

## **Addressing Challenges in the New Millennium for Science and Technology**

### **WELCOME REMARKS**

**ACD. PERLA D. SANTOS OCAMPO**

*President, National Academy of Science and Technology*

Honored guests, distinguished National Scientists, our beloved Secretary Dr. Filemon A. Uriarte, Jr. of the Department of Science and Technology, eminent scientist and fellow Academician Dr. Onofre D. Corpuz, the honorable Undersecretaries and Assistant Secretaries of the Department of Science and Technology, fellow Academicians, esteemed co-workers in science, friends, ladies, and gentlemen:

The modern English term "science" is derived from the Latin word for knowledge, *scientia* and in the early days referred to knowledge possessed by anyone, be he peasant or king, unschooled or learned man. Nowadays, science has come to be recognized as a special kind of knowledge belonging to a special group of individuals, obtained by strictly defined methods. The word science has therefore become self-limiting. It is the goal of the National Academy of Science and Technology to expand the meaning of the word in order to better serve humanity.

The new millennium brings before us many challenges. Thus, the Steering Committee of this Annual Scientific Meeting led by Academicians Jose O. Juliano and Apolinario D. Nazarea broadened the theme and addressed several pressing issues in science and technology. Five general concerns were identified: (1) environment and health; (2) climatic and environmental changes; (3) transportation and traffic management; (4) information and communications technology; and (5) modern biotechnology in agriculture. With these concerns in mind, NAST conceived the theme *Challenges in the New Millennium for Science and Technology*.

For the five concerns identified, we invited authoritative experts to speak. As the program unfolds, each of them will be introduced to you and they will share with us their insights and recommendations.

The emerging and re-emerging problems and concerns on health, environment, and climatic changes require immediate and appropriate policies.

The traffic and transportation situations in the country, especially in Metro Manila, are becoming increasingly serious and need special attention and implementable solutions.

With the advancement in accessibility to information and communications technology (ICT), a new kind of economy surfaces in which knowledge plays a vital role in the creation of wealth of the country. We should urgently address the issues and concerns in ICT if we are to survive and prosper in the highly competitive twenty-first century.

Important concerns in biotechnology and genetic engineering leading to sustainably productive agriculture have to be approached vigorously.

As the government's highest advisory body on science and technology, the Academy has the responsibility of advising our policy makers and civil society on all vital concerns. I am delighted that the public and many experts in different scientific fields are present and interested to participate in this very important event, I hope we can put all our bright ideas together to come up at the end of the meeting with resolutions and recommendations that would best serve our country and the whole of humanity.

It is also during the Annual Scientific Meetings that NAST gives its awards. Tomorrow you will witness the winners of science on stage and know more about their contributions to science and technology, including the investiture of an Academician.

I bid everyone in this eventful occasion, warmest welcome, and may this be a fruitful, insightful, and successful meeting. Congratulations on your quest for knowledge so that the blessings of science may be enjoyed by all.

Thank you and good day.