

# **40<sup>th</sup> CACCI Anniversary and 21<sup>st</sup> CACCI Conference**

November 1, 2006, Taipei, Taiwan

## **WELCOME REMARKS**

**Dr. Jeffrey L.S. Koo**

*Chairman, CIECA*

Your Excellency, President Chen,

Mr. Okuda, Mr. Modi

Mr. Sohn, Ladies and gentlemen:

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the twenty-first conference of the Council of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry. We are also celebrating the fortieth anniversary of our Council, and so this is indeed a very special event.

I am a little bit over forty years old, and so I still remember that forty years ago, as we looked around us, the future of Asia seemed to be very bleak. There was war in Vietnam, Cultural Revolution in China, and unrest in other parts of the continent. There was no APEC, no ASEAN, and practically no regional cooperation. Most of Asia was characterized by economic underdevelopment, insufficient education and widespread poverty.

It was during that time when CACCI held its inaugural meeting in Taipei, with ten national chambers as initial members. CACCI had a vision that by promoting cooperation and expanding linkages among our business communities, our continent may be able to overcome its conflicts and focus its energies on obtaining prosperity for its citizens.

Today, Asia is a continent looking at a much brighter future compared to forty years ago. Our economies are growing twice as fast as Europe and North America,

thanks largely to the growth of cross-border trade and investment. I would like to think that CACCI has in a certain way contributed to Asia's economic success.

CACCI is now the leading regional organization representing Asia's business sector, with 26 primary members composed of the apex chambers of commerce and industry in the region's various economies.

There is a saying that "life begins at forty" – although some of us here seem to be convinced that "life begins at seventy." In any case, CACCI is still a young organization. We continue to look toward a dynamic future, and so we have chosen "Innovation for Sustainable Development" as the theme of this conference.

We are very honored to have with us today a number of very distinguished guests: His Excellency Chen Shui-Bian, President of the Republic of China, Mr. Hiroshi Okuda, Senior Advisor to the Board (Former Chairman) of Toyota Motor Corp., and Mr. Sohn, Chairman of the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

I am sure that you would all want to hear from them, so let me end my remarks at this point. Once again, welcome to Taipei, welcome to our conference, and a happy 40th anniversary to CACCI. I wish you all a very fruitful day.