

Closing Speech
for
“International Small Business Congress 2007”
By
Dumri Sukhotanang, Ph.D.
Deputy Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Industry
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At the Queen Sirikit National Convention Center

Distinguished guests and members of the press,

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity that Thailand has had this week to host the “**34th International Small Business Congress**” for the year 2007 at this Queen Sirikit National Convention Center. This was the first time that this important international conference has been held in Thailand.

The conference featured plenary meetings, parallel sessions, explanation of SME promotion policies, business matching opportunities and product exhibitions. Seasoned experts in the SME field offered knowledge, suggested innovative ideas and reflected on their experience. Approximately 800-900 representatives from SMEs in manufacturing, trade and services as well as from government agencies, financial institutions, academic institutions, the press and the general public of many countries came together to meet, discuss, debate and exchange ideas related to SME promotion and development. Three main topics included positioning SMEs toward globalization, internationalization of micro-enterprises and logistic innovation for SMEs.

With reference to the above topics presented by SME practitioners from private and public sectors as well as academics from more than 30 countries, I believe that all the ideas presented here will greatly benefit the development of SMEs and assist them in becoming more globally competitive. Within this limited time period – spanning only a few days – it is impossible for us to cover all SME-related topics.

Nevertheless, I sincerely believe that all the issues we have covered will certainly build knowledge for participants and enable all of you to utilize this information in formulating relevant policies, to improve the competitiveness of SMEs at international level, with particular reference to those highlighted here:

1. Assisting SMEs in the preparation for new trade measures such as emerging FTA agreements.
2. Guiding them through new business practices and assisting them in building their global networks.
3. Fostering entrepreneurial development and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of franchising business tools, as well as exploring new emerging business models.
4. Enhancing the international competitiveness of logistics by reducing the cost of supplying, sourcing, planning and delivering products and goods through the development of logistics technology, especially in B2B transactions.

5. Expanding the business opportunities of SMEs in the service sector, in particular forming key alliances to improve export capabilities.

6. Expanding market opportunities through the distribution channels of trading firms and outsourcing alliances.

7. Tackling the market risks facing SMEs, in particular those associated with equity, interest rates, currencies and commodities, as well as improving venture capital instruments for SMEs in areas of liquidity management, equity investments and funding.

8. Developing human resources, in particular the role of women and young entrepreneurs.

Ladies and gentlemen, among the many topics covered by this year's congress, three key areas have emerged that warrant our further attention between now and the 35th ISBC next year. The first is the issue of global warming and climate change; the second is the use of alternative energy; and the third – no less significant point – is how to strengthen SME alliances and improve their ability to network – especially within key industrial sectors.

Listening to your feedback, I can only conclude that this conference has been highly successful. The participating countries have gained valuable information, knowledge, guidelines and useful measures for SME development. These will be analysed to produce guidelines to promote and support SMEs in practical. In addition, we have

strengthened international relationships and built bonds of friendship that will lead to mutual assistance bringing benefits to every country.

Let me express my gratitude to every one of you who participated in the International Small Business Congress 2007. I thank all the speakers and moderators and everyone who contributed to the success of this conference. As you may know, the next International Small Business Congress, which will be the 35th congress, will be organized in Belfast, Northern Ireland. I sincerely hope that every country will participate and build on the successes from this conference again.

Finally, on behalf of the conference organizers, I wish to thank every one of you who helped this conference to achieve our common goals. May all of you have a safe journey home to your respective countries.

“Sawasdee Krub”

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