

Speech by **Joe K. Tung** presented at the Opening Ceremony on July 10, 2011, Sunday

Wow, so here we are! This still seems so surreal and magical- the International Chemistry Olympiad 2011! As one of your peers, I would just like to take the chance to congratulate everybody on making it this far. The world truly needs more of us chemists, for chemistry is the central science. Disease, medicine, toxicology, life—at the most fundamental level of all of these is chemistry, the way individual atoms and molecules interact based on shape, structure, charge, and other properties. From these properties and interactions emerge the nature of everything around us.

Now I understand that this is a competition, but I would also like to stress the fact that at the end of the day, it is not about the colors of the medals hanging around our necks. More importantly is the friendships we make, the experiences we have, the memories we keep, and the people we meet from all over the globe. We have studied bonds between molecules and atoms; it is now time for us to create our own bonds, between individuals and between countries.

I would like to close this speech by giving thanks to those who have made this international gathering possible. I would like to thank each individual country for taking the time and expenses to travel here today. I would like to thank all the team mentors and professors for pouring their efforts and hearts into educating and preparing the students. I would like to thank my fellow students for all your hard work and perseverance. But most importantly, I would like to thank Middle East Technical University, the IChO steering committee, and everyone else involved for hosting this Olympiad in the International Year of Chemistry 2011!

Now, let the fun begin!