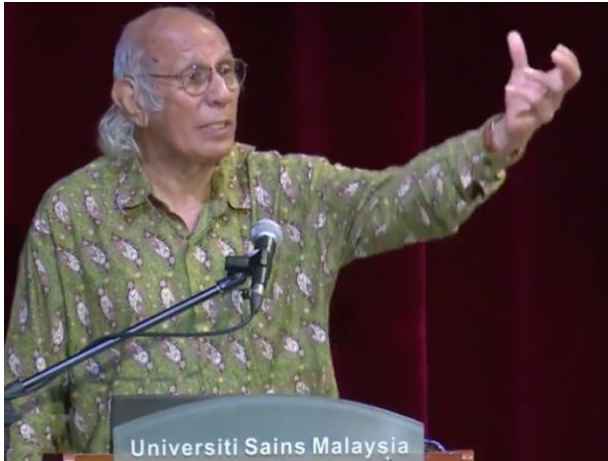


Dato' Seri Anwar Fazal: Keynote address



Brothers and sisters, citizens of the universe and children of mother earth. It is a very special joy for me to come back here again to USM. My sister was one of the first batch at USM in the science class when it began in sixty-nine.

My sister became the chief librarian in USM and had the joy also of setting up one of the most pioneering colleges in the world which has now some 12 campuses called the Right Livelihood College which brings together all the winners of the alternative Nobel Prize - the people who are change makers, people who make a difference to all over the world and come from nearly over

150 countries. Penang USM was the headquarters of the network that made these people into learning change workers.

There was a person who was watching a building being made by three brick layer. That person went up to the first brick layer and asked what are you doing? And the bricklayer said, I'm laying a brick. He went up to the second bricklayer and he asked him, what are you doing? He said, I am building a school. I'm building a school. And he asked the third bricklayer what are you doing? He said I am trying to make the world a better place.

I use this illustration because it tells you of the way in which we perceive things that we do and things that other people do and there are different kinds of visions about life. And for us in the world today we have to be the kind of people who can see these three differences. It be not enough to be just PhDs. You have to be BSDs. And you have to be DTDs.

What is BST? BST is blood, sweat and tears. You must be prepared to get out on the field and start doing things and sacrifice yourself and take up all the challenges that are needed to be taken up.

And what is GTD? GTD is getting things done. The ability to see how you can make sure things can happen. That means you understand the techniques of making change in society.

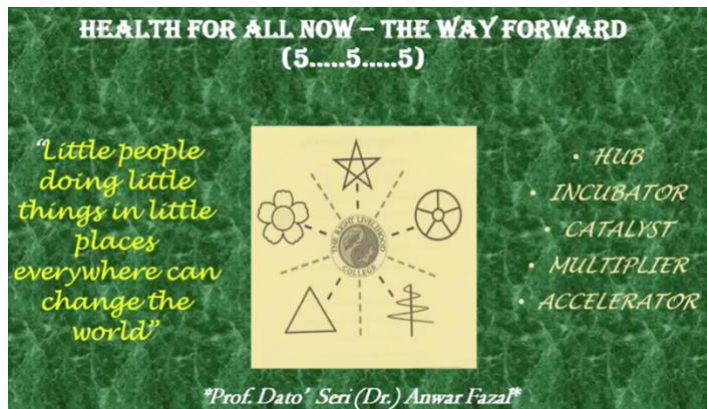
I had become much closer to pharmacy thanks to the *tongkat* that people were buying from pharmacies. The Poison Centre worked very closely with the consumers movement in doing tests for products. We were finding that products that were harmful (*tongkat* for exmple) were being marketed as something that will be beneficial. And we were able find poisons in things that were freely available.

There were remarkable things at that time. For example, Belacan that was very common at the time. there were people who thought that Belacan (shrimp sauce) looks very ugly and that we should make it better by adding color to it and they added red color to make it look nicer but you know what they use as coloring they use the same coloring as was used to make paint and this paint color is actually poisonous and you will be causing cancer. So you can imagine a product that was like a household thing for large numbers of community in this country was being poisoned by being coloured with a colouring that is used for paint.

