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Welcome Remarks by

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CHAIR, SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL AND MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES,
NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

OPENING OF SPMS CONFERENCE

Monday 20 July 2009, 9.30 am
Lee Kong Chian Main Lecture Theatre, NTU

Dr Su Guaning, President, Nanyang Technological University,

Provost Bertil Andersson

Distinguished speakers and participants,

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!

On behalf of the School of Physical & Mathematical Sciences at Nanyang Technological University, I would like to welcome you to this conference held in celebration of the official opening of our new building.

We are thrilled by the completion of our new building, and are thankful for the infrastructure and facilities that support us in our pursuit of excellence in research and education. We are grateful to the University Management for its generous support that made this state-of-the-art building possible.

Our School, often known by its acronym SPMS, was established four years ago in 2005. For three years, while our building was being planned, designed and built, our three divisions – Chemistry & Biological Chemistry, Mathematical Sciences, and Physics & Applied Physics – had to be housed in temporary locations in different parts of the campus. On behalf of the School, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the various Schools in NTU and the

National Institute of Education for your help when we most needed it. It is also a pleasure to thank the Office of Facilities Planning & Management for their assistance when we needed all the space.

With strong support from the University and under the leadership of our Founding Dean and Chair, Professor Soo Ying Lee, the SPMS has been able to build up our capabilities in the chemical, physical and mathematical sciences rather rapidly in our short existence of four years. Much of what we are and have today, including our new building, would not have been possible without Soo Ying's insight and very hard work.

We are indeed also indebted to many who have been generous in their help and support. There is one individual to whom I would like to pay special tribute here. Professor Kiang Ai Kim – one of the pioneer chemists in Singapore – has always been a strong supporter of SPMS and a source of encouragement for SPMS. At the establishment of the School, Professor Kiang made a generous donation towards supporting deserving and needy students in the School, and kindly consented for the Kiang Ai Kim Endowment Fund to be set up for this same purpose. He would have been thrilled to join us here today. However, unfortunately Professor Kiang passed away peacefully barely two days ago, at the age of 92. We thank him for having constantly cheered us on as the School moved forward.

Yes, the SPMS has come a long way, but we are equally mindful that the road ahead is even longer, and full of challenges, but also excitement and opportunities. Hence, what better way would there be to celebrate the opening of our new building than to host an international conference like this one, involving all the disciplines represented in our School.

We would like to thank all our distinguished speakers for making time in your very busy schedule to make the programme of the conference an intellectual feast for all of us. It is also my pleasure to welcome all the participants to our beautiful campus and building – your presence will enrich the exchange of ideas that will take place these next three days.

This conference is co-organised with the Institute of Advanced Studies in NTU, and it is my pleasure to thank them, especially its director Professor K K Phua, for their partnership and financial support. We also gratefully acknowledge the generosity of our sponsors.

Finally, may I wish everyone a stimulating and successful conference, and an enjoyable stay here in NTU and Singapore.

Thank you very much.