

**Address by Professor CUI Xianqun, President of Chinese
Astronomical Society,
at the Opening Ceremony of the 28th IAU GA
(August 21, 2012. Beijing)**

Respected Dr. Robert Williams,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am much honored to welcome you all to the IAU 28th General Assembly in Beijing on behalf of the Chinese Astronomical Society.

The Society is very happy and encouraged to host this IAU General Assembly for the first time in China, especially in this festival year when we celebrate the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the Chinese Astronomical Society.

As it is known, the Chinese Astronomical Society started to make preparations for the IAU 28th General Assembly as early as August 2006 at the 26th General Assembly in Prague when it succeeded in its bid for hosting this meeting. Early in 2007, the National Advisory Committee, the National Organizing Committee and the Local Organizing Committee

were established to secure smooth planning and preparations for the meeting. Throughout the planning process, the close collaboration with IAU leadership and staff and the precious experiences from the 26th and 27th General Assembly meetings have been of great help to us.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to our counterparts from all around the world for their continuous guidance and support, in particular to Robert Williams, President of IAU, and Ian Corbett, General Secretary of IAU.

In addition, I would also like to express our sincere gratitude on behalf of the Chinese Astronomical Society to the many Chinese colleagues, scholars and students for their hard work and deep involvement in the preparation, to the Chinese public for their enthusiasm, and to the Chinese government for the serious concern and extensive support.

Chinese astronomy has a very long history. The recordings of the earliest astronomical observatory can be traced back to about 3000 years ago, with eminent ancient astronomers such as ZHANG Heng and GUO Shoujing who are still being honored by the Chinese until present day. The Chinese Astronomical Society was initiated and established by Chinese astronomers in October 1922 during the very period of the

anti-imperialist and anti-feudal “May 4th Movement”. After the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, and in particular over the last 30 years since China’s opening to the world, Chinese astronomy has experienced rapid development. At the same time, the Chinese Astronomical Society has grown extensively. Currently, the Chinese Astronomical Society consists of 17 Science Committees with branches scattered in different provinces around China. The Society has about 2000 individual members, and its member organizations come from relevant research institutions and universities all over the country. Up to now, the society has more than 400 IAU members since it joined the IAU in 1935.

Every year, the Chinese Astronomical Society holds a national Annual Meeting, as well as various kinds of seminars, workshops and activities. As such, the Chinese Astronomical Society has played a vital role in promoting scientific exchange and public awareness of astronomy.

Chinese astronomy is developing and we still have a long way to go to reach global levels. As such, the IAU 28th General Assembly in Beijing will provide an opportune moment for Chinese astronomers to discuss and exchange views extensively with their international counterparts. It is my sincere wish that this meeting will give an impulse to the further development of Chinese astronomy, and provides a platform for

international cooperation in astronomy.

I would like to extend once again a very warm welcome to all of you to the IAU 28th General Assembly, and welcome to Beijing. We hope the meeting will be a great success for all of you, and we wish you a pleasant stay in Beijing.

Thank you.