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**SPEECH BY MS GRACE FU, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, AT THE SINGAPORE-CHINA ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOUNDING CEREMONY AT GENEXIS THEATRE, FUSIONOPOLIS, ON FRIDAY, 15 JANUARY 2010 AT 2:30 PM**

Your Excellency Zhang Xiaokang, the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the Republic of Singapore,

Dr. Lu Li, President, Singapore-China Association for the Advancement of Science and Technology,

Distinguished Guests,

Friends in the SCAAST,  
**National Archives of Singapore**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

1. I am honoured to be here with you, as part of the founding ceremony of the Singapore-China Association for the Advancement of Science and Technology, also known as SCAAST. The SCAAST is the first non-governmental body set up to promote the exchange of science and technology between China and Singapore. I believe that SCAAST will play an important role in bridging the two countries' expertise and management skills in successful technological innovations.

2. As a nation, Singapore has benefited greatly from advances in science and technology. Over the years, Singapore has developed strong capabilities in research and development, which have fuelled fast-growing industries such as petrochemical, pharmaceutical and biotechnology, aerospace, and water, among others. Coupled with a world-class manufacturing sector, our R&D capabilities have attracted many well known international companies to relocate their research facilities, using Singapore as a centre for research and for test-bedding new products and services.

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3. The focus on science and technology permeates our education system across all levels. Today, close to 95 per cent of our students offer both science and maths up to secondary level or age 16. Our students have performed well consistently in international comparative studies, such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study.

4. In the tertiary institutions, we have provided more places and funding to shape a proportionately larger intake for science and technology-related courses. For example, in the National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technology University, the proportions of all students enrolled in science and technology-related courses are 57 per cent and 65 per cent respectively. In our polytechnics this year, about two out of every three students admitted into a polytechnic are enrolled in such courses.

5. Our investment in research and development at the national level has also provided our students with more opportunities for research attachments and internships. We are encouraging more entrepreneurship in schools and institutions of higher learning. These strategies have served us well, with our science and engineering graduates being versatile and in demand by the global market.

6. In the last few decades since economic liberalisation, China has achieved tremendous advancement and astonishing success in terms of science and technology, manufacturing and city-building. China has now become the base for the manufacturing of worldwide industrial and household products. Some people, without exaggeration, have termed China as the “factory of the world”.

7. In terms of science and technology, China has achieved tremendous success as well. Industries such as aeronautical engineering, bio-technology, as

well as large-scale disease diagnosis and treatment are developing with amazing speed. China started relatively later in terms of large-scale industrial management, city development and transport management but has now surpassed many other countries. It is interesting to note a study by the Georgia Institute of Technology in 2008 which predicts that within the next decade or two, China would become the new driver of the global economy, exceeding the US in its ability to transform its R&D into marketable products and services<sup>1</sup>.

8. There are therefore many areas where Singapore and China can learn from each other. Singapore is an old friend of China and had the good opportunity to be involved in the process of China's economic liberalisation. The Suzhou-Singapore Industrial Park is a good example of a joint project between China and Singapore, where we shared our expertise in science and technology, industry and business. The Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-city, which I am personally involved in, is another platform of co-operation.

9. At the people-to-people level, the SCAAST will bring about deeper and broader levels of co-operation in science and technology, and enable our scientists, inventors, and engineers to forge closer industry ties and collaboration. In the process, we must also not forget about talent development and the importance of nurturing our young. Many students from China have come here to receive the best education and specialist training that Singapore can offer, and

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<sup>1</sup> Alan L. Porter et al., "High Tech Indicators Technology-based Competitiveness of 33 Nations 2007 Report", Georgia Institute of Technology, [http://www.tpac.gatech.edu/hti2007/HTI\\_2007\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.tpac.gatech.edu/hti2007/HTI_2007_final_report.pdf) (accessed 8 January 2010).

in turn, are contributing back to both our countries as researchers, scientists and engineers.

10. I am heartened to hear that many of the SCAAST members here are faculty members in our universities and polytechnics. I hope that the SCAAST will further encourage the development of young talent in the areas of science and technology. Together, we can contribute to further scientific and technological innovations and help accelerate industrial and business growth in China and Singapore.

11. Friends in the SCAAST, let me wish you success in the journey that you have just begun and may you grow from strength to strength in building a bridge of friendship and excellence in science and technology between Singapore and China.

Thank you.

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