datuk Wira Dr Fong Chan Onn
Minister of Human Resources, Malaysia • 2004*

“The name Lim Kok Wing has long been a synonym for excellence in design and innovation. I am, therefore, delighted it will now be borne by the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology. This new institution will be a major addition to Malaysia's tertiary education sector, strengthening, yet further, the country's position as a regional centre of educational excellence.”

*H.E. Mr Bruce Cleghorn
British High Commissioner to Malaysia • 2004*

So we had coffee that was sweet and with cream. And durian will make a good mix - very smooth. Thank you for that.

At first, it tasted a little bit bitter and I was wondering what was the bitterness. Perhaps he could have added a little bit of Tongkat Ali to it. I will tell you what will become of me later so that he will know exactly what to do, whether to patent this durian coffee or not.

Anyway, I am very happy. Thank you for the honour that you have given me to come here to officiate the opening of your university.

I would not choose this date of 11th October which was chosen by my secretary, Dato' Thajudeen. He wanted to find a date convenient for me. Then I did not check until very late when he told me I had an appoint-

ment with Limkokwing University. I was very happy with that.

But upon reflection, I wish it would be another day but it would be in the month of Ramadan. Normally, secretaries like to make us work less but we work just as hard. If you make a change for me I would have chosen 22nd of this month because it's your birthday. Eleven days ahead is not too early really. On behalf of all your friends, students who are around here, happy birthday, Kok Wing. Many happy returns of the day.

It's certainly a pleasure for me to be here with you to celebrate the official opening of the two institutions. I am confident that both the Limkokwing University and Malaysia Design and Innovation Centre will play a leading role in developing skilled human resources in the creative fields for the benefit of Malaysia and the wider world.

The development of skilled human resources is an area of great concern to me and my government. In fact, human resource development is one of the four strategic thrusts of the 2005 budget that I recently proposed. The priority I place on human resource development is predicated on my belief that people are a country's most valuable asset. It is people who do the thinking and planning; people who execute and implement; people who build and develop industries. In short, it is people who advance nations.

Given the crucial role of people in development, it is pivotal that

“The Limkokwing University builds upon the philosophy of ‘industry within university’ of its founder and educator Tan Sri Lim Kok Wing. The fact that it is now renowned and internationally recognised as an enabling centre for creativity, innovation and technology speaks volumes for its founder. The university has contributed well in putting Malaysia on the international map as a centre of educational excellence.

Situated in Cyberjaya with MSC status, Limkokwing has excellent facilities to complement its internationally recognised educational and training programmes.”

YB Dato' Fu Ah Kiow

Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Malaysia • 2004

Malaysia, which seeks to advance to developed nation status within the next 15 years, makes greater efforts to develop skilled human capital. Indeed, as the world becomes more competitive and more complex, success and prosperity will increasingly go to those who add value in the global supply chain. Nowadays, "knowledge", "innovation" and "creativity" have become the new sources of value in an economy, and therefore, the main drivers of a country's economic growth. Industries and companies that have been developed through creativity and innovation drive many of the world's most successful economies today.



The Limkokwing University has a unique campus where a library showcases the process of creativity applied in all facets of the country's socio-economic activities.

I strongly believe that in order to face the new realities and compete successfully in the new economy, Malaysia must strengthen its capacity in, and the environment for, innovation and knowledge-creation activities. I have already outlined elsewhere some of the steps my government is taking to strengthen the national innovation system, including forging closer university and academia links, increasing commercialisation of R & D activities, as well as improving the legal framework to protect intellectual property rights.

I am pleased to note that some of these measures, particularly the need

“For the past 13 years Limkokwing has provided leadership in the higher education sector by delivering innovative programmes that enable graduates to gain employment. Innovation in the education sector is vital if we are to produce outstanding students for the future development of Malaysia. Creative and innovative thinking are resources that every successful student needs.

It pleases me to see a large number of Malaysian and international graduates from Limkokwing achieve excellence within their industry.”

