

Welcome and Opening

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the ICF Congress in Chicago. It is my pleasure to open the congress and I like to extend a particular welcome to all the new members who have joined ICF in the past 12 months. The first congress was held back in 1991 in Hawaii. Today we serve the 16th annual congress of our federation. There are several key benefits of being an ICF member. We can get together with other members from around the world and exchange opinions of important challenges which our industry are facing today. We can also enjoy a wealth of valuable input from renowned international experts. The fact that new members continue to join ICF is a proof that ICF's founding principles are still well recognized and appreciated throughout the cable industry.

The environment surrounding our industry is constantly changing. One important aspect is the increasing emphasis on the global environment. How can we build and maintain power plants and transmission networks that are friendly to the global environment? We really have to find answers to this question, if we want to achieve continued growth of our economy in generations to come.

If we turn to day-to-day business operations, raw material price issues, such as copper, are too important to leave out. The global economic growth consumes raw materials in much larger volumes than ever before, and speculative money has further boosted the magnitude of the problem.

Technological advances wait for no one, and we have to keep an eye on the evolution of key technologies such as broadband and wireless communications.

I am convinced that the ICF Congress in Chicago will give you information and perspectives that you will find valuable in challenging these issues. On behalf of ICF, I would like to extend my deep appreciation to the guest speakers, and please also join me to thank the ICF Standing Commission Members and the Secretariat, who have spent a lot of time and effort to organize the sessions.