

Thank you Arvind (Gupta).

Good afternoon, it is indeed a pleasure to be here on behalf of my colleagues across Canada, to take part in celebrating the achievements of MITACS through its inaugural decade.

And to illustrate just what kind of a decade it has been, let's do some simple math. (I'll admit, that's the kind I'm best at!)

Ten years ago when MITACS was first founded, it was the smallest of the Networks of Centres of Excellence. Today, it is the largest, with 526 partner organizations, 1,114 students and 633 faculty members from 55 universities across Canada.

And when the MITACS Internship Program was launched in 2003, there were just 18 internships funded. Last year, there were 608 and that number is expected to double next year.

You don't have to be a mathematician to know that these are impressive metrics. There is, however, another aspect of this growth story that can't be expressed numerically, but is equally worthy of acknowledgement.

When MITACS was first envisioned back in 1998, its first hurdle – and arguably its greatest challenge– was to invoke an entirely new way of thinking about mathematical research. Up until that time, few of us had noticed that the discipline had evolved far beyond its traditional parameters of basic research.

I confess that I myself did not appreciate until recently the full extent to which mathematical methodologies could be brought to bear on such a vast spectrum of applied research.

What this means is that the growth figures I just mentioned point not only to MITACS' success in bringing universities and partner organizations together, but also to its success in affecting a shift in attitudes towards mathematical research on the part of industry and government, and even among graduate students and their professors.

As a result, the power and influence of mathematics upon the Canadian economy, and upon society as a whole, is much more widely understood. We now understand, for example, how it can unlock secrets behind diseases like Alzheimer's and diabetes; how it can help to develop new tools to understand climate change; to enhance internet privacy; to establish the long-term viabilities of our resource industries, or to manage retirement incomes.

And as Arvind opportunistically pointed out in another of his tireless efforts to champion the cause, mathematics can even help

our Canadian Olympic athletes by pinpointing the optimum rigidity of hockey sticks, or by helping to design the fastest bobsleds.

In saluting this inaugural decade, it should be noted that MITACS has also created a number of programs to facilitate further collaboration between universities, industry and government; to provide professional skill and entrepreneurial development, as well as to inspire the next generation of young Canadian scientists.

If you think about it, the continuum of service that MITACS provides today extends from elementary school classrooms to the boardrooms of the nation, and I have to say that is truly remarkable—and more than worthy of this celebration.

As for Canadian universities, the point that must be emphasized is this: By fostering a wider understanding of the power and multi-

disciplinarity of mathematical science, there is today an even greater appetite for university-based research than there was a decade ago. Naturally, what followed has been a steadily increasing investment in university research from both industry and from governments.

Although we have not made as much progress in this regard as the leading US universities, the success of MITACS gives us reason for optimism. It has demonstrated clear and mutually beneficial ways to leverage investments that ultimately serve the social and economic interests of Canada by helping us to attract and retain greater numbers of outstanding graduate students and faculty.

With that in mind, I want to sincerely congratulate Arvind for his scientific and administrative leadership for the last nine years, and to his colleagues from Simon Fraser University for their pioneering work in establishing such a strong foundation for MITACS.

And I am particularly proud to acknowledge one of our own faculty members, Professor Nassif Ghoussoub, who was one of the four co-founders of MITACS, and who continues to serve as a member of the Board of Directors.

I also wish to acknowledge the vision, support and partnership of our federal government and of various provincial governments across Canada, including our own BC government, which has propelled so much growth in the organization, particularly through the support of the Accelerate Internship Program. *(MLA Douglas Horn will be present)*

Finally, I wish to salute the 55 universities from across Canada and the 526 organizations who joined forces with us to realize the vision first expressed to a largely unaware nation just over a decade ago.

A vital paradigm shift has been achieved, and from every perspective – most importantly, that of the people of Canada – MITACS is a great Canadian success story.

Warmest congratulations to you all.