These were the kind of little things that we found and here was an institution that could do testing for us. We collaborated with the Poison Centre in a number of things that happened and we were also very proud because of the initiatives that they took.

One of the early winners of the Olle Hansson award was none other than Tan Sri Dzul for his activist work - including with the Poisons Centre - in making health for all available. Well done! It was nearly 40 years ago and very important action for us.

There are three things. You can see the chart there that I have put which are going to be quite



significant and I have chosen these symbols to represent them. The first you see is the flower. The flower represents beauty here. It also represents a thing that gives life. It carries the pollen for the flower and its five petals are five things I like to remember because if you want to make a better world, you have to know the elements that will make a better world and there are five very very strong elements.

The first is **social justice** - equity, social justice. If you don't have that sense of social justice you will not recognize the real meaning of what is a caring life.

The second is **ecological sustainability**. To look at how we have an impact on mother earth - the way in which we very often end up poisoning mother earth with the way we deal with chemicals and so on - we just throw them away. We flush them down and we actually poison mother earth itself.

Then there is **economic productivity** and that's very important too - you want to see ways by which you can make things that are not just money making but productive in terms of how they give value to society. That's a different way of thinking. You think in terms of good economics and bad economics. There are people who just do anything that can make money. Tan Sri Dzul mentioned how you know these things were happening and in our very very early stages of our work we found how pharmaceutical companies were charging one kind of price in one place and may be 100 times more in another place - and they were forming cartels where they can distribute drug sales to any one of them at a higher price and that will be the winner for contracts. We found all kinds of amazing things happening in the world at that time - how corporate capitalism was engaged in leading things that were meant to serve humanity - products that were about life and death and were completely unaffordable to ordinary people.

That was very very sad and then of course we had to find ways of competing with these kinds of things. Affordable generic drugs were being made and several countries took leadership in these enterprises. Bangladesh was one of them. Thailand and India also took action in terms of making sure that they were free to make generic drugs of their own. So then essential drugs were available at very reasonable prices and yet the processes were sustainable in terms of economics.

So you had this profit capitalistic type and the community service type of economics that is so very very important.

The next thing is what I call **participatory democracy** - how big decisions that need to be made about health and so on should have consultations and should have engagement - so that when things are being discussed, they should be discussed with the groups that are involved. What Tan Sri Dzul mentioned the use of nicotine vapes for example - that there is a whole network of anti smoking organisations, the whole network of doctors who have been involved. We know the impact of these kind of practices but not to engage those who are involved in dealing with the practices - not to listen to them - is not democracy. It's a kind of authoritarianism that we cannot accept. When they don't have the appropriate kinds of engagements and involvement they may be listening only to those who want to sell the problem products because they make money.

The last thing is extremely important - **cultural vibrancy**. We all have traditional systems of music and dance and even medicine. We even know of traditional exercise - whether you take the yoga or tai chi and so on. There is a whole range of wellness systems that are actually built into our system. And these systems can be can be sadly ignored and lost. We must keep that kind of cultural vibrancy

And that cultural vibrancy also brings joy and colour to people's life and we should combine those kind of things with health.

The second set of five is the star. If you want to be a star in this movement, in the health movement, in the community, there are five things that are extremely important. You find the five that are you. This five - the star.

If you want to be a better person, there are **five C's** that are extremely important for you. And of these five C's the first is conscience. Conscience is that you feel accountable.

I want to tell you two stories. One is a story that links up with the award that we going to give in memory of this great doctor - Dr Olle Hansson. There was a woman, a young woman who was working in Ciba Geigy. They were talking about a particular drug - *Enterovioform* (clioquinol) - that was damaging the health of Japanese - causing blindness. Tens of thousands of Japanese were being damaged. And the discussions in the board were 'never mind it's only affecting the Japanese and we have 10 more years of patent. Let's continue. Let's not bother about them. No one is complaining you know.'

