Honorable Mayors,
Ladies and Gentlemen:
Good afternoon!

In the course of developing city informatization, cities of the Asia-Pacific region not only share common interests and similar regional culture features, but also have their own non-replaceable characteristics respectively. Therefore, there is a wide-ranging basis for future cooperation. At the preparation stage of this forum, in accordance with the UN spirit on CIARP, the participant cities in the Asia-Pacific region have discussed on four fields including tourism information network, telemedicine, distance education and digital library, and finally made a Cooperation Project Proposal.

Four fields as follows are involved in the project: The tourism information network project is at present being launched in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore, with a purpose of sharing tourism consulting and resources of different areas and of exchanging information, so as to achieve online tourism commerce. The telemedicine project is to seek international cooperation in different aspects, such as remote expert diagnose, remote academic exchange and remote medical education. The project is now being carried out in Shanghai, California of the US, etc. The distance education project is now being performed in open universities in Shanghai, Macao and Hong Kong, which mainly deals with long-distance teaching exchange. The digital library project is to set up a network system of sharing information resources among city libraries in the Asia-Pacific Region. So far, libraries in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Macao, Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Japan have made first-step cooperation.

Tourism Information Network

The information network, as charming as tourism, is changing the way we live. The tourism network is fostering infinite vitality, bringing impact on our traditional market and notion, making tourism undergo a profound and dramatic transformation. In this revolution, E-travel is most outstanding, which has become the fastest-developing business in global E-commerce. This is because tourism covers a wide range and gets involved with a great deal of people, which demands more of the support of communication of the IT network so as to fit with the trend of personalization and dispersion of tourism, making travel more convenient and flexible. E-travel possesses a natural advantage of flexible settlement, so it enjoys a rapid
development with a promising future.

In order to expand information exchange and cooperation, in this CIAPR-Shanghai 2000, Shanghai Tourism Commission will confirm the constructive strategic cooperation status with Asiatravel.com, Singapore and e-travelchina.com, Hong Kong. We will launch a wide cooperation in information sharing, image promotion, market development and other fields. All of us agree to make mirror sites and realize linking and resources sharing in others’ websites. We reached agreement in web technical support, training and E-commerce. In order to provide convenience for travellers home and abroad, we are cooperating to exploit E-business AI terminal for city travel in English, Japanese, French, Korean and other languages, providing tourism and public information query function and booking service.

Certainly, this is only the first step in the cooperation of Shanghai E-travel. We hope to cooperate with other cities in the Asia-Pacific region present here, constructing a powerful tourism information network to promote the development of tourism.

Telemedicine

The society today is stepping into an overall age of information. With the development of the social informatization, the medicine field is developing rapidly, which gives birth to telemedicine, a relatively new subject.

Telemedicine is a new interdisciplinary subject combining medicine and communication. It mainly includes remote medical consultation, remote medical education, remote medical information retrieval, remote real-time monitoring, remote home medical service, and net hospital.

The development of telemedicine realizes the sharing of medical resources, including medical human resources and medical equipment, improves the quality of medical care services and facilitates the increase of economic and social benefits.

With the improvement of the people's life quality, the requirements for medical service provision is upgraded. The concept of treating illness has given way to that of health preservation and disease prevention. Hospital is not the only way to get access to medical services and people can obtain comprehensive medical services through many ways, such as remote real-time monitoring, remote home medical services, and net hospital.

The application of telemedicine changes the traditional and single medical mode thoroughly. By means of net hospital, the patients can exercise self health examination and self health preservation accordingly. By means of remote real-time monitoring, the patients can receive proper home nursing care and timely medical treatment. Telemedicine can create simulated operation practice and clinical occurrence, which facilitates the modern medicine education. Telemedicine can also provide rich means for medical communication.

Currently, a lot of work has been done on applicable telemedicine services, such as the construction of network platform with multiple communication methods, related software designing of multimedia transmission, and the concentration of service resources. A network center has been established with multi-channel exchanges, including satellites, CATV, optical cables, POTS, and Internet. A rather complete set of telemedicine services, including the WEB, multimedia medical education and remote medical consultation can be provided to the whole nation, as well as to the Asia-Pacific region.
At CIAPR-Shanghai 2000, Shanghai Municipal Health Bureau and American Nobel Medical Institute will sign the "Letter of Intent on Telemedicine Cooperation", and the Society of Cardiovascular Diseases of Chinese Medical Association and American Heart Association will sign the "Agreement on Developing Continuing Medical Education Programs". This is only the first step in our telemedicine cooperation. We hope to see more cities or medical institutes in the Asia-Pacific region join our cooperation. We expect to make greater contributions to the social development and progress by telemedicine through joint efforts and friendly cooperation with our colleagues.

