

Distinguished guests,

My colleagues from our Foundation and I personally are honored and very happy to be here today. I would like to thank Mike Lazaridis and his colleagues for reaching out to us to collaborate on this project. We are very glad these early discussions led to a partnership between our two organizations that helped launch this \$8 million initiative.

Although at first glance one might feel there is little in common, our two organizations share a lot. Both, the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation are not-for-profit organizations which share a mission, that of trying to improve society at large; they were both formed quite recently, in the late 90s, and both believe in the multiplying effect of positive collaborations. By our nature as a philanthropic Foundation, we at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation play a more passive role in the sense that all we can do is offer financial assistance, whereas the Perimeter Institute has taken a more active role in the amazing field of theoretical physics. And it plays such an important role not only as the world's largest research hub devoted to theoretical physics but in appreciating the role of the power of physics through educational outreach, public engagement, and through its commitment to today's theoretical physics as tomorrow's technology, helping thus to improve the lives of all. As described in our internal assessment by Eva Polyzogopoulou, our Foundation's Coordinator of the Education program area assigned to the Perimeter's grant proposal, "its uniqueness as a research institute lies in its core philosophy, which is based in the belief that science can only progress when young qualified minds are given the freedom and space to devote themselves to their research and tackle the deepest questions. Focus is given to inspiring and training the next generation in order to drive innovation and lead to breakthroughs."

In contrast to modern Greece, which is once again going through another socioeconomic crisis, our ancestors seemed quite a bit wiser indeed. It was Solon, the Athenian statesman, lawmaker, and poet, who more than 26 centuries ago said "girasko aei didaskomenos" or "as I grow older I keep on learning", and it was Albert Einstein much more recently who said "The more I learn, the more I realize how much I don't know". I am not a scientist by any stretch of the imagination, but it seems to me that both of those sayings are very applicable to the field of theoretical physics.

I understand that in early February this year a team of scientists announced that they had direct proof of the existence of gravitational waves, something that Einstein had predicted 100 years ago, in effect validating the existence and essence of black holes. The report in Physical Review Letters had more than 1,000 authors, emphasizing the critical role that collaboration plays in scientific research; it also validates the Perimeter's mission and the importance of its public-private partnership structure with the Governments of Ontario and Canada becoming active partners in Perimeter's mission.

Asimina Arvanitaki has been named the inaugural Stavros Niarchos Foundation Aristarchus Chair in Theoretical Physics at the Perimeter Institute. We couldn't be happier with this selection. The Chair itself is named after Aristarchus, the ancient Greek mathematician and astronomer who proposed the first-known model placing the sun at the center of the solar system. Asimina Arvanitaki, a female scientist, born and raised in Greece, studied at the University of Athens and then at Stanford University, seems among other things happily involved and deep into black holes, dark energy, and hidden dimensions, trying to make sense of them. Her work concentrates on "experiments and observations that open new windows onto the universe", and thus contributing to our better understanding of our cosmos. Her work will also create a pipeline with Greece that will allow fellow Greek students and scientists to become more exposed to the Perimeter's research endeavors and to benefit from them, thus being very impactful especially during those very difficult times in Greece given the deep socioeconomic crisis that has engulfed the country for the last 7 years.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone at the Perimeter Institute for their services to society at large, and to remind all of us what the 19th century American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson said, namely "science owes so much to the art of imagination", and what your own, Asimina Arvanitaki said in a recent interview, "if you don't look you don't know", so to all of you at the Perimeter Institute, keep imagining, keep looking, for the good of all humankind, thank you!