

Mr Director General, Professor Ali Dođramacı,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

It is a pleasure and great honor for me to be the recipient of the World Health Organisation's Ihsan Dogramacı Family Health Foundation Award.

I accept this meaningful honor with pride and humility because it is given by WHO and as it carries the name of Professor Ihsan Dođramacı, a monumental international figure in child health.

I first met Professor Ihsan Dođramacı when I graduated from Ankara University Medical School and started my General Surgery residency at Hacettepe University Hospitals. He became my visionary mentor who guided me through the long journey of becoming a transplant surgeon.

Many of you in this distinguished Assembly knew Professor Dogramacı, a global citizen. He devoted his entire life and energy to the advancement of medicine and education in Turkey and beyond.

He was a friend and lifelong supporter of WHO from Day 1 as he was a signatory to the Constitution of WHO as it was established in New York in 1946. He served many years on

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the Executive Boards of UNICEF, WHO and numerous professional societies.

Professor Dođramacı pioneered many innovative health initiatives and improved the health and well-being of women, children and families not only in Turkey but also globally. He established Hacettepe University in 1967 and then, Bilkent University in 1984, the first foundation university in Turkey.

Professor Dođramacı was truly “a man of the future” and “an architect of miracles”. His legacy will continue to guide us and shed light in improving the health and well-being of many generations to come.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentleman,

Throughout my career, I was inspired by the wisdom, energy and courage of this extraordinary leader. Following my mentor’s footsteps, I established Bařkent University, which is the first foundation university related to health care.

As I receive this prestigious award, I would like to express my gratitude to Atatürk, the founding father of modern Turkey to whom I owe my presence today.