Working together: a joint statement between the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Royal Society

Science is at the heart of modern life throughout the world. Science is the most reliable way to gain knowledge about ourselves and the natural world, based as it is on reliable evidence, observation and experiment, on the free exchange of ideas, and on sceptical rational argument unconstrained by ideology or religion. It has transformed our culture and the way we live. Twenty-first century agriculture, healthcare, information technologies, telecommunications, transport have all been developed and honed by scientific research, combining creativity, discovery and innovation. The food we eat, the planes which allow us to travel the globe, the vaccines which protect us from disease, and the computers and phones which keep us in touch with each other, are all the products of the modern, global scientific enterprise. Our natural curiosity has built the world in which we live, and will continue to drive future change and progress.

China and the UK both recognise the value of science and its impact on our culture, everyday lives, society, industry and the economy, and the potential for science to deliver even more. Our two countries, and our neighbours around the world, face significant challenges in the coming decades to which science may hold solutions. From finding ways to feed a growing worldwide population, to ensuring that our energy needs can be met with minimal impact on our environment; from identifying cures to debilitating diseases to ensuring that there is sufficient clean drinking water, scientific research taking place today holds the key to overcoming threats to our wellbeing in the future. And science will be building opportunities for that future, developing new materials and technologies, and finding ways to better explore and understand the world and universe around us.

The Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Royal Society, on the occasion of Sir Paul Nurse’s visit to Beijing in September 2013, encourage scientists in China and the UK to take up the opportunity to work together and tackle these global challenges, and to identify the ground breaking advances which will fuel future prosperity and development in both countries and around the world.

These challenges and opportunities will not fall to one country alone, and the solutions and discoveries required of science are unlikely to come from one single nation. Science – the pursuit of knowledge – is inherently and increasingly international and collaborative. We know that collaboration enhances the quality of science by bringing together different skills, knowledge and perspectives, and improves the effectiveness of science by drawing together resources. Research collaboration will be crucial to forging the science that will be demanded in our future.

As scientific nations, committed to fostering world leading research, China and the UK are ideally placed to collaborate closely on scientific issues, to share ideas, skills, resources and practices, and to both work together and learn from each other in applying knowledge based innovations to our economies and societies. By using today’s emerging technologies and innovations, such as the next generation internet and cloud computing, our geographical distance is of less importance than our mutual understanding and ambitions to discover.

The Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Royal Society, building on our rich history of bringing together Chinese and UK researchers, will work closely to support collaboration between our two countries. We believe that this will be a catalyst for a new generation of ground breaking discoveries and scientific advances.

Signed in Beijing on Friday 13 September 2013

[Signatures]

Professor Bai Chunli,  
President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences  

Sir Paul Nurse,  
President of the Royal Society