

# **Closing remarks / Asia-Pacific Conference of German Business**

**Hong Kong, 5 November 2016**

**17:30 – 18:00, Plenary Hall**

**Dr. Hubert Lienhard**  
APA-Chair and CEO, Voith GmbH

*- The spoken word applies -*

Dear Ministers,  
Dear Excellencies,  
Dear honorable guests,

Let me start my closing remarks with a quote.

“The proposed free-trade agreement TTIP between the EU and the USA serves the interests of corporations and not of citizens”.

The German NGO who used this phrase to gather support against free trade draws a sharp distinction between the “economy” and “society”. As if the gains of businesses would mean losses for the people. There are people who feel overwhelmed by the complexities of the world and the speed of change. It is our obligation to come up with sound arguments, necessary information and an open and transparent communication.

Ladies and gentlemen, a global economy that is open, interconnected and on a level playing field is beneficial for the

citizens of our countries. The world does not need less, it needs more globalization. Through free exchange and cooperation our economies can complement each other. The free flow of goods and ideas promotes growth, generates jobs and helps us find answers to common challenges. It makes trade easier and frees resources for innovation.

Ladies and gentlemen, over the course of the past two and a half days, we have discussed important questions.

First, how to promote globalization as a positive force that benefits all of us?

We need to bridge the divide between businesses and society. For this we need a public commitment from politicians and businesspeople. We need to convince critics through success. We need to talk about the increase in productivity and the quality of life through innovation and we need to address the fears through open communication.

We want to support growth by reducing protectionism. We strive to conclude FTAs that create new business opportunities and

jobs. We aim to find solutions to security risks on a global scale and to create a viable security architecture, and not give in to populism and nationalism.

Second, how should a sustainable world economy look like?

In this conference, I learned a lot from our Asian partners how to cope with the challenges of urbanisation. We discussed new mobility concepts, energy efficiency and sustainability. Here I see a lot of potential for additional cooperation with German industry.

How can we manage and shape the digital transformation of our industries and lifestyles?

Asia is a good place for innovation. The basic line in some of the panels was the need to invest much more in education, training and in the development of our young talents. We need to expand our digital infrastructure and harmonize standards and update regulations.

We need to be more flexible and creative and work with trial and error. Essential remains the human factor in the age of Industrie 4.0.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With the APK we came a long way. From a small German speaking conference of only German business people to an international platform for an Asian-European-Dialogue. We want to continue this path:

- Include even more Asian speakers in our sessions
- Attract more of our Asian customers to participate
- Strengthen interactive formats
- Integrate social media in our discussion
- Stay relevant and be up to date in the topics.

It is my great pleasure to announce the next conference. It is going to take place in Jakarta in 2018. Mr. Lembong, you clearly attracted us with the Indonesian hipp- and coolness. You have the floor.

Thank you, Mr. Lembong. We are looking forward to meet you again in Jakarta in 2018. I am convinced that Jakarta will be a location as stimulating as Hong Kong has been.

Let me all remind you that the rewarding exchanges that we had here in Hong Kong would not have been possible without the right setting and the right people to make the APK work. We thank the Hong Kong government for being a formidable host.

My gratitude goes to all our sponsors, especially the Diamond Sponsors:

Commerzbank

Deutsche Bank

HSBC

Mercedes-Benz

TÜV Rheinland

Special thanks to:

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy;  
Germany Trade and Invest;  
The German Foreign Office;  
The German embassies;  
The Bertelsmann Foundation for setting up an excellent “Young Leaders Forum”;

Thank you, Mrs. Jones, for guiding us through the conference.

Finally: Please give the local team of German Industry and Commerce Hong Kong a big thank you for a great APK 2016. Please join me here up on stage.

And the APK team in Berlin. Please also join us on stage. After two days of intense exchange and thought-provoking discussions, I am delighted to invite you now for a drink outside. I look forward to seeing you 2018 in Jakarta. Thank you.