



**On 19 April 2008 the Limkokwing University conferred upon Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister, YAB Dato' Sri Najib Tun Abdul Razak the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Social Transformation in recognition of his leadership that has not only contributed to lift the Malaysian rural heartland to new heights of economic progress but provided the vision to empower the next generation through strategies to move the rural sector into the 21st century.**

*Citation*

## **YAB Dato' Sri Dr Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak**

**Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia**

### **A mission to transform the rural heartland of Malaysia**

He has been a leader all his adult life. A career politician for over 30 years, power holds no mystery to him. He knows how to wield it to obtain the outcomes he seeks. In championing the Federal Land Development Authority or FELDA as it is better known, he is able to influence the life of over a million people in the rural heartland of Malaysia.

He seeks to transform a people entrenched in centuries-old lifestyle in a manner that safeguards their traditions and values. He seeks to stem the outflow of young people eager for the attractions of city centres. He seeks to mould them into young leaders who will be the bridge that will close the gap between the rural and the urban centres.

### **Moving FELDA second and third generations into the 21st century**

It was his father, the second Prime Minister of Malaysia, the late Tun Haji Abdul Razak, who created the FELDA programme, 50 years ago, to redress rural social issues. While his father's plan achieved success in eradicating poverty faced by the first generation of FELDA settlers, Dato' Sri Najib is taking FELDA's second and third generations into the 21st century to manage the future and sustain FELDA's remarkable growth.

His past experiences in Ministerial positions covering a wide range of portfolios from Energy, Telekoms and Post, Education, Finance, Culture, Youth and Sports to Defence have given him a wide vista of the world and its myriad challenges.

He knows how vulnerable a nation can be if there is no vision set on a future that can respond to change. He knows that the strength of a nation lies in building its people. And therein lies his focus.

### **Creating a new generation of rural entrepreneurs**

He has set in motion a social transformation underpinned by a 5-prong strategy that will see the rural heartland develop into Malay economic growth centres. It will produce a new middle class through enhancing and diversifying the income of the rural population by encouraging people to venture into business and entrepreneurship instead of just depending on commodities.

A graduate with a Bachelor of Economics (Hons) from the University of Nottingham in England, Dato' Sri Najib understands the value of education and the role it plays in harnessing and developing the potential of young people. He has persuaded many to pursue their higher education to improve their skills and knowledge.

While he sees an educated and skilled younger generation as agents of change he has been at work transforming the rural landscape so that the young will be persuaded to return home where they can put their knowledge to work.

The social transformation that Dato' Sri Najib foresees for the rural heartland will take time to take effect and he is content to provide the catalyst that will bear fruit in the next 50 years.

**For his inspired leadership the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology confers upon him the Honorary Doctorate in Social Transformation.**