She could not bear that kind of action and she sent documents from the board meeting to Doctor Olle Hansson. Based on those documents we wrote up a book that was published in Penang called *Inside Ciba Geigy*. That scandal went all over the world with that book that was published in Penang. There was not one letter trying to challenge us, or lawyers to sue us. No - because we had the truth as the result of the conscience of this person. Until today we have never talked about who this person was but it was the conscience of a woman who could not stand this kind of conduct. It is extremely important if there is something really wrong - you have to speak up.

There was another woman whose name was Kelsey. Frances Oldham Kelsey was a doctor with the Food and Drug Administration who was in charge of approval of drugs and she was put under pressure to get approval for a drug called thalidomide. This drug already had problems. It was given to mothers who suffered from morning illness and depression during pregnancy. Very commonly their babies were born without arms and without legs - just with little appendages. This was happening in an amazing way all over the world - and what happened? They wanted to introduce this drug to the United States. The United States is a very drug taking society with the culture that for everything you have you must have a drug. You have a situation where people put pressure to get drugs and there was a very strong link between pharmaceutical companies and the food and drug administration.

The pharmaceutical companies were among the largest contributors of political donations to the government of the United States. So you can see the politics by which these kinds of things are done. These kinds of politics are very very strong and and very painful for us. Doctor Kelsey was not happy with the selling of this particular drug in the United States. She fought and she fought. She was put under so much pressure by the companies and then the results came out from a number of reputable sciences that this drug was causing babies to be disformed - a really amazing story - and she became hero. She lived to be a hundred and one. She was given a very special award for all her health work by President Kennedy. This again represented conscience.

The next C of course is relating to courage. You have to have also the courage. You have a conscience but you must be able to get out and do something about it - courage like this women showed.

Competence as the third C is extremely significant. And that you would know very well because if you are not competent then you shouldn't be in this particular field.

Creativity. That's the idea of having a very open mind in which you can begin to think about links and links and organisations - what I call sometimes you know hubs - incubators - catalysts - multipliers - accelerators. All these kinds of concepts that come up and which tell you about how to organise and lead.

The fifth C is conviviality. Conviviality is about how to deal and disagree without being violent, without being difficult. You can talk, you can discuss, you find all kinds of methods and ways by which you can address these kinds of issues and the more you keep yourself comfortable, the more you even smile as the other party gets angry. You keep calm and you have that kind of culture and ability - then you will make a difference

Then there is the will, the will of change. The will is moving things forward. As we are planning to do and here we have five things that we need to remember. One is the power of one. One person can actually make a change in the world. Look at Zafrullah - one person - he provided leadership and with his leadership we saw essential drugs, we saw courage. In the movements in his own country we saw the setting up of a university and a whole healthy self-reliant community. Amazing things he did.

The power of many comes so that you form networks, you form organisations like HAIAP and then you can get stronger because you have a network. Network - the word was first to be used by us in civil society. That time 40 over years ago the word network didn't exist really. A network is where we form links with institutions, with universities, with the professional organisations with even individuals - everyone. Then you have the power of all including the power of local, national and global - the younger generations, the middle generations and the older generations. You become universal in terms of your work.

The next is of course information and now data is available all over and the new challenge is what is good data and what is bad data. That is going to be a brand new story.

The fourth part of the will is the halo. We have international rules. We have international documents, we have treaties, all of which we can draw from in order to make change in our own country, in our own community. These have already been agreed to. We also have the halo of the spirituality and our conscience and our caring that goes together with our spirituality.

The fifth part of this will is the power of success everywhere in the world people are doing great things and making a difference but these stories are not told, the stories are not shared - we forget. But if we know how to share these kinds of stories then you know that you can make it. If somebody ask you and suggests it is difficult, it cannot be done, then you know other people are already doing it. So, go ahead and get it done.

The triangle is what I want to talk about. The triangle is about local, national, global, it is about the younger generation, the middle generation, the older generation. Many of these kinds of things that you have to become aware of because they represent the way the world is sequenced.

