

Respected UFI members participating the 79th Congress, dear colleagues,

It's a great honor for me to speak to you today as your UFI president. First of all, I would like to thank all the members of the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors of the UFI. It was your trust and recommendation that made me the first Chinese as well as the first Asian president ever in the 87 years' history of this organization, creating an excellent opportunity for me to serve all the members. In the meantime, I'd like to thank all the members participating today's conference. It was your contribution that made this conference a memorable success.

As the most influential and representative international exhibition association, UFI was born and nurtured in Europe and now it has reached out to the globe. The association's development at every step is closely linked to global political, economic and social development at the time. We rose up to every opportunity and challenge presented to us. In this process, we adhere to our principals: members are always at the center of our work; we always provide valuable information and opportunities for our members; we always do our best to promote exhibitions accredited by us; we always provide detailed and reliable data regarding the exhibitions; we always act as the voice of our industry and enterprises, with their best interest at heart at different platforms around the world. As a result, the association grew in its strength over a century, with more and more support and participation from show organizers, venues, service providers as well as exhibition associations from different countries. Our association's history reflects the development of the world exhibition industry and it is also the global economic development history in miniature.

Since I was elected the incoming president of UFI, people often asked me two questions. The first one is "what makes you qualified to be the president of UFI?" The second is "what's your plan and blueprint for UFI's future development after being elected the president?"

For the first question, I want to divide my answer into 3 parts. Firstly, I think as a global organization, UFI's managerial structure should become increasingly internationalized and diversified. If we can have more people coming from different continent, different countries assume leadership in this organization, UFI will have a better knowledge about the global economic development and exhibition industry in different regions and cultures. This will make our association more internationalized and can help us better serve our members. Secondly, we are all well aware of the fact that the world economic landscape has changed dramatically over the past 20 years. As globalization deepens, we can see that although developed countries like the European countries and the US still have a leading edge in science and innovation over other countries. However the economic development of emerging countries, including China, has been very amazing. Take China as an example, the country has maintained a double-digit growth for 20 consecutive years. Of course, the growth expectation of China has been slowing down as evidenced by the first three quarters' economic growth which stood at 7.8%, but that doesn't stop China's GDP growth from dominating the headlines of public opinion all around the world. China's economic growth also drives the development of exhibition industry. Currently, China has the most UFI members and there are more and more stories about international exhibition companies coming to China and succeeded, which goes to show that China's market has great potential. Though for the exhibition industry's development, we are not strong, we do have strength in quantitative terms. The third reason that I was elected the president is about my background. Thirty years ago, I started my career in the exhibition industry. Back then, we considered UFI approved certification the ultimate goal to endeavor for, because that is the universally acknowledged standard within the industry. From then on, I started coming to terms on the features and values of UFI and I made friends with a lot of UFI members. But most importantly, Shanghai hosted the 2010 world EXPO, which attracted over 73 million visitors and more than 200 nations and international organizations to participate. It left a deep impression on everyone working in this industry. As a participant as well as an organizer, I feel extremely honored and proud. And perhaps that's also why I had so much support from my UFI friends.

Now I'd like to answer the second question. According to the stipulation of UFI, the tenure of its president is one year, in which what can or cannot be done is quite obvious. During my term, I'll give top priority to two issues. One is to inherit the legacy of former presidents and the other is to further develop. Former presidents - Eric and Arie - have made dedicated efforts, mainly in three emphases: enhancement of members' communication networks, promotion of UFI's image and facilitation of sustainable development in exhibition sector. I would take over their vision for the work. For example, in building up members' communication networks, new members will be incorporated, and UFI's influence and cohesion will be further developed by convening meetings of special interest groups. With regard to the second priority - the development, firstly I would fully use the advantage of my origin from China and Asia to better connect Asian members with those from Europe and other continents, and encourage those from Asia to get more involved in activities and conferences organized by UFI and make their voice heard. Meanwhile, I also hope that members from South America could play a bigger role during my term and companies and organizations from that region could have more presence at UFI. Secondly, the challenges that economic uncertainties and instabilities impose on exhibition sector will be seriously reflected upon. Exhibition, as a means of marketing, is influenced by economic climate while could also serve as a catalyst for economic development and recovery. When global economy is in good shape, there is no need for UFI to worry about members' prospect, but when economic situation is in fluctuation, UFI has a stake in helping members analyze the situation and find solutions to weather the crisis. This responsibility is best illustrated by the theme of this conference - where is the growth coming from. Members are everything for UFI, and without them, UFI is nothing but empty. Therefore, we should pay serious attention to their thoughts, expectations and needs. Their concerns are totally shared by us, and their successes are also UFI's achievements.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have a wish that a year from now when we celebrate the eightieth anniversary of UFI Congress in Korea, I can hear our members say that thanks to the support and help from UFI, and with the valuable information and services it provides, they successfully overcame negative factors emerging from the complicated and fast-changing situation of the global economy and achieved new progress.

Last but not least, thank you for your attention and I hope to get your continuous support during my term.