*YB Dato' Hishammuddin bin Tun Hussein
Minister of Education (former Minister of Youth and Sports) Malaysia*

to forge closer university-academia links and increasing commercialisation of research, have resonated with the private sector. I believe that with the establishment of the Malaysia Design and Innovation Centre, we have taken another step forward in building our capacity to produce innovative products and services that will enhance the country's international competitiveness. The centre is set to play an effective role to connect industry, academia and government in order to quicken the pace of development of our creative industries and nurture more

“I am very heartened that this kind of industry-in-campus learning environment has been implemented - for the first time in this country if not in the world - by Limkokwing University at its new Cyberjaya campus.

Through collaboration with Malaysia Design & Innovation Centre, the students will interface with the largest and most successful brands in the country. At the same time, industry partners will be connected directly through the university's database to the most creative people in the country as well as some of the most creative and experienced practitioners around the world.”

YB Dato' Sri Chan Kong Choy
Minister of Transport, Malaysia
National Advisor, National Creativity & Innovation Institute

Malaysian global brands. I am confident that the centre will play a key role in translating knowledge from various sources into useful products and services that can be marketed and commercialised.

The measures I outlined and the development of innovation hubs such as the Malaysia Design and Innovation Centre, no matter how important, cannot by themselves create an innovative, creative, knowledge-driven society. To be truly effective in the long-term, I believe that the education sector must be strengthened so that it will produce a new generation of Malaysians who have the appropriate knowledge, skills and capabilities to take Malaysia forward and up the value-chain.

An education system that emphasizes cognitive and other transferable skills and builds capabilities in science, innovation and creativity will ensure that Malaysia's economy continues to leap-frog. More importantly, a good education system that emphasizes these aspects will ensure that the persons who graduate from the system are better off. After all, people who have the right knowledge, skills and capabilities will be more marketable, able to command better pay, and as they are equipped with transferable skills, able to move between industries with little cost. This means that they are more resilient to economic uncertainties.

This is why I use every occasion I can to emphasize to Malaysian stu-

dents that they should use the opportunities that have been provided, to get a good and sound education. My advice to students has always been to study hard, study smart, and above all, learn to learn. Students must understand that in a world characterised by globalisation, rapid change, and information explosion, what one learns can become obsolete very quickly. Having the ability to "learn, unlearn, and relearn" quickly and effectively enables one to master change and to prosper in a global knowledge-economy.

I thus feel very encouraged to see that Malaysians are beginning to value higher education more. This can be seen in the sharp increase in demand for places in institutions of higher learning in Malaysia over the past few years. In the year 2000, 25 per cent of the 17 to 23 year-old cohort was enrolled in public and private higher education institutes. In 2003, the figure reached 29 per cent. By 2010, the figure is expected to reach 40 per cent. By 2010, it is estimated that 600,000 more places in institutes of higher learning will have to be created to supplement the existing 1 million places.

In order to meet the growing demand for places in institutes of higher learning and complement the existing public universities, the government has continued to encourage the establishment and growth of pri-

“Limkokwing has a close working relationship with several Australian universities. This new chapter for Limkokwing will help to deepen these ties between Australia and Malaysia. With the launch of the university, Malaysia has signalled again its deep commitment to high-quality education!”

H.E. Mr James Wise

High Commissioner of Australia • September 2004

vate institutes of higher learning. In 1986, when I was the Minister of Education, there were less than 50 private institutes of higher learning, but today this number has increased more than ten-fold to 539. The rapid growth of the private education sector has allowed local students to obtain high quality education in Malaysia without being burdened by the tremendous financial costs of pursuing equivalent courses abroad. Foreign students have also found Malaysia to be an attractive alternative destination for pursuing their tertiary education. Currently, there are as many as 39,577 foreign students in Malaysia and this number is expected to grow to 50,000 by 2010. What began as an initiative to cater to an increasing demand for higher education has in fact become a success story in its own right.

