

# Speech by SITI at International Society for Stem Cell Research 2025 Annual Meeting (English only) (with photo)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, at the International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR) 2025 Annual Meeting today (June 11):

Professor Greco (President of the ISSCR, Professor Valentina Greco), Mr Alm (Chief Executive Officer of the ISSCR, Mr Keith Alm), Professor Kathryn Cheah (2025 Annual Meeting Program Committee Co-Chair of the ISSCR), Professor Rocky Tuan (Lee Quo Wei and Lee Yick Hoi Lun Professor of Tissue Engineering and Regenerative Medicine of the Chinese University of Hong Kong), Professor Nancy Ip (President of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It gives me great honour to stand before you today as we kick off the ISSCR 2025 Annual Meeting here in Hong Kong, a city where East meets West, tradition meets innovation, and today, science meets the future.

I still remember the pivotal moment in September 2022 when Kathryn, Nancy and Rocky approached me with a bold vision, that is, to bring this prestigious conference to Hong Kong. Without hesitation, I said, "Let's make it happen!" And here we are, thanks to the relentless effort of the Bid Committee, the unwavering support of our three co-sponsoring universities, and of course the confidence that the ISSCR placed in us.

I would like to thank the ISSCR for choosing Hong Kong as the host city for this very important meeting. Your decision speaks volumes. It is not just about our city's thriving biomedical ecosystem, but about its growing role as a global hub for scientific collaboration.

Hong Kong is more than a skyline. It is a skyline of possibilities. We are moving full steam ahead to develop Hong Kong into an international innovation and technology centre and a leading hub for life and health sciences. Hong Kong has a solid foundation in biomedical research with a good number of world-acclaimed award-winning scientists, well-accredited research outputs, an excellent clinical research track record and the state-of-art research infrastructure.

Our flagship R&D (research and development) initiative, InnoHK, exemplifies this commitment – bringing together over 30 world-renowned universities and research institutes from 12 economies, and setting up a total of 30 top-tier research labs. Sixteen of them are life science and health-related with many involving stem cell research in various dimensions, which are pushing boundaries every day.

Stem cell research is not just a field, it is a frontier. It holds the promise of rewriting medicine, healing the incurable, and unlocking the deepest mysteries of human biology. Over the next four days, this gathering will allow ideas to be shared, partnerships to be forged and inspiration to be ignited. The discoveries made here will not only make an impact in Hong Kong, but will also ripple across the globe.

As we stand at the forefront of stem cell research, a field that bridges the impossible and the inevitable, may I leave you with the words of Marie Curie, a pioneer who reshaped science: "Nothing in life is to be feared; it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less."

Ladies and gentlemen, let this conference be a testament to that understanding. Together, we are not just studying stem cells, but unlocking the future of medicine. May I wish the ISSCR 2025 Annual Meeting a resounding success, and everyone a wonderful stay in Hong Kong. Thank you.

