Kaohsiung Medical University has long been among those institutions working to create a gender-equal and balanced academic environment. With the belief that increased gender equity is a measure of human progress, we proudly recognize the contribution of women to science over the past century. Keenly aware of the need to encourage women to enter the sciences, the National Science Council of Taiwan, together with Kaohsiung Medical University, has sought to create a platform to understand the current state of woman scientists in their professional development. With funding from the National Science Council of Taiwan, we organized The International Conference on Woman Scientists (ICWS), held at Kaohsiung Medical University, Taiwan, in 2009.

The ICWS 2009 was a success. More than 30 speakers and moderators from Australia, the United States, Japan, Indonesia and Taiwan participated in the conference, sharing their thoughts, experiences, and strategies. We were very pleased to have about 400 high school students, mostly females, participating in the conference. We witnessed passion, strength and success, the main themes for the conference, from all who took part. Many successful female scientists shared with us their stories of hard work and persistence, all the way leading towards success, and their husbands who gave us their accounts of love and support. To extend the enthusiasm of the conference and to disseminate their knowledge, our speakers have continued their dialog in this current supplementary issue.

I hope this special issue not only demonstrates our acknowledgment of their long-term endeavors to reach gender equity in science, but will also inspire our younger generation to find innovative research and help turn their vision into practice.

On behalf of the ICWS 2009 Organizing Committee, and Kaohsiung Medical University, I express my sincere gratitude to all of the people who contributed to the conference and this supplementary issue. I hope our continued effort will inspire our next generation who will further contribute to the scientific world.

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