

GIN2004: 12th International Conference of the Greening of Industry Network. November 7-10, 2004, Hong Kong

Closing remarks by Theo de Bruijn, GIN-Europe Coordinator

Partnerships for Sustainable Development

At the closing of this conference we could reflect on what we have learned about partnerships. Do we now know more about the success factors underlying partnerships? Have we learned more about the pitfalls which threaten collaborations from becoming truly innovative? Did we become more sensitive to the different cultural contexts in which partnerships have to develop? Interesting and important questions, but also questions at an academic level.

I would also like to speak about the other side of GIN. GIN is knowledge *and* action. We aim not only to talk about sustainable development and the role of partnerships. We also intend to engage in action. So, rather than trying to summarize or reflect on the knowledge that you produced and shared during this conference, I would like to pose some questions on the action side of this conference: What partnerships have been formed over the past four days? What will these partnerships accomplish in the future? Or did you become less hopeful for forming international, cross-cultural, cross-professional and inter-generation partnerships? And on a more personal level: what friendships have been formed here in Hong Kong, friendships that may be the seed of a future collaboration? After all, GIN is a community of people who share the same concern about the future.

In his opening remarks Kurt Fischer compared GIN to a comet, appearing at regular intervals in various parts of the world. From this perspective conferences are the landmarks in an on-going process; the temporary materialization of an extensive and wide-ranging on-going debate; it is the continuation of debates started earlier and the start of new ones. The debates we had here won't stop here; and hopefully this conference will lead to some action as well. Next time, we will reconvene in Europe, in Cardiff UK. In the meantime, we would like you to let us know what debates you want to continue in Cardiff, what newly formed partnerships you can report on then. My closing remarks are therefore a call to stay in touch, with us and also with one another.

For now, I would like to congratulate Peter Hills, Richard Welford, Ms. Eva Poon and the rest of the staff with this wonderful conference.

See you in Europe next time!