Distance Education

The arrival of the information society renders new challenges as well as unprecedented chances and supports for education. The features of modern distance education is that everyone, at any time and in any place, can learn what is targeted for, which is very important to the construction of a lifelong education system.

The functions of modern distance education includes multimedia-based display of teaching information, organization of teaching information through hypertext, strengthened interactivity between teachers and learners, high capacity on large storage of teaching information, intellectualized network-based teaching information and others. Printed materials, audio-visual materials, network teaching materials and CD-ROMs are important components in distance education, while face-to-face tutoring, question answering on telephones, electronic voice mailbox, E-mail, two-way teleconferencing television, BBS seminar are important means of distance education.

Modern distance education ranks among the most important modes of education in the 21st century. Compared with traditional education, modern distance education presents more advantages. On the other hand, however, we still have a long way to go and are faced with many problems to educate people on networks. Especially, the construction of network resources, its management and sharing, the protection of intellectual property rights and the setting up of an operating mechanism helping to maintain a continual virtuous development are all waiting to be solved. The key to solving the problems above-mentioned is to strengthen cooperation.

As a solution, the Asia International Open University (Macao), Hong Kong Open University, Hong Kong Caritas Adult & Higher Education Server and Shanghai TV University are cooperating with each other and doing research on the construction, exchange, usage and sharing of teaching resources in distance education with joint efforts, so as to promote the development of distance education, especially in continuing education, and construct a better lifelong education system.

We hope to cooperate with more cities on distance education and form a distance education network in the Asia-Pacific region. Let us exert our efforts and enhance our cooperation to stride toward a learning-oriented society.

The Digital Library

The rapid development of digital and network technology is gradually changing our ways of
working, living and even thinking, and promoting the development of the library industry as well.

In recent years, as the hinge of regional information transmission, the construction of the digital library has won great attention from city libraries in the Asia-Pacific region, and many libraries have begun to plan and built their own digital libraries. The digitization of information resources, the transferring of knowledge through the Internet and the globalization of information sharing are developing at an increasing speed. We can believe that the establishment of the digital library will play an active role in promoting the development of libraries, the advancement of science and culture and the prosperity of economic construction in the Asia-Pacific Region.

The construction of the digital library must be based on the traditional services of the library. It is a wise and realistic practice to strengthen the connection and interaction between the virtual library and the physical library in the current development of library services. The digital library cooperation between cities can start from the traditional library services, such as the cooperation of resource construction and the sharing of library catalogs. The catalog sharing based on the Z39.50 protocol is an important foundation for the cooperation between libraries. For this purpose, we suggest that libraries participating in the Digital Library Project adopt the Z39.50 protocol catalog database and achieve information sharing between different areas by means of Internet mirroring and other technology. At the same time, more channels will be opened for further technological cooperation and information exchange in the future, so that city residents in the Internet age will receive better globalized information services.

Today, Shanghai Library and libraries in Hong Kong, Macao, Singapore, Korea, Thailand and Japan will sign the "Memorandum for Cooperation on Intercity Digital Library Project in Asia-Pacific Region". We hope more libraries in the Asia-Pacific region will join us. It can be imagined that when all city libraries in the Asia-Pacific region digitize their various specific information resources and move these resources onto the Internet, and when all readers thirsty for information and knowledge can access these resources conveniently through the Internet, how proud we will be.

Now, on behalf of all the cooperative parties who are going to sign the contract, please allow me to initiate the proposal: let all cities in the Asia Pacific Region strengthen the reciprocal cooperation on informatization, take efforts to eliminate the unbalanced development of informatization progress, and join in the established projects under the principles of "Independence, equality, voluntarism, mutual benefit, and a win-win situation for all". We can also launch further cooperation and exchange by means of the special web-site (www.apcity.org) of the Cooperation Committee of the High-Level Forum on City Informatization in the Asia-Pacific Region to realize the purpose of speeding up the joint regional economic development.