The last thing I wanted to share is this symbol and it's a Sufi symbol - that is a straight line. and a curve. A curve and the straight line represents the path that cannot change - all the things that relate to - like integrity, the carrying the ones that I spoke about earlier. That has to be the straight path. The river is the flexibility, the creativity that you can have in order to make changes. You have to have both that kind of ability and flexibility. So if you want to make a difference - whether you are faculty, whether you are students or my brothers and sisters from Health Action International, you have to remember that if you want to make the whole world grow, you have to make the whole world into a garden. You have to make the whole world a God. If you want to learn, you have to make the whole world your university. And if you have that kind of mindset, then you, all of you, can make a difference. Thank you very much. Salaam Alekum.

Beverley Snell - Session Chair

Thank you Anwar: This weekend we celebrate the anniversary of when those four people - the founders of HAIAP - Anwar Fazal, Doctor Mira, Doctor Bala and Doctor Zafrullah - on that night of May the 29th in 1981 in Geneva pretty much took on the whole world and they made an organisation. There were a lot of links with other organisations throughout the world and something emerged that would make a difference.

One of the most successful enterprises is the development of Gonoshasthaya Kendra which was started by Doctor Zafrullah Chowdhury. We lost Doctor Zafrullah quite recently - on the 11th of April and we will remember him forever. The following video tells some of the story of the history of the development of Gonoshasthaya Kendra and of Zafrullah himself.

Tribute to Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury

Zafrullah Chowdhury was born December 27, 1941 in Chittagong. He completed his MBBS in 1964 at the Dhaka Medical College and then in 1967 he attended the Royal College of Surgeons in England. But when the liberation war began in 1971, he returned to serve the nation only weeks before completing his degree.

He started collected money from Britain for constructing a field hospital and began with a hospital of 480 beds in Agartala for wounded freedom fighters. He provided basic training in health care for female volunteers.

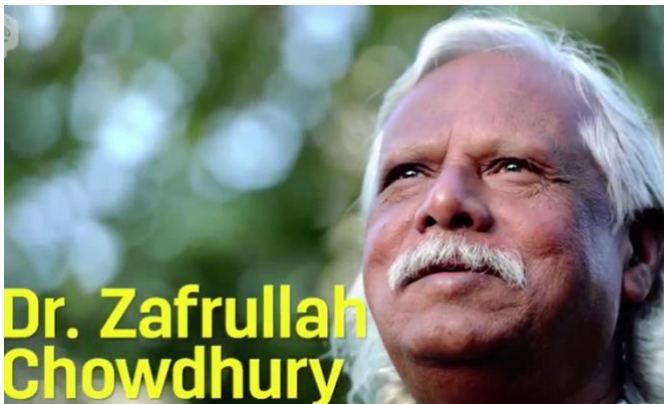
After consulting with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, he named the hospital Gonoshasthaya Kendra - Peoples' Health Centre - that became a whole community organisation. In 1981 they established a modern pharmaceuticals plant name Gonoshasthaya Pharmaceuticals. They could provide good quality essential medicines at a very low price.

Dr Zafrullah dedicated his whole life to serving people. He rejected an offer to join BAKSAL - a communist political party - and refused becoming a Minister in General Zia's regime and also refused the offer of becoming health minister in President Ershad's government.

In 1977 his organisation earned the highest national award from the Bangladesh Government - the *Independence Day Award*. In 1992 they were also awarded the *Right Livelihood Award* from Sweden.

Recently, during the corona virus pandemic, his organisation invented a COVID-19 Testing Kit.

But Dr Zafrullah also involved himself in many political issues that incurred conflict. However, his love for humanity will remain unforgettable for Bangladesh and for the whole world.



Bangladesh is located in South Asia. With a population of nearly a hundred and sixty million it is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. During the years after the liberation war against Pakistan in 1971 the new independent country was plagued by hunger, impoverishment and political instability. And although the situation has improved in the meantime many Bangladeshis are still mired in poverty to this day.

