



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation
Secretariat**

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3 January 2005

APEC Senior Officials
APEC Chairs of Committee
APEC Lead Shepherds of Working Groups

Dear Senior Officials, Chairpersons of APEC fora,

It is with a heavy heart that I extend to you my New Year's greetings!

As we welcome 2005, I would like to, at the outset, and on behalf of the Secretariat, spare a thought and a prayer on the extensive sufferings caused by the deadly earthquake and tidal waves that swept through many countries in the Indian Ocean on 26 December 2004, including several APEC member economies.

Whilst our thoughts are with the families of those who have lost loved ones, our hopes are also with the survivors, as they deal with the aftermath of the unprecedented catastrophe. It is also heartening to note that many Governmental and non-Governmental organizations have come forward to extend assistance to the many hundreds of thousands of displaced persons and to cope with the increasing threat of waterborne diseases.

I am honored and privileged to have this opportunity to serve you in the capacity of the Executive Director of the APEC Secretariat for the year of 2005. APEC 2005 is charged with enormous challenges for the efficient implementation of our commitments in advancing free and open trade and building one economic community in the Asia Pacific region.

I am confident that, under the able leadership of Ambassador Kim Jong Hoon, the SOM Chair for APEC 2005, and the cooperative spirit that is inherent in the APEC process, we could meet these challenges and produce important milestones to further the development path of APEC.

Building on my experience as Deputy Executive Director for 2004 and guided by the SOM Chair and Senior Officials, I will discharge my duties in the most faithful and efficient manner. As you are well aware, the agenda of APEC reform, which include the improvement and strengthening of the Secretariat, remains as one of our priorities in 2005.

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To push forward our efforts, I have started the process of proactively reviewing the current work modalities of the Secretariat with a view to make it work better, smarter and more cost-efficiently. Since it is always a cumbersome and difficult process to change already established practices, sensitivities and mindsets, I would need your sincere support and encouragement to achieve the improvements that we are looking for.

I look forward to working with you to further strengthen the APEC community during the year of 2005.

Yours sincerely,

Choi Seok Young
Ambassador and Executive Director