

## Speech at the Graduation Ceremony 2008/2009 By Professor Lei Heong lok, President of Macao Polytechnic Institute September 26<sup>th</sup> 2009

The Honorable Chief Executive Mr. Ho Hau Wah,

Mr. Lu Shumin, Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in Macao Special Administrative Region,

Mr. Liu Xiaohang, Representative of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macao Special Administrative Region,

Mr. Manuel Maria Camacho Cansado de Carvalho, Consul-General of Portugal in Macao,

Mr. João Alberto Sobrinho Teixeira, President of the Committee of Portuguese Polytechnic Institutes,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen;

This year we commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Macao's handover. Today, we are gathered here to celebrate the commencement of a new chapter in life for this year's graduates. Please allow me to extend, on behalf of the Institute's students and staff, a warm welcome to Mr. Ho Hau Wah, Chief Executive of Macao, and to all the honorable guests and friends here. Thank you very much for attending this ceremony. To the 1,133 graduating students, who for the past few years have been working very hard in this Institute: Congratulations! We are proud of you and you have our best wishes.

Over the past 10 years, we have had the honour of the presence here, at each year's graduation ceremony, of the Chief Executive, Mr. Ho Hau Wah and the Chief Executive Elect, Dr. Chui Sai On. We are particularly grateful to Mr. Ho for addressing the Congregations on each occasion. The speeches have been a great source of confidence as the Institute's students and staff worked together for the common good of Macao's education and society.

Underlining our achievement, or rather your achievement, Ladies and Gentlemen, was Macao's achievement over the past 10 years. Together we have turned a new page not only in the history of the territory but also in the history of the country. We owe our achievement not only to the unstinting support from the Central Government and from people all around China, but to the staunch stewardship of Mr. Ho's administration. Together we have testified to the wisdom of the "one country, two systems" policy and traversed the most vertiginous tightropes in Macao's development.

In what we have achieved within the Institute alone, there is abundant cause of pride. Compared with ten years ago, we are now much better resourced. We have not only inherited a first-rate sports complex from the SAR Government, but the Government has fully funded the building of a new 17-storey teaching complex, expected to be completed early next year. In 1999, we were equipped with only 380 desktop PCs, now we boast an increase of 453% to as many as 2,100.

Moreover, there has been a phenomenal increase in the number of applicants. Back in 1999, we had only 2,143 local applicants. In 2009, the number rose to 6,200, an increase of 189%. It has been indicated that over 63% of this year's high school graduates have applied to the Institute. This means we are now the most aspired-to tertiary institute in Macao. Since 2008, our admission score for mainland Chinese applicants has been set above the cut-off line for mainland key universities (in the National University Entrance Examinations). As a result, of over 2,000 mainland applicants this year, only 100 have been recruited.

Along with the increased number of students, we have been recruiting high calibre faculty. Ten years ago, there were only four doctorate-holders in our faculty. Now there are nearly 100, which is around 46% of the total number. The recruitment of high calibre faculty also meant, of course, better research output. In 1999, there was a lacuna in our research record. In 2008, we are credited with the publication of 185 monographs and papers, quite prominently in nationally and internationally renowned journals.

Not the least mentionable is our ever-expanding quality cooperative enterprise. Over the past 10 years, we have established rewarding exchanges and cooperation in Chinese-, Portuguese-, and English-speaking countries and regions, with institutions such as the Peking University, the Sun Yat-sen University, the University of Cambridge, Queen Mary College of the University of London, the University of Lisbon, and Queensland University.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Macao Polytechnic Institute is entering a new phase of development. With these 10 years behind us, fully supported by the SAR Government and by the people of Macao, fueled by the passion and hard work of our staff and students, we embark on a new beginning that asks even more of us. Guided by the government as before, we can put in greater effort, stay inventive, and advance our educational work and social services for the good of Macao.

In retrospect and anticipation, I close my speech by wishing you all good health and a prosperous future. Thank you!