

# THE IDB MERIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

THE GUIDINANCE AND COUNSELLING PROGRAMME

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM, UK

TUESDAY 01 APRIL 2008

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**OPENING ADDRESS**

**BY**

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Dear Brother and Sister Scholars,

Assalam-O-Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

*“Indeed in the creation of the heavens and the earth, in the changing of the day and night, there are signs for the intelligent thinking people (sura Al-Imran)*

First of all, I would like to express my thanks and appreciation for your attendance to this session. It is a pleasure and a unique opportunity for me to address you on such an occasion, and indeed a privileged instance in discharging my duties as the Head of the IDB Scholarship Programmes. You may be aware that the former Head of Scholarship Programme Office, Dr. Ahmed Shah bin Mohd. Noor died in a tragic road accident in India In November 2006 while on an official mission. We all pray to almighty Allah for his mercy and blessings on the soul of late Dr. Ahmed Shah.

On behalf of the IDB management, I would like express our profound thanks and gratitude to the authorities of the University of Nottingham, especially Ms. Harriet Matthews and Mr. Vincenzo Raimo at the International Office to kindly host this event and providing us with all the facilities to conduct this programme.

This is indeed a unique occasion considering the two major elements of the session, the intellectual level of this audience and the topic of discussion, science and hi-tech education. We have come to meet you through this event under a new initiative of scholarship programmes activities. The purpose is to build a closer relationship between you and the IDB. The management viewed that to derive the true success of the scholarship programme and its underlying objective, it is important to instill in you a sense of belonging to IDB. This event is a testimony how much the IDB management is keen to develop your sense of belonging to IDB. You are not merely recipients of IDB scholarships, but a key player to achieve the vision, mission and the development objectives that the IDB envisages through its scholarship programmes.

So long, we had been focusing mainly on awarding the scholarships and looking at the number of scholars being trained and graduated just as the output of the programme.

As from the current year, with the expansion of the scholarship programmes and enhancement of its activities, the focus has shifted from output to outcome. The time has come to look at the real impact our scholars are making in the development of their countries and region. Their playing the

exemplary role of IDB scholars – by dedication, show of gratitude to IDB, approach to the need of the country and getting along with the country and its people. To do so, we feel that we must be along side you from now and give you the guidance on your role as an IDB scholar, your obligation to your countries and the cause of the IDB. Indeed, your social and professional leadership and creativity are vital for you to leave a legacy in your country.

In a presentation later, we will bring to you the implementation status of the Merit Scholarship Programme after 15 years of operation, and an update on activities of IDB. We may not have achieved a critical mass in each field in each country to make a greater impact, yet you can bring about a good result of your work being clustered in whatever number you are and work in a concerted manner. Your network with each other will surely bring about some positive and visible results. The Science Development Network (SDN) that IDB has launched is to serve that purpose. While Dr. Wagdy Sawahel will make a detailed presentation to demonstrate his work and experience from the profile of an IDB scholar, will also touch upon this network and your possible role through this network.

As from the current year, scholarship programmes have undergone major expansion, not only increase in number of scholarships, but also enhancing other activities. With this enhancement, we aim at regrouping our graduates through alumni kind of association and make them the focal points for IDB scholarships in each country and region. You will appreciate the purpose and usefulness of such association on having the beneficial impact to all

parties concerned - the scholars themselves, the region and the country, and above all the Ummah in general.

*Dear Scholars,*

While education has been the noblest topic at all times, it has now reached a height that all nations across the globe find it the only way to advancement and prosperity. People of all walks of life perceive it as the means to break through misery and backwardness, especially in the present context of highly competitive world of technological development.

IDB, as the development partner of its member countries, had timely identified that without acquiring hi-tech knowledge and expertise, its member countries will not be able to undertake development programmes and sustain its progress. For IDB member countries, mostly being in the low-income group, training its people in hi-tech education is quite a challenge and sometimes a luxury. The Merit Scholarship Programme has thus been launched by IDB to effectively contribute to the efforts of its member countries in developing their human resources in hi-tech education.

