

HONORARY DOCTORATE IN LEADERSHIP **YB Tan Sri Datuk Seri Utama Haji Mohd Isa bin Dato' Haji Abdul Samad**

Chairman, FELDA (Federal Land Development Authority)

His entry into the corridors of political power came abruptly when his father, an elected member of the state constituency of Linggi, in the Malaysian state of Negeri Sembilan, fell ill. Tan Sri Isa was just 29 years old, having served as a teacher with the Dato' Abdul Razak School in Seremban for the past 5 years. He was torn between the offer to become Vice-Principal of a secondary school and the opportunity to stand for election in his father's place. Being the only son of a father that he admired, he felt the pull of politics and the urge to continue his father's service to the people. Little did he know that the moment he made the decision to stand for election in 1978 he would be catapulted to the state's highest position.

He served as an Exco Member of the Negeri Sembilan State Government where he picked up vital skills in governance. By 1982 he was considered ready and appointed to the position of Chief Minister. At the age of 33 he was among the youngest to assume this mantle. Many considered him a pushover because of his age. And there they were wrong for he held his position securely for 22 years.

His philosophy was simple. He completely believed in serving the people of his state. Gregarious and outgoing by nature he had a strong affinity to the ordinary citizens of his state. He was always there at their functions in the best of times as well as the worst. He knew their names. He remembered every imam, village head and temple priest. He was keenly interested in their welfare. Suffice to say he truly loved his people and they showed their loyalty to him through the power of the ballot. His door was always open and he was always a ready listener to their problems.

He served briefly as Minister of Federal Territories and remains today an elected member of the state seat of Bagan Pinang in Negeri Sembilan. But his interests have now gone global. Appointed as Chairman of FELDA (Federal Land Development Authority) he takes on a corporate role that has arrived at a most opportune time when the organization is aggressively globalizing. Tan Sri Mohd Isa is no stranger to FELDA as he has been closely connected to the settlers in his home state of Negeri Sembilan.

FELDA, established in 1956, the brainchild of Malaysia's second Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak, is Malaysia's most successful story of how government policies have nurtured the future of a people. Pegged to the policy of giving land to the landless, the organization is lauded by the World Bank as among the world's most exemplary poverty eradication schemes. The appointment of Tan Sri Isa comes at a time when the global arm of the organization, Felda Global Ventures Holdings Berhad (FGV) is now spearheading the mission to build the organization into a multinational venture. It began with the successful listing on Bursa Malaysia in June 2012, making it the world's third largest IPO (Initial Public Offering) that year.

Tan Sri Isa is now working closely with the Prime Minister YAB Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak to develop FELDA into a global Economic Powerhouse for Malaysia, integral to the Economic Transformation Programme. Tan Sri Mohd Isa's task now is to ensure this vision is accomplished which he knows full well is in the safe hands of FELDA's top management who have been responsible for its outstanding progress. His focus will forever be fixed on the well-being of the 2 million FELDA community who form the foundation and life blood of the organization.

For his versatility in rising to all tasks as well as the sincerity which has endeared him to people from all walks of life, the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology is honoured to bestow upon YB Tan Sri Datuk Seri Utama Haji Mohd Isa bin Dato' Haji Abdul Samad the Honorary Doctorate Degree in Leadership this day 19 July 2014.

