

Local Development and Planning in the 21st Century

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WORLD PEACE AND MEGA PROJECTS: THE EXAMPLE OF THE CHANNEL TUNNEL

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Introduction

Local development and planning in the 21st Century is a good topic. My keynote speech is "World peace and mega projects: The example of the Channel Tunnel."

Do you know that the Channel Tunnel was awarded first prize amongst the top 10 construction projects of the 20th Century by an international construction panel in the United States?

Do you know that since the start of commercial services during the summer of 1994, the Channel Tunnel has steadily become the fastest and most reliable way of crossing the Channel between France and Great Britain with a high level of satisfaction?

After 6 years Eurotunnel is today the market leader on the Channel for cars (with 54% of the market) and for lorries (with 39% of the market).

It is also the exclusive link for Eurostar passenger trains which carry over 50% of the total market passengers between London, Paris, and Brussels, the three main capitals in Europe. And it also is the exclusive link for freight trains between Great Britain and continental Europe.

I've brought a video tape to show you some images of this famous tunnel. Unfortunately it is not possible to play it in this room. The organizers will manage a special presentation on a TV set near the registration table.

So, I will use this OHP with hand made transparencies.

But before beginning, I would like to ask you a question: who has had the chance to go through the Channel Tunnel by "Le Shuttle" or by "Eurostar"?

Well, I think it is necessary to show you where exactly is this Channel Tunnel (transparency map of Europe 1).

My presentation will have 3 parts: 1) the context and the chronology, 2) the figures and the characteristics, and 3) the impact and a conclusion (Transparency Plan 2).

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come true. In less than a decade, we have dreamed, dared and done it.

Was it, therefore, so easy? Indeed not. All the players involved in this huge construction site will assure you that it required determination, tenacity and intelligence to reach the appointed goal, but when political will teams up with engineering technology, nothing is beyond the reach of human ambition.

The challenge was enormous. Political decisions had to be supported by technical prowess to allow the age-old dream to take shape. Success required extraordinary precision and qualities of a high calibre in design, research and organization. Great ingenuity was put into finding the best way to overcome each obstacle. What a selection of talents were assembled for this project: among designers, engineers, workers at all levels and among the all those who contributed their ingenuity and know-how to one of the greatest construction projects of the century!

To my mind, this endeavor illustrates the courageous spirit with which we must face the future. If we have been able to achieve what seemed an impossible task, then other ambitious projects are also within our reach.

Relations between France and Britain have been invigorated by the project. It is a shining illustration of the fact that when two nations with time-honored identities pool their resources, they can achieve great things and prepare the future together (I think about the tunnel between Japan and Korea as the VP Hee-Soo Chung spoke about it).

Now that we have the single Market, we must think of developing Europe on a continental scale. The map of Europe is changing before our very eyes and France is located in the center of the new formation.

With this tunnel and the road and rail infrastructure, which will follow, the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region can expect to regain its former position as a major crossroad between Northern and Southern Europe

This magnificent technological achievement is the first link in a chain of projects reaching from north to south and east to west across our continent, helping pull down barriers, first between countries and then between mentalities.

I wish good links like that to your area in Asia.