Speech by

Prof. Sumio Iijima

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to His Majesty the King of Saudi Arabia and the King Faisal Foundation for awarding me the 2025 King Faisal Prize in Physics. The late King Faisal supported efforts to alleviate human suffering through advances in research and creative thinking in humans. For now, I don't know if my work is suitable for alleviating human suffering. But I hope so. I received this prestigious prize as a representative of the international scientific community working on nanoscale phenomena in physics and chemistry.

Many researchers from all over the world are making important contributions to nanoscience and nanotechnology. My contribution was the discovery of carbon nanotubes and the elucidation of their atomic structure. They have triggered flourishing nanoscience and nanotechnology. I am honored to be recognized for my achievements today.

My research is based on high resolution electron microscopy, which I have been working on for many years. Without well trained manipulation skill of this instrument there would be no way to find the carbon nanotubes, as they are so small, like on the nanometer scale. I should be grateful to the many researchers and engineers who have developed such an instrument to the point where we can see individual atoms directly. Personally, I also thank my teachers for introducing me to the fascinating unknown world of science, as well to collaborators who helped and inspired me.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife and family for allowing me to stay in a rather challenging and unknown world.