

ICTPI09 Welcome Address

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Dear Secretary of State for Science, Technology and Higher Education, dear Rector of the University of Porto, dear Colleagues in this Opening Session, Ladies and Gentleman,

When we were confronted with the issue of choosing the theme or the motto for the 12th ICTPI Conference – it was perhaps nine months ago – there was no space left for dilettantism. The growth paradox – so well portrayed by Clayton Christensen in his book “The Innovator’s Solution” – was no longer a paradox. The silver string attaching the real economy and the stock markets computer screens did not resist to the ever innovative investment models created. Crisis was the official status of the economy and the firefighting – pouring money onto the banks, companies, etc. – had just started.

Some people – at OECD for example – had realized the obvious: this was certainly not part of a sustainable strategy. It was perhaps a pain killer or even a good old chicken soup, but not an effective antibiotic. And looking for alternatives seemed mandatory.

So, if we were to decide giving our Conference a very useful and timely theme, the opportunity was there, right in front of us. Science, Technology and Knowledge Networks emerged as enablers of new growth models, which were expected to help in the transformation of the economic and industrial tissue into a novel one, capable of deploying and complying with the sustainable growth as defined by the Lisbon Agenda: economic growth, environmental protection and social cohesion.

The conference motto was there - *Science, Technology and Knowledge Networks – long term growth strategies to face the financial crisis* - but then we were confronted with the all times challenging question “so what?”, and we had to work on how to turn this vision into reality. I would like to thank the International Program Committee members, David Gibson and others, for the most valuable help.

Implementation ended up being done through a unique set of 13 Top Key Note Presentations giving us the strategic/policy making level; also by the nearly 50 paper presentations putting forward the view of researchers in Europe, US and Asia; and finally by the 4 UTEN Roundtables focusing on technology transfer, built on the real-life successes of 20 Portuguese start-up companies that became global the precise moment they were born.

Just a brief word on UTEN|Portugal: the University Technology Enterprise Network. UTEN is actually a novel and distinctive example of a Science, Technology and Knowledge Network, which is focused into helping to turn some part of the knowledge generated by public and private investment in R&D in Portugal into new businesses and real economic value. Those of you that are part of UTEN|Portugal network are certainly able to testify that this is already happening.

A strong word of appreciation should be left to the UT Austin Team: for their unconditional support and most valuable involvement in UTEN activities.

To all of you – Key Note Speakers, researchers and company CEOs – I wish to address my warmest thanks, because you have made our conference your conference, there is no doubt about this!

Thank you and I wish you a fruitful conference and the most pleasant stay in the city of Porto.