

Welcome

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Vice-Chair: ACES-Singapore

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Good morning, Minister for National Development, Mr. Mah Bow Tan, President of the International Federation of Consulting Engineers, Dr. Padilla, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Singapore hosted her first FIDIC Annual Conference in 1982, exactly 25 years ago. That was before I graduated as an engineer, and so I did not know much about what happened at the conference. My first FIDIC conference was in 2002, where we flew and waited at various airports for more than 24 hours to reach Acapulco in Mexico. We submitted a proposal to host the annual conference in Singapore but did not succeed then. I was in Paris the following year, where FIDIC agreed that the Association of Consulting Engineers Singapore will be the host association for the Annual Conference 2007. That was the beginning of our preparations. Four years later, we are all gathered here in Singapore.

We have over 450 overseas conference participants and more than 150 accompanying persons. To all of you, welcome to Singapore. I am sure that you will find Singapore a unique city, and I do hope that you will enjoy the social programme that we have planned for you.

Singapore has always been a city of opportunities. When I graduated in 1983, after having played and studied for 24 years, I was glad of the many opportunities given to me to participate in the many engineering projects that presented themselves. I have witnessed the opening of the Mass Rapid Transit, the completion of several expressways, the change to the school designs, leading to more facilities to broaden the minds of our children, etc. I remembered that in the 80s, when my friends visited me, they said that they had difficulties differentiating one new town from another, because all the building blocks were similar. I am sure that if they come down now, they would have felt differently.

I have studied and worked here for the last 24 years, and the number of developments has not abated. As you traveled around Singapore, you will see plenty of construction activities. I hope that many of you will find opportunities to come back again, because there will be many new exciting developments for you to experience. Singapore is a country that embraces the theme of this conference – Global Services, Enhanced Partnerships. We have many international consultants actively working with us, and we have also partnered many of them, both in Singapore and venturing abroad.

At this juncture, I would like to thank several organizations for supporting this conference – the Building and Construction Authority; the Land Transport Authority; the Professional Engineers Board; and the Public Utilities Board. Their support is greatly appreciated and I see many of their staff here today.

We have also garnered several sponsors for the conference. BST has always been a staunch support of FIDIC and has followed them round the world. Locally, we are glad to have the sponsorship of Woh Hup - Shanghai Tunnel - Alpine for the Opening Ceremony; Sambo Tosfoc for the conference cyber café; JDC Corporation for the coffee breaks; and Bachy Soletanche for the Gala Dinner wine. Thank you to all of you.

As a consulting engineer, I have found my work challenging and interesting. I have worked in the development of many local projects. I have partnered overseas consultants in the development of both local and regional projects. I look forward to more partnerships as we learn from each other through such global services.

I have played and studied for 24 years, studied and worked for the last 24 years, and I certainly look forward to working and playing for the next 24 years in Singapore.

I would like to invite the President of FIDIC, Dr. Padilla, to the stage for his speech.