

# Welcome Remarks

**Opening Plenary**  
**International Conference on Engineering Education (ICEE-2009)**  
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**Win Aung, Ph.D., P.E., Dr.h.c.**  
Secretary-General  
International Network for Engineering Education and Research (iNEER)  
Arlington, VA, USA

This conference is the 19<sup>th</sup> iNEER partnership event, yet it is only the 4<sup>th</sup> time that an ICEE conference is held in the Asia-Pacific region. Now, we are in a mega-city that is home to some of the world's leading high-technology companies whose products and services in semiconductors, information technology, cars and electronics are used by people around the world everyday.

In 1960, the per capita Gross Domestic Product of Korea was under US\$900; last year it was over US\$19,000, though this will likely drop this year because of the economic crisis. The standard of living in South Korea has doubled every 10 years or so since 1960. Such a phenomenal economic growth has been made possible in part through a major national focus on scientific research and technological development and their educational underpinnings. The growth in university-based research, and the excellence of Korea's education programs, are making South Korea a magnet for scientific and engineering talents. Many of the Korean scientific and engineering experts who left Korea years ago to seek better opportunities elsewhere are now returning to Korea, and many are in this room this morning.

Recent data from the U.S. National Science Foundation show that Korea is among the top 15 destination countries of choice worldwide for U.S. students to go for extended-stay, research-abroad visits. The NSF data also show that, in 2004, South Korea ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in the world in the number of university bachelor's degrees awarded in science and engineering, and 5<sup>th</sup> in the percentage of science and engineering degrees awarded to engineers. In terms of the percentage of 24 year-old young people in the total population who received bachelor's degrees in engineering, South Korea's ranking was 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in the world.

These numbers underscore the important roles played by engineering and engineering education in the Korean society. No wonder, then, that the country is so strong in the global marketplace.

We all who are present here today are from many countries in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Africa. We are here to learn from one another and to look at possibilities for future cooperation in curricular and teaching innovation and creative pedagogical development. Like all of the conferences sponsored by iNEER, ICEE-2009 seeks further advancement in engineering education through international cooperation.

Beyond its technological and education advances, South Korea has much to offer in its friendly people and their unique place in world history, rich and colorful culture, diverse offering of food and beautiful touristic spots. After the conference concludes, I hope you will spend time to explore this fascinating country with its many possibilities.

It is in this setting and context that I welcome you to Seoul.

This conference is organized jointly by Hanyang University and the Korean University of Technology and Education. An important partner is the Korean Society of Engineering Education. On behalf of Prof. Tomas Cermak, Chair of the iNEER Board, and other members of the Board, I sincerely thank these three organizations for their efforts in making ICEE-2009 a reality.

I wish you a great conference!