

SPEECH BY DR FRANCIS YEOH, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER OF THE NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION, AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC SUMMER INSTITUTES (EAPSI) PROGRAMME HELD ON MONDAY, 16TH JUNE 2008, AT 8.30AM AT UNIVERSITY HALL AUDITORIUM, NUS

Prof Barry Halliwell, Deputy President (Research & Technology), NUS
Friends and colleagues

Good morning to you.

Let me first of all congratulate the 15 students selected for the East Asia and Pacific Summer Institutes (EAPSI) programme held in Singapore for the first time.

I would expect that for many of you, this would be your first visit to our country and perhaps even to the Far East as well – so you deserve a very special welcome!

The National Research Foundation, or NRF, is delighted to be able to facilitate this very meaningful Summer Institutes programme of the National Science Foundation. It was in August 2006 when the idea was first mooted by Dr Rick Nader, Programme Manager for EAPSI at the NSF, in an e-mail to the NRF, at the suggestion of Prof Barry Halliwell. Several e-mails followed and several teleconferences were held between the NRF and the NSF. Agreement was reached very quickly and a simple memorandum of understanding was signed last year between the two organisations. I'm pleased that we are now having this opening ceremony of the programme. So those of you who made it here have to thank Dr Nader and Prof Halliwell for getting this whole thing started.

The NRF sees the EAPSI programme as an excellent opportunity for Singapore to foster good relations with the United States in science and technology research. This will add on to the long and successful history of research collaboration between the two countries. Many US universities and corporations have a research presence in Singapore and there are numerous joint research projects between US universities and Singapore's universities and research institutes. A notable example is the research centre set up by MIT here last year, which is called the SMART Centre, SMART being the acronym for Singapore-MIT Alliance in Research and Technology. This is MIT's biggest endeavour outside the United States ever – it will involve numerous MIT faculty and researchers carrying out research here in Singapore in collaboration with the local research community. SMART came out of an almost decade long relationship between Singapore's universities and MIT in education and research, known as the Singapore-MIT Alliance or SMA.

A few colleagues and I had the privilege of visiting the NSF early this month. We met with Dr Thomas Weber, Director of Office of International Science & Engineering (OISE) and his team. They were very happy indeed to have the EAPSI programme starting in Singapore. Both NRF and NSF were also keen to discuss other co-

operative programmes beyond EAPSI. We certainly hope that EAPSI will lead to other forms of international research collaboration in the future.

To our 15 friends from the United States participating in the EAPSI programme, I am sure you will have an enriching and fulfilling experience in Singapore. I'm equally sure, that being young and adventurous, you will find time outside the regular programme, to savour the sights and sounds, the culture and colour of Singapore. I hope that the friendships that are established during your stay in Singapore will be long lasting. Most of you I understand will be pursuing careers in research. I hope that your stay in Singapore will allow you to see the vibrancy of research undertaken here in Singapore and that in the future, as you embark on your careers in research, you will look for opportunities to collaborate with your friends and colleagues here in Singapore.

So let me welcome you again to our beautiful country and wish you a stimulating, exciting and fun-filled few weeks ahead.

Thank you.