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NUS medical school to name new professorship after veteran diplomat

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The National University of Singapore's (NUS) Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine will name a new professorship after veteran diplomat Kishore Mahbubani, to recognise leaders in medicine and public health policy.

The Kishore Mahbubani professorship will also catalyse the formation of partnerships between experts from various disciplines to address the healthcare challenges of the day, said the university.

Launching the professorship yesterday, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine dean Chong Yap Seng said: "We hope the professorship will help to nurture a new generation of healthcare professionals who think creatively and are able to approach challenges and problems from various perspectives."

Professor Mahbubani, 72, was the founding dean of the NUS Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and led the school for 13 years, from 2004 to 2017.

During his tenure, the school developed a strong international reputation as Asia's leading public policy school and as a thought leader in key areas of public policy research.

Before that, in a diplomatic career spanning three decades, Prof Mahbubani was Singapore's ambassador to the United Nations, the president of the UN Security Council and also had postings to

Cambodia, Malaysia, New York and Washington. He was also permanent secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1993 to 1998.

Speaking to *The Straits Times* ahead of the professorship's launch, Prof Mahbubani said: "Covid-19 has shown that you need to combine good medicine and good health policy."

Citing how public policy has fallen short during the current pandemic, he said: "The world was able to develop good vaccines quickly, but public policy was still fragmented and adversarial."

China and the United States should have cooperated and collaborated to fight Covid-19, but instead, the two large powers had let geopolitical differences overcome common interests, he added.

He said he hoped that the research undertaken through the professorship will help to combine good scientific, medical work with good health policy work so that the world can better prepare for health pandemics in the future.

As a writer, Prof Mahbubani published eight books in which he attempted to explain the Asian perspective to Western intellectuals, while advocating for the strengthening of multilateral institutions, including the World Health Organisation, said the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine in a statement.

It said it will give more details on how the professorship will work in due course.

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