

PENANG MEDICAL COLLEGE CONFERRING CEREMONY

SUNDAY, 5 JULY 2009, 3.00PM

ADDRESS BY PROFESSOR BILL POWDERLY, SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE PRO-VICE CHANCELLOR OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND

Chief Minister, President, Registrars, Deans, Colleagues, Graduates, Ladies and Gentlemen – I am delighted to be in Penang today at this Conferring Ceremony, representing Dr Hugh Brady, President of UCD and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the National University of Ireland.

This afternoon, we have conferred degrees of the National University of Ireland on students of Penang Medical College. It is gratifying to see that the College is now accepted as a well-established institution that contributes significantly to the excellence and dynamism of medical education and clinical training in Malaysia. It represents a successful partnership in medical education between the Penang State Government (through the Penang Development Corporation) and the Irish Medical Schools of the National University of Ireland (NUI): University College Dublin (UCD), my own institution, and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI). For its founding institutions, my own university - University College Dublin, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and the National University of Ireland, the continued success of the College is a source of immense pride.

The degrees awarded today at Penang Medical College, to students who have studied here in Penang and have also completed part of their studies at UCD or at RCSI, are degrees of the National University of Ireland. It is a pleasure to welcome these newest graduates into the ranks of graduates of the National University of Ireland.

The National University of Ireland is Ireland's largest university and since its foundation in 1908 has been extremely important to the social, cultural and economic development of Ireland. However, when it comes to the recognition of its degrees, NUI is more than a national institution. NUI degrees enjoy a high level of international recognition and graduates of the NUI Schools of Medicine and Health Sciences can be found in every continent. It is deeply gratifying for the University to acknowledge the success enjoyed by NUI graduates in medicine and the health sciences, nationally and internationally. We believe that those graduating today, with qualifications of the National University of Ireland, will find this to be of distinct advantage to them in their careers.

Penang Medical College has grown considerably since 2001 and today you, the class of 2009 and ninth successive cohort will, like your predecessors I am sure, become valued members of the noble profession of medicine whether here in Malaysia or elsewhere. Medical Science is one of the most highly sought-after disciplines in the University sector. Places are limited and entry highly competitive. The undergraduate programme of studies is rigorous, its duration one of the longest in higher education. Those of you who have graduated today can feel proud that with your medical qualification you have achieved something that is highly prized in society, both here in Malaysia and internationally. In studying at Penang Medical College you have been educated at a distinguished institution with a growing reputation as a centre for excellence in medical education in Malaysia.

Medical graduates have the benefit of scientific knowledge and access to the secrets of human science and behaviour, and society gives them great privileges as a consequence. With that comes responsibility. Among these responsibilities is the requirement to maintain and expand your knowledge in the light of ever increasing knowledge in science. As well as maintaining your professional competence, this means taking your place as a responsible citizen who will inform your fellow citizens of the implications of knowledge. That citizenship is important for your country but also for the world. The present influenza pandemic shows us how small the world has become – how a sneeze in Mexico has worldwide reverberations. As graduates of an international medical school we would hope you can remain informed medical world citizens, advocating science and knowledge in place of prejudice and rancour.

I would like to offer my warmest congratulations to all of those new medical graduates who have been conferred this afternoon. I wish each of you every success as you embark on what I hope will be a long and rewarding career in medicine. However, you should think of your achievement today as a platform to further study – given the pace of change in medical knowledge and technological development, the practice of medicine today calls for constant renewal and lifelong learning. We hope to welcome some of you back to Dublin for postgraduate studies.

For your parents, families and friends, the Conferring day is also a day of celebration, a day to enjoy the satisfaction of seeing the graduate successfully cross this important threshold in life and now ready to embark on a new phase. And, to the President, Dean and Staff of PMC, I also extend my warmest congratulations and collegial good wishes.