

Distinguished participants, prominent keynote speakers, esteemed colleagues, ladies and gentlemen welcome to the "International Conference on Underground Energy Storage and Recovery."

As the Scientific Secretary of this conference, it is my honor to welcome you all and to introduce the scientific program and the activities planned for this event. The subject of underground energy storage and recovery has gained increasing importance within the context of global energy security, the transition toward low-carbon energy systems, and the growing need for reliable and flexible energy infrastructure. Bringing together researchers, engineers, industry experts, and policymakers creates a valuable opportunity to exchange knowledge, discuss emerging challenges, and explore innovative solutions in this critical field. Allow me now to briefly outline the main themes of our scientific program.

First, we are proud to host a group of distinguished keynote speakers whose expertise and research achievements will offer valuable insights into the latest developments, scientific challenges, and future prospects regarding underground energy storage and recovery. Their presentations will address key aspects of this field and provide a platform for dialogue among participants from diverse scientific and professional backgrounds. These speakers are:

Dr. Azim Kalantariasl (Head of the Research Institute of Petroleum Industry) – Topic: The Energy Mix, Oil Industry Experience, and Future Scenario Planning

Dr. Shahin Kord (Vice President of Research and Technology, Petroleum University of Technology) – Topic: New Era of Petroleum Engineering; CO₂ EOR/IOR an Sequestration

Dr. Abbas Roohi (President of the Iranian Petroleum Geomechanics Association) – Title: The Importance of Rock Mechanics and Wellbore Stability in Reducing Drilling Costs

Dr. Mohammad Enayatzadeh (Vice President of the Oil Industry Technology and Innovation Park) – Topic: Bridging Iran's Energy Imbalance: Unlocking Subsurface Storage Through Targeted R&D and Academic-Industry Synergy

In addition to the keynote speeches, our program includes specialized workshops designed to facilitate focused technical discussions, knowledge sharing, and interaction among experts and participants. These workshops allow us to explore selected topics in greater depth and discuss

practical approaches to addressing current scientific and engineering challenges. The speakers for these sessions include:

Dr. Ali Kadkhodaie (Professor of Petroleum Geology/Petrophysics, University of Tabriz) – Topic: Integrated Geological and Economic Assessment and Prioritization of Salt Structures for Underground Natural Gas Storage in Northwestern Iran

Dr. Mehdi Parvini (Associate Professor of Chemical Engineering, University of Tabriz) – Topic: Process Safety Assessment for Underground Natural Gas Storage

Regarding the schedule, the conference will proceed according to the program provided to the participants. I kindly ask all attendees to adhere to the designated times for sessions, keynote speeches, workshops, and discussion forums, ensuring that we make the most efficient and effective use of the available time.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the organization of this conference. Furthermore, I would like to thank the Scientific Committee, whose valuable contributions to developing the scientific program and maintaining the academic quality of this conference have been pivotal. Finally, I also extend my sincere gratitude to all the reviewers and scientific evaluators who generously dedicated their time and expertise to assessing the submitted works. Their meticulous and rigorous efforts have played a vital role in upholding and elevating the scientific standards of this conference. Hosting a scientific event of this caliber requires remarkable coordination and commitment, and the efforts of these individuals are truly deserving of high praise.

It is my hope that this conference serves as an excellent platform for productive dialogue, valuable collaborations, and the cultivation of innovative ideas that will advance research and practical applications in the field of underground energy storage and recovery.

The slogan of our conference is:

Managing Uncertainty, Enabling Underground Energy Storage and Advancing Net-Zero Carbon.

Thank you for your attention. I wish you all a productive, inspiring, and successful conference.