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Acknowledgements

In May 2005 the University of Coimbra, Portugal hosted a Nobel Workshop in Chemistry entitled 'Fundamentals of Biomolecular Function: Nucleic Acids, Proteins, and Membranes. This volume is based on presentations and discussions from this workshop.

The origin of the workshop was Bengt Nordén's visit to Coimbra University one year before as external Ph.D. thesis examiner. During discussions then, the timeliness and significance of the workshop topic was identified. It was also found that Coimbra could offer a good setting for an interactive workshop. Bringing this idea to our colleagues in Sweden we received a very encouraging and enthusiastic response. The joint efforts with Swedish and Portuguese colleagues then led to the workshop, which was the first Nobel Workshop outside Sweden.

There was also another important incentive in organizing the workshop, i.e. to honor Bengt Nordén in conjunction with his 60th birthday. An internationally leading scientist, Bengt has generously and fruitfully not only worked for strengthening chemistry in the Swedish society but also for science in general. The workshop gave ample illustration of the depth and breadth of Bengt's contributions.

As being responsible for the local organization we thank the Nobel Committee for Chemistry for trusting us with this arrangement and the Nobel Foundation for support. We also thank our colleagues at The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, in particular Astrid Gräslund, Göran Lindblom, Bengt Nordén and Håkan Wennerström for their help in setting up the program. Coimbra University has not only a long and successful general tradition (founded in 1290) but has also a strong chemistry department. The direction of the university, and in particular Rector Fernando Jorge Seabra Santos, Pro-Rector João Carlos Marques and the Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology Lélio Quaresma Lobo, as well as several colleagues in the Chemistry Department, in particular Sebastião Formosinho, Hugh Burrows, Luís Arnaut and Alberto Canelas Pais, greatly helped to make the meeting successful by their support and work. We also acknowledge generous support from Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (FCT), Fundação Gulbenkian, Banco Millenium/BCP and Banco Português do Investimento. An aspect of science politics was a natural part of the meeting and received added importance by the fact that both the Portuguese Minister of Science, Technology and Higher Education, Professor Mariano Gago and the President of the Portuguese Research Council, Professor Fernando Ramôa Ribeiro, honored the meeting with their presence. Finally, Bengt Nordén sends his thanks to the Portuguese colleagues for the excellent organization and for arranging a splendid birthday banquet at São Marco Palace. He is also grateful for all the friends from all over the world who came for this celebration.

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