

Rector's Address at the 2017 SCANDEM Conference.

Held in the Aula, Tuesday 6 June at 8.15 a.m.

Ladies and gentlemen,

A very good morning. It gives me a great pleasure to welcome you here on behalf of the University of Iceland and it is an honour to open the 68th annual conference of the Nordic Microscopy Society, SCANDEM 2017.

SCANDEM has a long and illustrious history, founded in 1948 and is therefore celebrating its 70th anniversary next year. As many of you know, SCANDEM is a society addressing advances in microscopy and its applications in materials and life sciences, covering also light microscopy and scanning probe techniques. The society has around 300 members from universities, research institutes and industry. In order to promote knowledge of microscopy in this context, SCANDEM coordinates a number of activities, including meetings, courses, workshops – and last but not least the annual conference which moves between the Nordic countries, and we are greatly honoured to hold it at the University of Iceland this year.

Let me tell you a little bit about the University of Iceland, which was established in 1911 with four departments and 45 students. It has evolved through the years. Now it is an international research university with 5 schools and 25 faculties. The student size has increased from 45 to 13000. In the first class there was only one female student but now women students are about 67% of the total number of students. International collaboration is key for the University. The University of Iceland has been ranked by the Times Higher Education World University Rankings since 2011 and is currently ranked 201-250.

The SCANDEM conference this year features an extensive and ambitious programme, comprising keynote speeches, parallel sessions, posters, visits to biotech and genetics companies and institutes, a

trade exhibition, and a conference dinner in the magnificent concert hall and conference centre Harpa at Reykjavik harbour.

SCANDEM 2017 focuses on the latest developments and applications of microscopy in materials science and bioscience. The scientific programme has been organized under two themes with four sessions in each: 1) Life sciences, including (a) Technology and methods, (b) Health and biomedical applications, (c) Cellular and organismic biology, and (d) Environment in the global context; and 2) Physical sciences including (a) Technology, instrumentation and methods, (b) Materials and nanoscience, (c) Geology, volcanology and earth sciences, and (d) Industrial applications. For the first time in SCANDEM there was a pre-conference hands-on workshop held yesterday on light and fluorescence microscopy for life sciences.

More than 150 participants are attending this year's conference, mainly from the Nordic countries, but also from other countries, as well as a group of participants coming from domestic institutions.

It is clear that such an extensive conference requires a great deal of preparation, and I would like to thank everyone involved in the organisation and all participants for their contributions. Not to diminish the work of others, but I wish to thank in particular the local organising committee, especially the conference chair and SCANDEM President Prof. Kesara Anamthawat-Jónsson.

Ladies and gentlemen,

There is an excellent programme ahead. I sincerely hope that you experience an enjoyable stay in Iceland, scientifically, culturally and socially and that you will return home with fond memories.

I hereby declare the 2017 SCANDEM conference open. Thank you.