ANNEX 6

Scientific and Technological Community Major Group

Address to Rio+20 Plenary by Prof. Yuan Tseh Lee

I am pleased to take the floor on behalf of the Scientific and Technological Community Major Group.

Science has sounded the alarm that the future wellbeing of humankind is at risk, and that we are facing serious changes in Earth's life support system. Our continued existence on Earth depends on natural resources, but science shows that these are being depleted at unprecedented rates, that we are degrading vital ecosystems services.

This Rio+20 Summit must heed these warnings from scientists and engineers, and action must be taken now to find and implement the right solutions. This is crucial as progress has been limited in the last two decades on implementing sustainable development. Pressures on the environment are such that they cause fundamental changes in the Earth's system and move us beyond safe natural boundaries. Major social and economic challenges persist, such as bridging the development divide between North and South and alleviating poverty.

The Scientific and Technological Communities have been following the Rio + 20 preparations, and throughout this long process we have upheld our conviction that science, engineering and technology - along with societal transformation – are key to our sustainable future. Science is essential to develop the knowledge base, to define targets and to monitor progress on our efforts to move to a sustainable future. Engineering and technology have a crucial role to play, as they will create and implement many of the solutions needed for a transition to sustainable development. Many implementable solutions exist. However, these are not the only solutions we will need, as societies, economies and politics will also need to transform.

To achieve our goals on sustainable development, we need political commitment at a totally different scale. We must move beyond the "business as usual" of the past two decades, which has seen a series of inadequate incremental steps. We need strong leadership and political commitment at the global, regional and local levels to take action.

We urge governments to follow through on the commitments they are making in the Rio+20 Outcome document. It is essential that Rio + 20 marks the start of a process, and that all actors maintain a strong commitment to implementation of what is agreed.

An important part of this will be improving links between governments and the Scientific and Technological Communities. These Communities stand ready to deliver our knowledge and skills to fulfill our side of this partnership.

We recognize the need for more interdisciplinary research that addresses the full range of issues for sustainable development; of the environment, society, human behavior, politics and economics, and science and engineering overarch these issues. We recognize the need to engage end-users from the outset to co-design research to produce the knowledge, engineering, technologies and services that societies require. As such, we are working to bring policy-makers, business and other stakeholder groups into science and technology processes. We recognise the need to build scientific and engineering capacity in developing countries, so that these countries can train their own scientists and engineers and fully participate in the generation of knowledge and clean technology. We recognize the need to fully

engage, civil society, including women, indigenous peoples and other vulnerable groups in the creation of an ethical, participatory science and technology model.

Rio + 20 should be the beginning of the transformational change placing humanity on a sustainable track. More than ever before, science and scientists, engineers and innovative technologies, are needed to help face the greatest challenges of our times.