

WELCOMING

Dear Mr. Antonio Abruña, president of the University of Piura,
Dear Ms. Martha Chavarri, Under-Secretary of Asia and Oceania, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peru
Dear Mr. Jaime Espinoza, functionary of the APEC Peru Taskforce
Dear Mr. Cesar Trelles Lara, governor of the Regional Government of Piura
Dear Ms. Mónica Zapata de Castagnino, Major of the municipality of Piura
Distinguished guest speakers,
Dear Colleagues from the APEC economies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be here on behalf of the Peruvian Network for Asia Pacific Studies (REDAP) on the occasion of the opening session of the 2008 APEC Study Centers Consortium Conference.

As a follow up of the APEC Peru Year 2008, this event is meant to be an opportunity to raise the dialogue and exchange of thoughts among outstanding academicians from the APEC Study Centers as well as from connoted experts in some of the key fields that are emerging within the scope of the APEC agenda.

First of all, I would like to welcome participants from almost all over the Asia-Pacific region. I am glad to announce that ASCs members from 15 APEC economies made their way to the cities of Piura and Tumbes to join this conference. We are pleased to have you here in Peru.

Our compliments to the organizing team of this event for all its work without which we would not be here today and, respectively, hold this conference. Our special thanks go to the persons who are mainly responsible for this conference, and to the universities members of REDAP, whose generous sponsorship has added value to this special event. Speaking about our host, we are very pleased that today's conference is hosted by the University of Piura, a member of REDAP.

Furthermore, thanks to the diverse institutions who made this conference possible by supporting it in a very generous way. To that extent we express our very special thanks to private organizations; to governmental organizations such as the APEC Peru Taskforce, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism; to the Latin America/Caribbean and Asia/Pacific Economics and Business Association (LAEBA); and to the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC).

In particular, the support provided by LAEBA and PECC, in the form of joint sessions, has been very good indeed, and in fact is one of the successful examples of cooperation in the region.

PURPOSE

With regard to the purpose and goals of this year's ASCC conference, and in the line of the envisioning of a challenging agenda for APEC and its academic community, the purpose of the annual ASCC conference is to focus on critical issues that call for the attention and concern of governments, civil society, academicians and businesses.

This year's conference is about to exchange thoughts and relevant experiences that would serve to the policy-making process in area such trade, structural reform, and regional institutional architecture. In addition, the conference will serve as a means to advance into the discussion of challenging topics that have demonstrated to be in profound change, such as education, human security and health, corporate social responsibility, disaster prevention, climate change and food security.

All the referred topics are just some of those which are becoming particularly important, since their implications open up many threats and challenges, as well as new opportunities for sustainable development and prosperity in the region.

PROGRAM

To that extent, let me conclude these opening remarks by walking you through the array of topics that have been included within the agenda of this year's ASCC conference:

In Day 1 we will have four sessions supplemented by a special lunch session. The four sessions will deal with the topics of Trade Liberalization, Trade Facilitation, Structural Reform in APEC Economies and Corporate Social Responsibility. In Day 2 we will have three sessions, in which we will enjoy several contributions from experts that will transfer a huge amount of perspective to all of us. The topics will be Regional Institutional Architecture, Education and Innovation in APEC Economies, and Human Security. Last but not least, in Day 3 we will attend a very interesting ASC business meeting as well as the eight session regarding East-Asian Regionalism and its Transpacific Implications.

The first two days of the conference will take place in the campus of the University of Piura, whereas the activities of third day will take place in the city of Tumbes. All session will start in the morning, beginning at 8:30 and ending early in the afternoon.

On behalf of the Peruvian Network for Asia Pacific Studies (REDAP) and in my own name, I wish to extend a warm welcome and the best of times in Peru, thanking again your participation in this year's ASCC meeting.