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Chairman of the Academic Committee of the Conference

Opening Speech

When the President of the Cultural Institute approached me to chair the Academic Committee of this international conference on Macao's cultural heritage, I said to myself: Given that Macao has over four hundred years of unique history and cross-cultural fertilisation, it definitely has a rich and colourful cultural heritage. But what can we do with it in light of the exciting developments we face in this new era of Macao? How do we make extra mileage out of it? How can it bring enrichment to our community life? And how do we share our rich cultural heritage with the rest of the world?

With these questions in mind, my committee and I decided that we must try our best to make sure that this international conference is worthy of everyone who attends it and also worthy of the Macao S.A.R. Government's support. It should be an international conference that our City is proud to host. Looking at the strength of the papers that will be presented in the next three days, I know that the efforts of my committee have paid off to everybody's satisfaction.

The Academic Committee met on several occasions since the beginning of this year to deliberate very carefully on the main theme and each of the sub-themes, and on the choice of internationally renowned conservationists and academics for this conference. We want the message of making Macao the "City of Cultural Heritage in Asia" to be clear. We want to make sure that Macao's application to UNESCO for World Heritage listing is not just to boost Macao's image, but to have real and positive effects on the community in the long run.

I wish to thank Prof. Zhang Wenbin, representative of the State Administrative of Cultural Heritage and Director-General of the Chinese Society of Museology, Mr. Richard Engelhardt, Regional Advisor for Culture in Asia and the Pacific – UNESCO Bangkok Office, Dr. Yasuyuki Aoshima, Director and Representative of UNESCO Beijing Office, Dr. Roland Silva, Honorary



President of ICOMOS, who are able to join us in the opening ceremony and deliver their keynote speeches. I am also thankful to the ten internationally renowned conservationists and academics in this field who have accepted our invitation to present their views and share their experiences with Macao. To my colleagues serving on the Academic Committee, I am truly indebted to you for your devotion in coming up with the initial idea and all the careful planning in making this conference a reality; in particular, to our Honorary Secretary Professor David Lung, an active academic and forerunner in heritage protection in Hong Kong and many parts of Asia who has given us his most selfless support and valuable guidance in the orchestration of this conference.

Last, but not least, I wish to thank the President of the Cultural Institute, Ms. Heidi Ho and her colleagues, especially Mr. Stephen Chan, Head of the Cultural Heritage Department of the Cultural Institute, in putting this conference together, and most importantly, in carrying through the ideas after the conference to a new plateau for the future of Macao.

To all of you, ladies and gentlemen who have taken your precious time out to attend this opening ceremony and the later inaugural speeches, may I extend to you a hearty welcome on behalf of the Academic Committee of this Conference. Thank you.

Chairman of the Academic Committee of the Conference