'Life in Bangladesh is miserable. Our health care becoming impossible. Women have been exploited. Bangladesh is known for its garment industries. Two million young women keep that economy of Bangladesh going. At what expense? They get less than a \$50 a month income.

'On the other side they are making they are making huge profit for the owners and they are giving you cheaper clothes in the western world. So you don't want to talk about that.



'Gonoshasthaya Kendra is a non governmental organisations that primarily champions better health care conditions. One of the centre's main undertakings is to train paramedics. It is mainly women who provide the first level medical care riding from village to village on their bicycles. One paramedic is responsible for up to 1000 families in three or four villages.

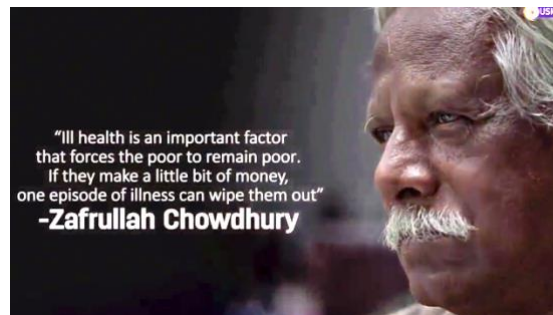
'They offer advice, treat patients and perform simple operations. More complicated cases are referred to the nearest clinic. Realising that solely doctors cannot provide the health care. You need a large number of people really who can provide other help. The experience of Gonoshasthaya Kendra shows that the participation of the

community and the integration of local authorities are key to the success of their projects.

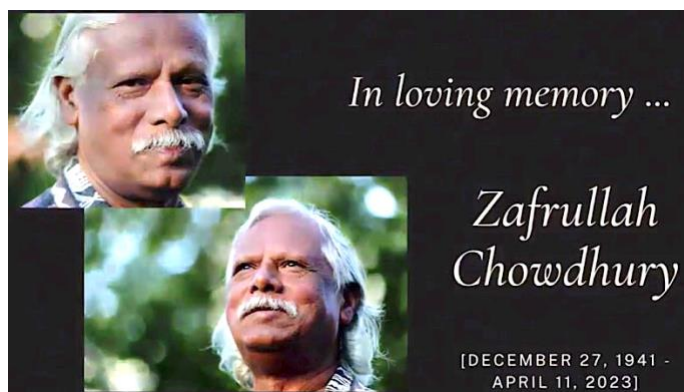
'Working originally in the health field, the organisation has expanded the scope of its work into other areas such as agriculture, emergency relief, research and education. We are trying to also provide health care and education for the rural people.

'From the beginning Gonoshasthaya Kendra emphasised independent, self-reliant and people orientated development. It conducts seminars and workshops, organizes conferences and offers training programs. Today the organisations employs over 1500 people and has a great number of volunteers working for it.

'Medicines must be affordable. This is one of the health centre's basic principles. To this end they founded Gonoshasthaya Pharmaceuticals Limited a company which has become one of the largest pharmaceutical manufacturers in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has become self sufficient. 97% of the drugs are produced locally and like a journal. So drug some drugs are those who are under government price control. These have become very cheap. But those who are is not under government price control, prices skyrocket. Greed is not sustainable. For doctors, this is a simple but crucial recognition. Something that everyone must be made aware of. Especially the future generations.



'To stop the greed of the multinational companies. We have to make medicines cheaper. So it is affordable. All the time you cannot take people for fools. Sometime they will be awoken. And that has a started beginning. But the process is a bit too slow for me. I think it has to be faster.



'Our life is a struggle. Our struggle is within the country because we speak for the common people. We speak against the prevailing system which reaps the profit while denying justice to the common people, denying health care for the common people. We speak for them, we stand by their side. For anybody who is willing to struggle, it is not easy.'

When Gonoshasthaya Kendra and Zafrullah Chowdhury received the 1992 Right livelihood award, the award was a valuable boost in the long and tough struggle for a functioning health care system in Bangladesh.

We are very fortunate to have with us today Doctor Tariq Kulli Islam and he is going to tell us more of life in GK