



AIT

Asian Institute of Technology

122th Graduation of AIT, December 2014 **AIT Prominent Alumnus Message by Mr. Ananda Dias (M.Sc. Computer Science** **1983)**

Excellency Dr. Subin Pinkayan, the Chairman of AIT Board of Trustees. The honorable President and the faculty of AIT, Distinguished Mr. Konuma, Assistant Director-General of FAO, distinguished guests, dear parents and graduates, it is with great pleasure that I take part in this special occasion of this years' graduation.

Graduation is an exciting and emotional time; there is tremendous joy and great sense of relief this achievement brings after a lot of hard work and sacrifices; which is followed by the realization of leaving this peaceful campus where you made many friends and where you lived so freely for 18 months or more.

Like you, I sat in this very auditorium through my own graduation some 30 years ago. I can recall that moment; it was filled with both excitement and anxiety with many thoughts flashing through my mind.

Today marks the beginning of a new chapter in your life. Some of you may be continuing with doctoral or postdoctoral studies and others may be aiming for other professional careers. Either way, it will be a new beginning and a new experience. Embrace it!

A lot has changed over the last 30 years since my own graduation. Technology has leapfrogged. Today what you could do with your laptop, Internet, wireless connectivity and GPS enabled mobile devices could not be imagined during my time at AIT as a student.

In fact there were no personal computers. The entire AIT community shared a cluster of 3 computers which served the needs of the students, the faculty and the administration. This computer cluster had about 20% of the storage capacity of your laptop, but occupied two third of the ground floor space of the large building that is just across the big pond from here – at the northern end of the pond.

Back then there were no Wi-Fi or plug-and-play devices. All peripherals were hard wired and took days for a specialist to connect them. There was no video streaming, social media or GPS-enabled map services. There was no Internet or web-browsers; the

only source of literature was AIT's main library housing books and journals.

These innovations in ICT have come about in less than 30 years. Can you imagine what it would be like in another 20 to 25 years - the time when you are approaching the peak of your careers? It would be very interesting to compare your predictions today with reality in 20-25 years-time.

Asia is the world's most dynamic region with some of the fastest growing economies. 60% of global transactions now take place in Asia. Asia's recent development however has come with an enormous cost to the environment.

I want to refer to Mr. Konuma's speech where he mentioned that large quantities of natural resources are being wasted in food production and supply chains, as well as in our consumption practices.

What happens in Asia during the next 3 decades will determine the future of the world –well-being of the people and well-being of the planet.

New ways must be found for pursuing development without further compromising earth's life support capacity.

Technological innovations and scientific breakthroughs combined with responsible investments and business practices are essential to realizing this goal.

Your generation of engineers and scientists are at a decisive moment in human history. You have a wealth of opportunity and an enormous responsibility – I repeat an enormous responsibility.

It is just a matter of time, before you will be influencing the important decision made in the region at national and international levels.

Whether you are in academia or research, or in politics or bureaucracy or in banking or industry, exercise your power to influence decisions and actions which bring prosperity, social equity and environmental sustainability.

With this message, I will conclude. I wish you all, the best in your future undertakings.

Congratulations class of 2014!