

**CITATION BY PROFESSOR KISHORE MAHBUBANI,
DEAN, LEE KUAN YEW SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY AT NUS
PUBLIC ORATOR FOR
PROFESSOR KLAUS SCHWAB, RECIPIENT OF HONORARY DOCTOR OF LETTERS**

**NUS COMMENCEMENT 2017, MAIN CEREMONY
THURSDAY, 6 JULY 2017, NUS UNIVERSITY CULTURAL CENTRE**

NUS Chancellor, President Tony Tan Keng Yam, and Mrs Mary Tan

Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills), Mr Ong Ye Kung

Excellencies

NUS Pro-Chancellors

NUS Chairman, Mr Hsieh Fu Hua

NUS President, Professor Tan Chorh Chuan

Distinguished Guests

Graduates

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a real pleasure and honour to read this citation for Professor Klaus Schwab whom I can call both a globally recognised leader and a personal friend. I have had the rare privilege of attending 17 Davos meetings. I was also touched to be invited to a small birthday party in Geneva to celebrate Prof Klaus turning 70 on 30 March 2008.

Prof Klaus founded the World Economic Forum (the Forum) in 1971. It started small with a few hundred delegates participating. Today several thousand world leaders and CEOs, civil society representatives and global thought leaders converge on Davos every January. Davos has clearly emerged as the number one global forum. No other meeting can match its reach and influence. As Kofi Annan said, "With great single-mindedness, he built Davos into a meeting place of business leaders, politicians, religious figures, policymakers and, more recently, activists, celebrities and younger leaders".

Even more significantly, the Forum has made our world a better place. It has enhanced global peace and prosperity, generated bold new ideas and visions and consequently, improved the lives of billions. It is truly surprising that the Forum has not received a Nobel Peace Prize, an accolade it richly deserves.

Having participated in both UN General Assembly (UNGA) and Davos meetings, I know that both have made equally important contributions to world peace. Many significant encounters between erstwhile adversaries took place in Davos: between Nelson Mandela and Fredrik Willem de Klerk; between Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres; between Helmut Kohl and Hans Modrow, the East German leader. The open chemistry of Davos enabled these historic encounters to take place in a comfortable setting.

Prof Klaus was actively involved in many reconciliation processes in the world, particularly at the end of Apartheid in South Africa, in the German unification process and in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It was mainly his intervention, which prevented a war between Turkey and Greece in 1988.

Equally importantly, Prof Klaus was among the first to realise the importance of China's emergence. He engaged China early and invited the first Chinese delegation to Davos in 1979. Premier Li Peng went to Davos in 1992. Vice Premier Zhu Rongji went in 1995. The summer Davos meetings in China have helped China's integration with the world order. It is therefore not surprising that President Xi Jinping chose Davos to deliver his major address defending globalisation in January this year.

The Forum was also the birth place of three major global life-saving initiatives: First, the creation of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), which has immunised 580 million children and prevented 8 million deaths; second, the global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria; and third early this year, the birth of the Coalition for Epidemics Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) with a funding at launch of US\$700 million.

Today globalisation is under attack. Yet globalisation has also improved the human condition significantly: reducing global poverty, spreading modern medicine, reducing infant mortality, extending human lives. The British philosopher Jeremy Bentham, the father of utilitarianism, famously said, "It is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong". By this definition, the Forum has done a lot of good for the world.

Under Prof Klaus' leadership, the Forum has tried to promote an inclusive globalisation. Today major global corporations take it for granted that they should demonstrate Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Yet this was never mentioned in 1971, when the Forum began. The annual gathering in Davos taught CEOs that they have larger social responsibilities. Kofi Annan, noting that Davos is the "place you went to try out new ideas, confirm trends or launch initiatives" said, "That's why, in 1999, I felt it was the right place to begin my campaign for a voluntary global compact between the U.N. and world business leaders on respect for human rights, the environment and labour standards". At the 2002 World Economic Forum, 36 CEOs of major corporations signed a document titled "*Global corporate citizenship: the leadership challenge for CEOs and boards*". The crux of this document is that CSR must be an important priority for businesses.

The Forum has also generated a great deal of global thought leadership. Each year, for example, the leaders of the major global universities convene in Davos at the Global University Leaders Forum (GULF). I must confess that I felt somewhat intimidated when Prof Klaus asked me to take the place of Professor Larry Summers as co-convenor of GULF with Professor Richard Levin, the President of Yale. But it also made me directly aware of how the Forum generates so many global public goods. Professor Tan Chorh Chuan can confirm this as he served as the Chair of GULF from 2014 to 2016. Prof Klaus has been, and remains, a strong and proactive supporter of NUS' multifaceted participation in the World Economic Forum's wide range of programmes. This has opened many unique opportunities for NUS to contribute to a broader global agenda, while benefiting from the Forum's deep and extensive networks. The LKY School is also happy to have hosted two meetings of the World Economic Forum Young Global Leaders Forum in 2012 and 2014. We also plan to host another in November this year.

It is no secret that the outstanding success of the Forum is a result of the dynamic and imaginative leadership that Prof Klaus has provided to the Forum over 60 years. Heraclitus famously said that you cannot step into the same river twice. It is equally true that you cannot step into the same Davos twice. In our rapidly changing world, Prof Klaus is able to reinvent Davos each year. This is why all the leaders of various dimensions of human society converge

at Davos each year. They will leave Davos with sparkling new insights into the human condition.

Prof Klaus has been globally recognised for these magnificent contributions. He has been knighted by Queen Elizabeth and received the Grand Cross of Germany, among many other awards. He has also been conferred Honorary Doctorates by several leading global universities including London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), University of Lausanne, and Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) in South Korea.

The National University of Singapore is deeply honoured to recognise the distinguished work of Prof Klaus Schwab.

Mr Chancellor, may it please you to confer on Prof Klaus Schwab the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters.