

Opening of the 15th Forum, Khabarovsk, 5 September 2006

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Dobro pojalovat na pyatnadcatii Severo-Vostochnii Aziatskii Ekonomicheskii Forum.

Welcome to the 15th Northeast Asia Economic Forum.

Honorable Victor Ishaev, Governor of Khabarovsk Krai, Honorable Park Kwan-Yong, former Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, Honorable George Ariyoshi, former Governor of the State of Hawaii, Honorable Steve Cowper, former Governor of the State of Alaska, Respected Vice-Chairman Wang Shuzu of the People's Congress of Tianjin, distinguished members of the Diplomatic Corps, Forum participants, ladies and gentlemen:

I have the great pleasure and honor to open the 15th Conference of the Northeast Asia Economic Forum in this gorgeous conference hall in the beautiful and pristine city of Khabarovsk in the most pleasant season of the year in Russia.

The Forum has held annual conferences in various locations in Northeast Asia, including Pyongyang, Tianjin, Changchun, Niigata, Yonago and Seoul, and also in Honolulu and Anchorage, Alaska, in North America. Our first meeting in Russia was in Vladivostok in 1992, and we have now returned once again to Russia.

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to Governor Ishaev and the Government of Khabarovsk Krai for their active cooperation and support by hosting the 15th annual conference. I would also like to thank Academician Pavel Minakir and his staff of the Economic Research Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, **for their support and assistance in making this conference possible.**

We are honored today by the presence of a number of representatives of the diplomatic corps in Khabarovsk. These include V. V. Chupin of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Takashi Osanai of Japan, Liu Zhizhong of the People's Republic of China, Kim Thae Hyon of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Baasanjav Ganbold of Mongolia, and Natasha Owen, Honorary Consul of the Russian Federation in Honolulu, Hawaii.

The Northeast Asia Economic Forum is a nongovernmental institution created in 1990 to promote understanding and better relations among the peoples and institutions of Northeast Asia and North America, through economic and functional cooperation in the Northeast Asian region. The idea of the Forum originated from a major conference on Asia and the Pacific entitled 'Cooperation, Peace and Prosperity,' held in Vladivostok in 1990. As a part of that conference, I was on the committee on functional cooperation and served as a session chairman. I therefore feel privileged to return to Russia today, as we continue our efforts to promote functional economic cooperation for peace and prosperity in the region.

I would now like to invite Mr. Yuri Onoprienko, Chairman of the Legislative Duma of Khabarovsk Krai, to provide his welcoming remarks on behalf of the hosts of our conference.