Remarks at the Opening Ceremony
Technology Time Machine
(as prepared)

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I think this is going to be one of the most interesting conferences I've attended in a long time. So let me start by saying thank you to Roberto for having the vision, and serving as the Executive Chairman.

And to Khaled Ben Letaief and Nim Cheung from Hong Kong who served as General Co-Chairs.

To Yrjö Neuvo from Finland who chaired an exceptional Program Committee, which, I want to note, included members from nine countries.

To David Poon and his colleagues, for the outstanding local arrangements. And to all the others who worked to make this event a reality. We're especially grateful to our institutional partners who are listed in the program.

And we are honored by the participation of the Financial Secretary of the Hong Kong SAR Government, Mr. John Tsang, who also serves as Chair of Hong Kong's Steering Committee on Innovation and Technology. Mr. Tsang, I've read some of your speeches, and your commitment to achieving greater prosperity for Hong Kong through technology and innovation comes through loud and clear. It's a commitment we often encounter in Asia, and it's one of the reasons we chose Hong Kong as the site for this meeting.

IEEE is the largest association of applied technologists in the world. We publish a third of the world's literature in our fields. We sponsor about 1200 conferences each year. And we've published over 900 standards. Every month, three million visitors download nearly nine million papers from our electronic library. About 22% of our more than 400,000 members reside in the Asia-Pacific region, and it's one of our fastest growing regions. That's another reason why we're here, and why our Board of Directors will meet here next January.

Yogi Berra, who was an American baseball player and philosopher, famously said "It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future." He also said, "If you don't know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else."

Yogi was right. It _is_ difficult to project the future, but in business, and especially in high tech businesses, having a vision of the future is the key to getting there, to building existing companies, to starting new ones, and to creating jobs.

We're here to try to understand more about what the high tech world will be like in a decade or more.

I often speak to engineering students. I tell them about Theodore von Karman, a famous rocket scientist and engineer, who described the profession of engineering as working to "create a world that never before existed." And I ask the students what they'll do the shape the human experience in the 21st century.

They frequently mention topics that we'll be discussing here.

Energy: They understand that energy is central to our economy, our security, and the environment.

 Health care: Diagnostics. "Body area networks." Therapeutic applications. Helping the handicapped. Major quality-of-life issues.

Displays, computing, and communications: Three interlinked technologies that will surely be even more important in a decade than they are today.

As we talk about the future over the next few days, I hope you'll remember this quote from Arthur C. Clark: "If we have learned one thing from the history of invention and discovery, it is that, in the long run—and often in the short one—the most daring prophecies seem conservative."

I'm excited to be here, to learn and to participate. On behalf of IEEE, I welcome you. And I wish us all a great conference.

Thank you very much.