



Opening Ceremony

Mr. Philippe Richard

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Securities Commission (IOSCO)

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**IOSCO Annual Conference – Opening Ceremony
Colombo, Sri Lanka, Wednesday 6 April 2005**

**Philippe Richard
IOSCO Secretary General**

Minister, Chairman, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great pleasure to be here at the 30th IOSCO Annual Conference.

Given that this is our 30th Annual Conference, it represents quite a significant point for our organization. Reaching this 30th milestone caused me to think about how much we have achieved in this time and how far we have come.

The other day I decided to take a trip down memory lane and visited the organization archives located at the General Secretariat in Madrid in order to take a look at some of our documents from our previous annual conferences. I can assure you that it was quite an enlightening experience. Alas I did not find any long ago forgotten buried treasure. Nevertheless it was interesting to see what we were up to years ago.

For instance at our 20th Annual Conference in 1995 which took place in Paris, the agenda seemed as congested as it could ever have been. Does anyone who is present here today remember or was a participant at the 1995 Annual Conference?

The agenda makes interesting reading. Items for discussion included “working toward compatibility in international accounting standards”, “dealing with financial fraud” and “the exchange of information between regulators”. I had to smile when I looked at the familiarity of some of these topics. When I compare this with the items on our present day agenda I am reminded of an old French saying that “the more things change, the more they stay the same....”

Going back even further to our 10th Annual Conference in 1985 which took place in Cartagena, Colombia was just as illuminating. Now I am sure that while some of you might remember Paris in 1995 no one here, except maybe my Deputy Jean-Pierre Cristel, would recall our 10th Annual Conference in 1985 in Colombia.

Actually if you compare the agendas of the 10th and 20th Annual Conferences with ours today at the 30th, there will be some obvious similarities. But what is more striking are the differences and how far we have traveled in such a short space of time.

In reality, these days, rapid change is a permanent feature of the environment within which financial markets operate. For instance, in the past, geographical borders were much more important. Today, issues and solutions involve an ability to reach across geographic borders.

Yesterday we were analyzing domestic transactions and sometimes cross-border transactions. Nowadays we oversee transactions in a global market without borders. Technology, competition and investor demand all add to the blurring of traditional boundaries. These are great challenges for us, but challenges that require global cooperation, an issue that increasingly dominates our thinking these days in ways that could never have been imagined even a few years ago.

The Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MMoU), is the best demonstration of IOSCO commitment to face the challenge of internationalization and globalization.

As we move to meet these challenges we know there is no breathing space. Corporations, issuers, investors and governments will not wait for the securities regulators. We as the regulators are going to have stay in front of developments as they occur over the next few years and be ready to be lead on the solutions.

Although economies keep changing and developing, some of the values that we uphold remain the same. Some of the values and standards include strong laws, corporate governance, independent regulators, fair and stringent enforcement of laws and encouraging market growth while protecting investors.

This is also the basis of transparency. Unethical behaviour is less likely to flourish in an environment where there is transparency.

Investors are attracted to markets by their depth, quality and integrity. And the dynamism of our market system depends on the confidence of users, their quality and their integrity. There is an old saying that “confidence is something hard won but easily lost”. Some of our recent corporate experiences have reinforced this for us.

That is why the decisions we are taking here in Colombo about our organisation’s future strategic direction are so important particularly as they relate to the implementation of existing standards and principles.

The decisions which we are debating and taking this week will enable IOSCO to become a stronger and more effective organization. We have achieved much in the last few years particularly in setting new international standards of cooperation, enforcement and information exchange. As a result our international reputation has been much enhanced as of late.

However, there remains an enormous amount of work in front of us especially in helping our members implement these existing standards and in promoting capacity building within member agencies.

That is why our support for the IOSCO assistance programs is essential since it is helping to deliver outstanding results in the implementation of existing IOSCO standards.

To date, the jurisdictions that have already participated in this program have all been success stories in their own way. I am tremendously pleased to note that one of the newest jurisdictions to be participating in the Pilot Program is now the SEC of Sri Lanka.

So as I looked back over those years of previous conferences I know that we could not have imagined back then in 1985 or even 1995 that IOSCO would demonstrate such

success over the years to the extent of our collaborative efforts in the implementation of our principles and standards.

In conclusion, I would like to join the Chairs, Jane Diplock, Andrew Sheng and Dogan Cansizlar, in extending the warmest of welcomes to those of you who have traveled to Colombo this week. During the last few days we have already been working hard and I am sure we have built the foundations for a successful conference.

I would also particularly like to commend the organizers of this Conference and the authorities of Sri Lanka for their efforts. Chairman Dr Dayanath Jayasuriya and his team here at the Sri Lanka Securities and Exchange Commission have done an excellent job in helping to organise this year's conference particularly while we recall the country has been facing such dramatic difficulties due to the tragic events at the end of last year.

The professionalism and dedication of the Sri Lankan team has been outstanding and on behalf of IOSCO, I extend my warm thanks to them for their most generous hospitality.

Thank you.

[ENDS]