

The Remarks at the Closing Ceremony of the 29th Intelligent Transport System World Congress

With the opening of the 29th ITS World Congress on October 16th 2023, Suzhou witnessed an exciting five-day event. During the congress, various cutting-edge technologies, intelligent equipment, and commercial and policy solutions in the field of intelligent transportation system were fully showcased, allowing us to see how intelligent transportation system can indeed create a quality life for us.

Mr. LI Yang, Vice Minister of Transport of the People's Republic of China, Mr. WU Qingwen, Mayor of Suzhou Municipal People's Government, and representatives from Jiangsu Provincial People's Government warmly welcomed all participants to Suzhou at the unforgettable opening ceremony. Mr. Akio Yamamoto, Secretary-General of ITS-Asia-Pacific, Dr. Angelos Amditis, Chairman of ERTICO - ITS-Europe, and Ms. Laura Chace, CEO of ITS America, delivered speeches on behalf of the three major intelligent transportation organizations in Asia-Pacific, Europe, and Americas, respectively, expressing the welcome of the founders and co-organizers of the ITS World Congress to all sectors. During the opening ceremony, we also enjoyed a wonderful performance of Kunqu Opera, a traditional art form unique to Suzhou, as well as the enchanting Jasmine Flower song, which showcases the mutual musical charm shared by the world. It demonstrated that besides intelligent transportation system, music has the power to serve as a common language for the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, as the thrilling five-day congress comes to a close, it has showcased the charm and resilience of the international ITS exchange network and highlighted China's important role in international technological exchanges and cooperation. At this moment of friendship and sharing success, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the organizers of the congress, including the Suzhou Municipal People's Government, Jiangsu Provincial Department of Transportation, Research Institute of Highways of Ministry of Transport, as well as all the friends who have contributed to this event. We also extend our special thanks to the Ministry of Transport of the People's Republic of China and the People's Government of Jiangsu Province for their careful guidance and strong support to this congress.

The theme of this congress, "Driving Towards Intelligent Society-Quality Life", reflects both the society's attention to cutting-edge technologies of ITS and the emphasis on technology serving people's quality of life. Therefore, the congress has attracted enthusiastic participation from experts, scholars, entrepreneurs, and government officials in the field from both domestic and international areas. According to preliminary statistics, delegates from 44 countries and regions attended the congress and exhibition, with a total number of participants exceeding 12,000, particularly with over 900 participants from overseas. The congress registered more than 4,500 attendees, while more than 7,000 people registered to visit the exhibition. In total, there were more than 40,000 person-time to visit the exhibition. A large number of enterprises were also attracted, with 134 exhibitors participating in the exhibition, comprising over 1,440 registered exhibition persons.

During the congress, the Ministry of Transport of the People's Republic of China organized a Ministerial-level Roundtable Meeting, in which 15 ministerial-level officials and guests from 10 countries and organizations participated and delivered speeches. Mr. Li Xiaopeng, Minister of Transport of P. R. China, personally attended the meeting and provided a summary. Furthermore, the Suzhou Municipal People's Government organized a Mayoral-level Roundtable Meeting during the congress, in which Mr. Wu Qingwen, Mayor of Suzhou, participated. Representatives from 10 cities from both domestic and international locations also attended the meeting.

During these five days of the congress, participants from various sectors engaged in high-level sessions and paper presentations to explore the future development of ITS technology and industry. They also experienced the future of transportation through exhibitions and live demonstrations. Throughout the congress, a total of 122 sessions were organized, including three plenary sessions, 12 executive sessions, 48 special interest sessions, 56 scientific and technical sessions, and 3 interactive sessions.

The eight sub-themes that were highlighted in this congress reflect the level of interest from academia, industry, and government in various aspects of ITS. These themes are: “Sustainable and transformational development of transport”; “Connected, cooperative and automated mobility”; “Intelligent and digital transport infrastructure”; “Integrated transportation systems; advanced technology for improved services”; “Smart cities and future transport”; “Pricing and travel demand management”; “Policy, standards and harmonization”. Due to time constraints, I am unable

to provide a detailed commentary on all the content of the congress. However, with the assistance of the excellent congress organizing team and based on my own observations, we can see some of the cutting-edge trends in the international field of ITS. Here, I will only briefly comment on the top three sub-themes of concern.

Firstly, the theme that received the most attention in terms of congress sessions and papers was “Connected, cooperative and automated mobility”. These sessions and papers covered various aspects of the development of connected and automated mobility. Among them, autonomous driving, which is currently a hot topic both domestically and internationally, was undoubtedly one of the most discussed topics at the congress. A notable change is that there is now a growing focus on considering the use of autonomous vehicles from the perspective of the transportation system itself, as vehicles are an integral part of the transportation system. Participants also expressed great interest in the development of communication technologies for transportation services. The discussions in several sessions on V2X communications were intense, with differing views among experts. Multiple experts mentioned that LTE-V and 5G are incompatible, and some regions seem to be abandoning LTE-V. Automotive manufacturers and road operators are more focused on direct communication between vehicles and infrastructure, as they believe that cellular communication has limited value for their own purposes. This is actually about the practicability and economy of new communication technologies in transportation.

The second theme that gathered significant attention at the congress was Intelligent and Digital Transport Infrastructure, with the number

of conference sessions and papers approaching 20% of the total. A common point of discussion was that digital infrastructure should be inclusive and sustainable. This is because digital technologies and equipment are rapidly evolving, and careful analysis and evaluation are required to determine how and when to invest in infrastructure development. Additionally, discussions at the congress emphasized the need to address interoperability, standardization, governance, and regulations in the era of the Internet of Everything. These considerations are essential to ensure the sharing of data and information for common benefits without compromising market functionality.

Thirdly, China and the world are studying how ITS can support the sustainable and transformational development of transportation. The number of executive sessions and special (interest) sessions related to this area is relatively high, which indicates the interest from both government and industry sectors. From numerous speeches, it is clear that there is a consensus across various sectors on the important role that ITS can play in achieving sustainable and transformative development in transportation. However, in addition to applying intelligent technologies to existing transportation systems, it is also necessary to allocate space for green modes of transportation during urban planning and incorporate the necessary infrastructure conditions for intelligent transport services. This will help make green travel more comfortable and convenient by utilizing ITS.

Ladies and gentlemen, as the curtain falls on this World Congress, I would like to express my gratitude to the Chinese government, Jiangsu Provincial Party Committee and Provincial People's

Government, Suzhou Municipal Party Committee and Municipal People's Government for their support and organization of this congress. Your outstanding work and assistance have ensured the success of this event. We would also like to thank the ITS-Asia Pacific, ERTICO - ITS Europe, and ITS America for their various supports in terms of papers, programs, sessions, and exhibitions. Special thanks go to the Suzhou Municipal Transportation Bureau, Suzhou Industrial Park Administrative Committee, and China ITS Industry Alliance for their remarkable efforts. Lastly, as we near the closure of the congress, I would like to express a special thanks to the volunteers whose selfless dedication is truly admirable.

Thank you to all the delegates and visitors from around the world who have traveled from afar to attend this congress in Suzhou, China. We truly appreciate your support and presence at this event.

Finally, let us work together to achieve the goal of "Driving Towards Intelligent Society-Quality Life". Thank you!