

**SPEECH AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE
INTERNATIONAL FORUM OF POST-EARTHQUAKE TOURISM RECOVERY,
RECONSTRUCTION, DEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION**

Mr. John Marian Koldowski, Vice Chief Executive Officer of the Pacific-Asia Travel Association
Sichuan, China
April 21, 2011

Distinguished Mr. Wang Zhifa, Vice Director-general of the National Tourism Administration of China,

Distinguished Madam Huang Yanrong, Vice Governor of the Sichuan Provincial People's Government,

Distinguished Mr. Zoltan Somogyi, Executive Director of the World Tourism Organization,

Distinguished Mr. Chen Min, Vice President of the Political Consultative Conference of Guizhou Province,

Distinguished delegates, academics, colleagues and friends,

Good morning!

And please allow me to add my welcome – on behalf of PATA - to this 2011 Sichuan International Tourism Festival, here in this most delightful of cities, Chengdu!

At this particular forum we are gathered to not only remember those who perished in the disastrous earthquake of May 12th, 2008 – and remember them we will – but to also celebrate the miraculous reconstruction that has taken place in the intervening three years and to take note and learn from what is surely a first-class example of what can be achieved when governments, communities and individuals work in unison and to a common purpose.

To achieve a reconstruction on the scale that many of us here have witnessed and experienced over these last few days is truly a marvel of planning, foresight and technical execution and the Provincial government of Sichuan is to be commended on its work and dedication in this regard.

So too the country governments, the neighbouring and supporting provinces that lent assistance when it was most needed and the peoples of the many countries of the world for their best wishes and gestures of solidarity and support.

The true measure of a person, a community and indeed a nation, is not so much how well they perform under conditions of ease and calm, but rather how they pick themselves up, dust themselves off and continue with life during and after times of intense hardship.

In this regard the peoples of Sichuan Province have been exemplars in how they embraced recovery and with it a new direction in their lives.

It is truly both delightful and astonishing to see how these most affected communities have embraced tourism as part of that new direction. Not only do these people now have an alternate means of generating income, they have one that creates a pride in themselves and of who they are; they can and should be proud and confident in the knowledge that they are maintaining their cultural identity, creating employment for their children and embarking on a better path of self-earned prosperity.

In speaking with a young guide from the northwest yesterday, I asked why do you like your job so much. Her response brought a lump to my throat – Wendy said simply 'because I love my country and my town and I want others to see it as I do so, they can love it as well'.

This is exactly as it should be – thank you Wendy for such profound wisdom from one so young!

States of mind and approaches like this are the real lessons of May 12th, 2008 – very personal examples of the Tragedy, the Transformation and the Triumph of what is not only an economic miracle but a social one as well.

Congratulations to you all!

Xie Xie!

在灾后旅游恢复重建与发展振兴国际论坛上的致辞

亚太旅游协会副首席执行官张科德先生

(2011年4月21日 中国四川)

尊敬的国家旅游局副局长王志发先生，

尊敬的四川省人民政府副省长黄彦蓉女士，

尊敬的世界旅游组织执行主任索丹·索莫基 (Zoltan Somogyi)

先生，

尊敬的贵州省政协副主席陈敏先生，

尊敬的各位代表、专家、同事和朋友，

上午好！

首先请允许我代表亚太旅游协会祝贺 2011 中国四川国际旅游节在成都召开。

我们相聚一堂，不仅仅是纪念在 2008 年汶川“5.12”大地震中逝去的亡魂，更是在庆祝过去三年中在恢复和重建方面所取得的成就。政府、团体和个人在灾后恢复和重建中的团结一致、众志成城，正是我们应该铭记和学习的榜样。

为取得更大的重建成就，我们许多人都见证和经历了在过去的日子里，为长短期规划和技术实施所作出的卓越贡献，四川省人民政府在这诸多方面的努力和付出值得我们学习和赞扬。

各国政府、兄弟省市政府在四川省最需要帮助的时候给予无私援助以及世界各地人民与四川人民同心同德给予的美好祝福和巨大支持，都是值得我们学习和发扬的。

衡量一个人、一个团体、一个国家，并不是要看他们在风平浪静的日子里做得有多么出色，而是看他们在极端困难的时候是怎样地重整旗鼓、风雨兼程、勇往直前。在这方面，四川人民正是我们的榜样，他们积极投入恢复重建，为生活开启新的方向。

看见这片曾经满目疮痍的土地，通过发展旅游业而焕然一新，真的非常高兴和激动。这不仅开拓了提高人民收入的方式，更使人们为自己的所做作为倍感骄傲和自豪。他们可以而且应该为自己在保护当地民俗文化和提高就业所付出的努力和自力更生创造的繁荣生活而骄傲。

昨天，我同一位来自西北的年轻导游 Wendy 聊天，我问她为什么那么喜欢她的工作。她的回答使我哽咽——“因为我爱我的祖国，我的家乡，我希望所有人都和我一样爱我的祖国和家乡”。确实如此，谢谢你，Wendy，年纪轻轻却有如此的大智慧！

这正是 2008 年汶川“5.12”地震所教会我们的心态和方法——亲身经历了灾难、转变和胜利，这不仅仅是一个伟大的经济奇迹更是一个伟大的社会奇迹。

祝贺大家！

谢谢！