

Preface

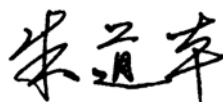
The 21st Century is an extraordinary era for the development of science. Constant advancement of science is fostering epoch-making discoveries and making new shapes of global economy and society. Basic research is an important driving force for the revolution in science and technology. The formulation and implementation of the *National Guidelines for Medium- and Long-term Plans for Science and Technology Development (2006-2020)* (hereinafter abbreviated as the *Guidelines*) has drawn for us the great blue print for China's development of science and technology. And Chinese basic research is now merging into the science endeavor of the world with an even more active and open attitude. As an important component of the national innovation system, the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) will surely play a more and more important role in promoting the prosperous development of basic research and enhancing the national innovative capability.

Since 1986, NSFC has, in its 20 years of progress, conducted a series of fruitful practice. By firmly supporting basic research, it has played the fountainhead role in making scientific and technological innovations. By making effective use of government investment, totaling 18 billion yuan as the National Natural Science Fund, we have supported more than 100,000 projects through the selection and funding of the best, achieved a large number of outstanding results, promoted a balanced and coordinated development of scientific disciplines, driven the rapid development of new scientific disciplines and research areas such as genomics, nano science and technology and quantum optics. We have adhered to the principle of focusing on human resources and played the cradle role in fostering S&T talents. We have supported 13,420 scientists through the Young Scientists Fund, 1,491 scientists through the National Science Fund for Distinguished Young Scholars, 118 excellent creative groups through the Fund for Creative Groups and 521 scientists through the Joint Fund of Overseas, Hong Kong and Macau Young Scholars, and played an important role in establishing a reasonably structured and good quality research force of S&T talents. We have adhered to promoting the integration of knowledge creation and technology innovation, and promoted the construction of national innovation system. Through setting up joint funds and other forms, we have established various cooperative relations with governmental ministries, commissions and local governments, state owned enterprises, and scientific research institutions and academies, promoted the development of cooperative mechanism between industry, university and research in various research areas. We have expanded international cooperation channels and created a good environment for international cooperation and exchange. NSFC has signed 64 cooperative agreements with foreign science funding organizations and agencies in 35 countries and regions, formed a multi-level and multi-dimensional cooperative structure, and set up a good platform for international cooperation in basic research. We have adhered to the management

innovation and cultural construction and promoted the development and improvement of science funding systems. We have gradually improved the coordinated science funding management system consisting of advisory, decision making and execution roles, adopted the principle of relying on experts, carrying forward democracy, selecting the best to fund and being fair and reasonable in project evaluation, advocated keeping close contact with and warmly serving scientists, formed NSFC culture of respecting science, fairness and transparency and stimulating innovation, and promoted the construction of S&T innovation culture.

The National Congress on Science and Technology proposed the great goal of building an innovative country. As one of the main channels for supporting basic research, NSFC must take a firm stand on supporting basic research, adhering to free exploration and playing the guiding role in the national innovation system. This means that we must firmly support basic research, provide powerful means for strengthening original innovations, integrating innovations and assimilating advanced technologies and further refining them, as well as research results and talents for the development of S&T, economy and society. We should strive to create a favorable environment to stimulate the initiative and creativity of scientists for free exploration, and, in accordance with the trend of scientific development and national strategic needs, play the strategic guiding role of the *Guidelines* and the *Development Plan of NSFC for the Eleventh Five-Year Plan Period*. The year 2006 is the first year in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan period, during which we made overall planning of our funding work, steadily promoted the implementation of all strategic plans set out in our Eleventh Five-Year Plan. In 2006, we continued to ensure that more than 70% of our budget be used on supporting research that promotes a balanced, coordinated and sustainable development of scientific disciplines, supported 10,270 projects through the General Program with a total funding of 2.69 billion yuan, strengthened the advanced layout in key scientific areas by supporting 272 Key Program projects with a funding of 436 million yuan, continued to improve the implementation and management of Major Research Plan and made a good planning and implementation of Major Research Plan projects. We strengthened the fostering of young talents, and, in line with the idea of properly controlling the funding intensity and expanding the funding scale, we supported 2,429 people through the Young Scientists Fund with a totaling funding of 555 million yuan, and steadily promoted the fostering of excellent academic leaders and creative groups, with 158 people supported through the National Science Fund for Distinguished Young Scholars and 22 creative research groups newly funded. We strengthened the joint funding, continuously increased the leverage of social S&T resources, and initiated 98 jointly funded projects with a funding totaling 35.97 million yuan. We made full use of the bilateral MoUs with foreign funding agencies, promoted substantial international cooperative research, and supported 54 major joint research projects with a funding of 51.96 million yuan. In the past year, aiming at promoting the disciplinary development, frontier of science and the national strategic needs and focusing on creating a favorable environment which encourages indigenous innovation, we steadily promoted the implementation of our funding plans, and made a firm step to the realization of NSFC's Eleventh Five-Year Plan.

The next few years will be a period of important strategic opportunity for China to develop its basic research and upgrade its innovative capabilities. NFC will follow the strategic planning set out in the *Guidelines* and focus on implementing the *Development Plan of NSFC for the Eleventh Five-Year Plan Period* according to its working principles of respecting science, carrying forward democracy, advocating competition, promoting cooperation, encouraging innovation and playing a guiding role in the new period. Based on the development of science, we will spare no efforts to promote the implementation of our four strategies, namely, original innovation, scientific talents, innovative environment and excellence of management, and ensure an even greater progress in every aspect of our work so as to provide stronger support to the overall upgrading of the national innovative capability and to lay a solid foundation for building China into an innovative country.

The image shows a handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of three characters: '朱道本' (Zhu Daoben).

Zhu Daoben
November 28, 2006