

**Speech by Professor Tan Chorh Chuan
President, National University of Singapore
at the Official Opening of
NUS (Suzhou) Research Institute**

29 May 2013, Suzhou, China

Mr Heng Swee Keat, Minister for Education, Republic of Singapore

Mr Jiang Hongkun, Member of the Standing Committee, CPC Jiangsu Provincial Committee, Party Secretary of Suzhou Municipal Committee

Mr Wang Xiang, Party Secretary of Suzhou Industrial Park Working Committee

Mr Wang Hong Sheng, Vice Mayor, Suzhou City

Mr Yang Zhi Ping, Director, Suzhou Industrial Park Administrative Committee

Distinguished guests and colleagues,

It is a great pleasure and honour to be here this morning for the official opening of the NUS (Suzhou) Research Institute's new building.

As NUS' first research institute outside of Singapore, NUSRI has developed remarkably within a short period of time, from its inception in October 2011. This outstanding progress and development would not have been possible without the strong support and commitment it has received, and I would like to express my deep appreciation to the governments of Singapore and the People's Republic of China, the Suzhou Municipal Government and the Suzhou Industrial Park Administrative Committee (SIPAC). It is this close partnership, as well as a common shared vision for NUSRI, which has made this special occasion possible.

With the completion of the NUSRI building in October 2012, and the final fit-out of the laboratories in March 2013, the NUSRI complex will consist of some 20,000 square metres of space, including 10,000 square metres for research labs. This excellent facility will help NUSRI to do internationally competitive work within the dynamic and economically vibrant region of Suzhou.

NUSRI's research efforts span a diverse range of disciplines: biomedicine, nanotechnology, microelectronics, the environment and functional food and software development.

These research programmes ride on areas of substantial strength at NUS.

However, they are distinguished by 2 other important factors.

First, the specific research programmes were selected in close consultation with our partners in SIP and Suzhou, to ensure that they are complementary to other developments in SIP and will also help bring benefit to the rapidly developing research and innovation ecosystem here.

Secondly, NUSRI's research is designed to be integrated and truly multi-disciplinary. At NUS, we strongly believe that such an integrated and comprehensive approach is much needed to address global challenges that are both complex and interlinked, and we will ensure that the same framework is adopted at NUSRI.

Besides high-impact research, NUSRI will also focus closely on two other complementary thrusts. The first is to develop stimulating and robust education programmes which include shorter programmes for students here as well as exchange and immersion opportunities for NUS students so that they too will be able to experience and learn from the vibrant developments in Suzhou.

The second is to develop the NUSRI Incubator, which will help very promising NUS start-up companies to develop in Suzhou, and hopefully, in other parts of China. This will be mutually beneficial, as we envisage that the incubation and development of these companies will also contribute to the growth and dynamism of the innovation ecosystem in SIP and Suzhou.

NUSRI will endeavour to make these three areas of focus – research, education and enterprise - mutually reinforcing. In this way, we believe we can create more exciting opportunities for collaboration and joint growth among researchers, entrepreneurs, corporate leaders and government agencies at SIP and beyond.

As the economy in Suzhou and in China continues to grow rapidly, and becomes even more dynamic and sophisticated, I hope that NUSRI can make a small contribution by adding to the culture of research excellence and commercialisation that is developing very rapidly in China and which will provide the vital underpinning for sustained and high-quality growth and societal advancement.

Many individuals and teams have worked hard to launch NUSRI off to such a good start. From NUS, I particularly wish to thank and to recognise the outstanding leadership provided by Provost Professor Tan Eng Chye as well as the Director of NUSRI, Professor Xu Guo Qin, and his team.

I would like to close by thanking Minister Heng Swee Keat, Mr Jiang Hongkun, Member of the Standing Committee, CPC Jiangsu Provincial Committee, Party Secretary of Suzhou Municipal Committee, Mr Wang Xiang, Party Secretary of Suzhou Industrial Park Working Committee Vice Mayor Wang, and SIPAC Director Yang, our partners in SIP and the Suzhou Municipal Government for your strong support and assistance.

My colleagues and I look forward very much to working with you to make NUSRI a great success, creating distinctive value for NUS and SIP, and, I hope and believe, for Singapore and the People's Republic of China.

Thank you.