

## **Your Excellency, Distinguished guests, Former UNU fellows, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

It is my honour and privilege to be given this opportunity on behalf of a unique group of specialists in geothermal science and engineering who have benefited over the last 25 years in the UNU Geothermal Training Programme in Iceland.

Participation in this programme was a momentous eye-opener to the fast evolving and exciting world of geothermal energy. Even though geothermal is a relatively young industry compared to the more conventional sources of energy, there is a paradigm shift in the development and use of energy, with a focus towards renewable sources. There is no doubt that geothermal energy will feature significantly in this shift in this new millennium.

With this background the UNU-GTP will continue to be a valuable asset in the training of human resource capability that will be required to meet the challenges of exploration and development of geothermal resources worldwide.

Looking back over the six months of training we feel very honoured to have been introduced into the exciting and new world of Geothermal energy. At the time of joining the training programme most of the fellows were young, but were eager and enthusiastic to learn. That notwithstanding, many of us were faced with a cultural shock and it took some time for us to settle down. Few of us, and perhaps none at all, had experienced a midnight sun or seen falling snow. This situation was not made any easier by the rigorous requirements of the academic programme. However, it was gratifying for all of the trainees to be exposed to the latest state of the art in geothermal science and technology.

Needless to mention it, this required a lot of patience on the part of the staff of ORKUSTOFNUN and UNU-GTP, especially the Director Dr. Ingvar Fridleifsson, and his able team of Gudrun and Ludvik. Nevertheless, it is not possible to thank everybody who in one way or the other helped us during the time we were in Iceland. It will suffice to mention that all of us were humbled by the many courtesies of the Icelandic people.

Your Excellency: The group of former UNU fellows you see here today represent many nations and professions all with a common band of having participated in the UNU-GTP in Iceland. It is a mini UNITED NATIONS in many ways and it is a demonstration of a wide coverage of the training programme. WE ALL ARE PROUD OF THIS!!! It is noteworthy that many of us here today may not have been present without the financial support of the UNU and the Icelandic government. We all extend our appreciation for this support.

But perhaps of more importance, your Excellency, is to recognize the commitment you made during the opening of this congress that the Icelandic government will not only continue this support, but will increase it in due course. Indeed your presence here is a

demonstration of the commitment of the Icelandic government in supporting this noble initiative. On behalf of the former UNU fellows, I take this opportunity to pass our warmest compliments to you and the Icelandic Government for this support.

We recognize that Iceland is a relatively small country, but in respect to this support it is the leader and the only country in the world offering capacity building for specialists in the geothermal science and technology. Nothing can capture the spirit more closely than the famous quote by Sir Winston Churchill “NEVER WAS SO MUCH OWED BY SO MANY TO SO FEW”.

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