

First of all, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman. for inviting me to attend the 16th Convocation Ceremony, and to deliver a speech, at this momentous and meaningful occasion.

2. I wish to extend my heartiest and most sincere congratulations to all the graduates on this joyous occasion, as we celebrate your moments of joy, pride and honour when you receive your coveted degrees from UTAR. Your achievements today are only made possible by your exemplary commitment and perseverance in striving to achieve success.

3. Your parents and family members must be proud of you. The UTAR faculty and staff must also be happy to see you walking into your new course of life knowing that they have prepared you well with a strong foundation.

Graduates,

4. When you leave the university, you already have the chance to start contributing to the nation. You may ask how and where you should begin. Allow me to recite a rather famous quote by an anonymous monk: "When I was a young man, I wanted to change the world. I found it was difficult to change the world, so I tried to change my nation. When I found I couldn't change the nation, I began to focus on my town. I couldn't change the town and as an older man, so I tried to change my family. Now, as an old man, I realize the only thing I can change is myself. Suddenly, I realize that if long ago I had changed myself, I could have made an impact on my family. My family and I could have made an impact on our town. Their impact could have changed the nation and I could indeed have changed the world." The great literalist Jalaluddin Al-Rumi shared the same belief: "Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today, I am wise, so I am changing myself."

Graduates,

5. You should start your post-university journey today with an ambition to excel in your respective industries and sectors by going beyond mediocrity in order to stand out above the crowd. Allow your inquisitive minds to open up to challenges. Improve the current work processes at your workplace. Improve the quality of your work and your organization. Be a value creator. Avoid from just extracting existing value and enjoying a transfer of wealth to you from another. Rather, innovate, and create new values for your organization. Consequently, it is you, and the Malaysia that you live in, that will benefit from the bigger pie.

6. As members of the new Malaysian work force, you must always discipline yourself and not be tempted with the corrupt seemingly easy money making practices that may cause the collapse of a civil society. You must execute your work responsibly with integrity and based on a strict code of ethics.

7. Please allow me to share with you an extract of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, PBUH, that we can use in our everyday life. What I am referring to is the “5 situations before 5 situations”.

You will achieve success by remembering:

1. To make the most of one's health before sickness
2. Wealth before poverty
3. Youth before old age
4. Free time before busyness, and

5. Life before death

8. With this in mind, I trust that we can all take a few moments to reflect on how we have spent our youth, health, free time, wealth and life. If we are yet to be satisfied with our answers to these questions, there is no perfect time to start other than now, to achieve the outcomes we desire. As the famous Chinese Proverb goes: "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now."

Graduates,

9. As university graduates, you will be part of the top bracket of the labour force totalling only 23%. The other 77% of the labour force may only have SPM qualifications at most. People will look up to you to show a good exemplary example in your work ethics and this in itself may already be an arduous burden on your shoulders. They may also be looking up to you as an agent of change, one who within his household or his community is capable of injecting a sense of hope, betterment, and uplifting everyone around him. It is you graduates, who will be expected by your families and communities to be role models.

10. It is my ardent hope that each family or household has a graduate in their midst. Your graduation today is another step towards achieving that hope. Whether you like it or not, society today looks up to graduates. So it is important that as role models, you must conduct your every move with dignity and sincerity free from all the ills corrupting society today. This may assist in building a larger- based civil society that we so crave in our country now.

Graduates, ladies and gentlemen,

11. The learning process in life does not end with your graduation. There is a bounty of knowledge out there that you can acquire throughout your life. Life itself is a leaning curve. So do not shy away from acquiring new knowledge and skills to better yourself and hopefully also benefit others in the process.

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12. You must be willing to be the driver in a knowledge-based society. History has proven that countries investing in her people to acquire knowledge have progressed further than those who just dish out dole money. Malaysia needs graduates like you to be the new driving force to acquire new knowledge to propel her to new heights.

13. Before I end my speech, let me leave you with a famous quote by William Butler Yeats: "Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire." I hope that spark of fire within each graduate today, will continue to burn endlessly.

14. With that, I wish all of you the very best in your future endeavours, and may all of you continue to excel in your chosen fields.

Thank you.

Speech by

Y.B.M. Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah

on the Occasion of Session 2 of the 16th Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman Convocation

at Dewan Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik, UTAR Perak Campus, Kampar,

on Saturday, 16 March, 2013, at 2.00pm

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