

Speech by NUS President Tan Chorh Chuan
ICMAT & IUMRS-ICA 2009 Closing Ceremony
Suntec Ballroom, Friday, 3 July 2009, 1.00 pm

Professor Chowdari, President of Materials Research Society of Singapore
Nobel Laureates
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen
Good afternoon.

Allow me to first warmly welcome all of you to the Closing Ceremony of the combined meeting of the 2009 International Conference on Materials for Advanced Technologies (ICMAT) and the International Union of Materials Research Societies' International Conference in Asia (IMURS-ICA).

It is very impressive to see how the ICMAT & IUMRS-ICA 2009 conference has brought together more than 1800 distinguished participants from around the world. NUS is delighted and honoured to host such a major event in the field of materials science and engineering, which continues to draw large numbers of scientists and engineers to share knowledge, to network, and to explore areas for collaboration.

A hallmark of our time is the explosive advances in research and development. These have been driven by the increasing investments in R&D funding around the world, as well as rapid improvements in research methodologies. The translation of new discoveries into novel technologies and applications has also been impressive. Material science research has played a key role in this, since new or better materials underpin many of the advances that we have witnessed.

At the same time, we also recognise that there are many difficult R&D challenges ahead. The fundamental issues that humanity faces today such as environmental sustainability, clean water and renewable energy, and better public health are highly complex ones that will require solutions that integrate across a wide range of disciplines and technologies.

For us to start to address these successfully, we need to foster greater cross-talk and interaction between researchers in different fields. We also need more collaborations and partnerships which pools expertise from different centres of excellence to tackle large scale R&D questions.

In this regard, the many events associated with ICMAT & IMURS-ICA 2009 play an important role. The plenary and public lectures, panel discussion on entrepreneurship, and technical sessions, have provided the platform for rich intellectual engagement between individuals and experts from many different sectors.

We are indeed fortunate to have many renowned scientists, including three Nobel Laureates, at this conference, who have shared freely of their insights in materials science, physics, physiology and chemistry.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a warm and special THANKS to our visiting Nobel Laureates – Professors Peter Gruenberg, Peter Doherty and Hartmut Michel. Your lectures and your participation in the discussions at this conference have made a big impact. You have ignited the imagination of our young scientists and encouraged them to pursue and excel in their areas of scientific interests.

In closing, I would like to express on behalf of NUS, our deep appreciation to our partners in this event – Materials Research Society of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University and the Institute for Materials Research and Engineering – and to our generous sponsors. Special mention also goes to Professor Chowdari for his strong leadership of this conference series. I would like to congratulate Prof Chowdari on his appointment as President of IUMRS in 2011.

Finally, I would like to thank all our speakers, delegates, poster authors and presenters for your contributions and support. I hope that you will keep in touch with the friends you've made at the conference, and come back to Singapore often, to renew connections and build new collaborations. Thank you.