Preface

This conference on Femtochemistry, Femtobiology, and Femtophysics (Femto IX) was organized in Beijing during the period of August 8–13, 2009. The event was timely not only because of the rise of science and technology in China and neighboring Asian countries but also because of the cultural and economic transformation taking place in this ancient land of civilization.

I have attended every conference in the series and was scheduled to attend this one, but because of a new national service, I had to be elsewhere. I wish to take this opportunity to thank Prof. ZHONG Dongping who was kind enough to present an overview lecture in my allocated time and to be more than generous in describing the contributions made at Caltech and which he now gives in his article published in this volume.

Over the years, this series of conferences proved to be unique and stimulating. The conference organizers strive to keep its tradition—the presentations of the latest in femtoscience, the in-depth discussions that follow, and the collegial and friendly interactions among the participants. We owe a great deal of appreciation to Prof. GONG QiHuang for his effort to make the conference a most exciting venue for scientific and social exchanges. We also cannot forget the effort made by his colleagues and staff.

The future promises to be as exciting as the past. The community will continue to explore the landscape of molecules and materials and make fundamental studies for bridging structure and dynamics to behavior of matter. This bridging is critical if we were to understand the function of complex systems. The next conference, which is organized by BAÑARES Luis and SANTAMARIA Jesus will be held in Madrid, Spain in July of 2011. We look forward to another exciting meeting of minds!

Ahmed H. ZEWAIL
Pasadena, California, USA
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Ahmed H. ZEWAIL is the Linus Pauling Chair professor of chemistry and professor of physics at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech). For ten years, he was the Director of the National Science Foundation's Laboratory for Molecular Sciences (LMS), and is currently the Director of the Moore Foundation's Center for Physical Biology at Caltech. Now, he and his group have developed 4D electron microscopy for the direct visualization of materials and biological behavior in the four dimensions of space and time.

Dr. ZEWAIL was awarded the 1999 Nobel Prize for his pioneering developments in femtoscience. He has garnered honors and awards from around the globe. Honorary Degrees have been conferred on him from Oxford University, Cambridge University, Peking University, École Normale Supérieure, and the University of Pennsylvania. He has been decorated with the Order of the Grand Collar of the Nile, Egypt's highest state honor, and postage stamps have been issued in commemoration of his contributions to science and humanity. He has received many honors including the Albert Einstein World Award, Benjamin Franklin

Medal, Leonardo da Vinci Award, Robert A. Welch Award, Wolf Prize, King Faisal Prize and the Othmer Gold Medal. In his name, international prizes have been established in Amsterdam, Cairo, Detroit, Trieste, and Washington (DC), and in Cairo the AZ Foundation is now providing support for the dissemination of knowledge and for merit awards in arts and sciences.

Dr. ZEWAIL serves on President Obama's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, and also as the President's Science Envoy to the Middle East. He is an elected member of academies and learned societies, including the American Philosophical Society, National Academy of Sciences, Royal Society of London, French Academy, Russian Academy, Chinese Academy, and the Swedish Academy.