You must be aware that in spite of possessing 70% of world energy resources, some OIC/IDB member countries are the most backward countries. 50% of its total population lives under poverty and the literacy rate is staggering below 40%. We cannot relate to anything else but low human development and illiteracy for the poverty and backwardness. The scenario in the area of science and technology is even more dismal. The number of scientists in OIC countries represents only 2% of world's scientist population, of which only 0.14% accounts for total scientific innovation. As

the world is moving forward rapidly on science and high-tech education basis, we only watch as bystanders and endure the pain and agony of staying behind with poverty. The member countries are badly in need of scholars like you to empower themselves to lessen their dependence and turn their resources into modern and sustainable economies.

You, the scholars are the outcome of IDB scholarship programme. Your active participation in the affairs of your country can make a significant difference in the development efforts and achievements of your countries. Through your knowledge and expertise, your country can foresee advancement and a bright future, where people are assets rather than liabilities, producers rather than consumers, leaders rather than blind followers. That is where the programme will achieve its real success.

IDB's efforts through this programme may not be seen as a major contribution considering the needs of the countries. Yet, a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. Through you, the journey begins, and as the march goes on, you will be joined by more and more of your people. This way, one day the march will gain the strength and momentum to breakthrough all barriers to the path of prosperity and peace. Your moral, social and professional leadership role in this march is crucial and will prove to be the savior of your country in particular and the Muslim Ummah in general.

To be able to gain the kind of expertise your country needs through you, you have been placed to enhance and nurture your education and knowledge in the best possible manner.

You are in an environment where you can get the facilities and support that a modern education system can provide. You may have become used to these facilities. However, as you return to your home country, you are certainly going to face a different environment where you will find accomplishing your tasks quite challenging.

Surely, there are opportunities and temptations for your career in this modern and developed system that your country may not be able to either provide or commit. There lies the value and spirit of the IDB scholars that the programme attempts to instill in you, to serve the community and the country. You must have the courage, commitment and conviction to overcome the frustrating situations you will be faced with, and to take the initiative to make an impact of your expert presence. It is more like the poor parents giving education to their children with all their means and resources keeping themselves in hunger and misery with the hope that the child will grow one day, be established and take the family out of misery, not run away.

My dear Sisters and Brothers,

You must have a dream, a dream that moves you from your small personal and family world to the world of human development and human welfare. A dream that connects your talents and commitments to the community at large. A dream that can be realized for a legacy you can leave as Sadaqa Jariyah, that is continuous charity to give rewards beyond death. A dream that can make you feel happy to see the fruits of own toil in the smiles you have helped to put on the faces of people who cannot smile due to the lack of opportunities for them to grow and become self-reliant economically,

spiritually, socially and intellectually. All these can be part of your dream to make a difference, to improve living conditions and to revive the glorious past when the Ummah was leading the learning and development that benefited the humanity.

You must prepare yourself to lead both professionally and spiritually by making sincere decision, determined action and humble prayers to God to make your vision a living reality. You must prepare on the basis of not only know-how of the technical issues, but also the know-why of the purpose of human creation. If it is really important for you, you can work to achieve it with *the help of God*.

As an IDB scholar, you are the envoy of the IDB everywhere. IDB takes pride in your activities and keenly looks forward to your being active both in your country and to the cause of the IDB. You need to have the sense of belonging to the IDB and be a stakeholder in its activities, if necessary at global level.

As IDB expands the scholarship programme to increase its contribution to the member countries to increase their number of human resources in science and hi-technology, to reap the success of this effort, it needs an all-out support from all stakeholders. We need more and more meritorious and outstanding candidates to be attracted to the programme. Your exemplary role as the IDB scholar will surely be a boost to the programme and create an image whereby the IDB scholarship programmes will be seen as an international brand to be able to tap the talents of its member countries and the Muslim communities globally, Inshallah.

Finally, I urge you to take pride in yourself, to where you belong and be faithful to your religion, your country, community and above all to the IDB as a gratitude for its contribution to yourself, and for the cause it has been created for to serve its member countries and Muslim Ummah world-wide.

We pray for your academic success and career progression, and May Allah give the IDB the strength and position to be with you all along and support you in your endeavour for the development of your country, community and the region. I appeal to the Almighty *Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'la* to guide our steps in the service of our Ummah and its progress.

***“Your wish is not enough, until Allah’s wish (supports you), the Lord of the universe”***

Thanking you all.

Assalam-O-Alaikum Warahamtullahi Wabarakatuh