Encouraged by this accomplishment, the government is seeking to develop Malaysia into a regional centre of excellence for higher educa-



Can you spot the famous award-winning movie star and film director - Mel Gibson in this picture? He and award-winning Hollywood producer Bruce Davey visited the campus in September 2007. They are pictured here with Founder President Tan Sri Limkokwing (in glasses) and Limkokwing students.

tion. In order to do this, we must ensure that we do not compromise on the quality of education that we deliver. My government is fully committed to ensuring that the education services being offered at all institutes of higher learning, including the private sector, are of the highest standard. In the recent budget, I announced tax incentives to encourage private institutes of higher learning to foster smart partnerships with other institutions and/or merge together to create strong educational entities at par with world-renowned universities. We should not spread our resources too thin; we need to emphasize quality, and move beyond mere quantity.

Furthermore, I believe the education sector in Malaysia should develop

“Tan Sri Lim has always had a strong vision in place. He has always connected design with wealth creation. He believes in educating people to understand the potential of design in creating new realities in our economies. He has always been clear about what he wants to do here - producing a new generation of graduates well-equipped for the global environment.”

Professor Helmut Lueckenhausen
Dean, National School of Design
Swinburne University of Technology
18 September 2004

more collaborative links with reputable foreign universities. This will add to Malaysia's attractiveness as a regional hub for education. These links can be realised either through developing more twinning programmes or by inviting more top-notch foreign universities to set up branch campuses in Malaysia. Currently, up to 2 billion Ringgit flow out of the country annually when Malaysian students study abroad. With more foreign universities setting up base here, the government and

“Limkokwing has built its reputation on creativity, innovation and the importance of design. It creates opportunities for students to develop originality, initiative, self-confidence, creative design skills, in fact the skills which make them among the most employable in Malaysia. Employers, in turn, have access to some of the most creative and versatile graduates.”

Prof. Chris Whitaker
Vice-Chancellor
RMIT University, Australia
22 September 2004

Malaysian parents would not have to bear such high costs in funding education overseas. More foreigners will also make their way to Malaysia as it will be much cheaper to study the same course here than in developed countries. Additionally, there would be a positive spillover effect

when local institutions are exposed to world-class teaching, research, and management practices.

As a further measure to raise the standard of local higher education, I have directed the Ministry of Higher Education to develop a system of ranking Malaysia's institutions of higher learning, both public and private. It is hoped that by ranking them, healthy competition between the institutions would be fostered, thereby motivating them to improve the quality of teaching and research conducted. I look forward to seeing the information on ranking of public higher learning institutes becoming available soon.

In recognition of the diversity in private higher education institutions, and in order to carry out the ranking exercise more effectively, I would also like to see private education institutions being graded into appropriate categories based on specific and transparent criteria. I have been told that this could include categories such as universities and university colleges; technical colleges; technical training centres; and tuition centres. This initiative would facilitate the monitoring of the quality and integrity of such institutions and the approval of courses. Furthermore, the grading will motivate the institutions to improve the quality of teaching and research in order to gain promotion to a higher category.



The Limkokwing campus has successfully incubated business units that are wide ranging from a fashion boutique, a trendy caf , a hair design salon, an academy and a convenience store.

And I am particularly happy that you are opening the door to participating students from abroad. Just now, I was delighted to hear the choir singing, the choir participated by nearly 60 students from 60 countries. They were not only Malaysians but Africans and Chinese. I don't think there is such a choir for the United Nations.

I hope that Malaysian students will develop friendship with them and develop in-depth networking and continue their relationship as friends working together for the future, especially world peace and better understanding.

Once again, I would like to congratulate Limkokwing University of Creative Technology on the successful establishment of its new campus. It is my sincere hope that Limkokwing University, along with the Malaysia Design and Innovation Centre, will work closely with the government to realise our common objectives of developing a dynamic and talented pool of graduates to strengthen our human capital, and of promoting Malaysia as a premier destination for quality education in the world.

On that note, I have great pleasure in declaring open the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology and the Malaysia Design and Innovation Centre.

Thank you.