

18<sup>th</sup> November 2004

**Keynote speech at AIA Graduate Convocation Ceremony 2004**

Good afternoon Mr. Lam, Mr. Tam, Mr. Fung, Honoured Guests,  
Professors, fellow members, Graduates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Standing before you today, I feel happy, proud and hopeful.

I am happy because the Association of International Accountants (AIA) is celebrating its most bountiful harvest ever, the graduation of 130 students. From what I have seen outside this hall and what I see on your faces now, I can feel how happy you all are. And that makes me happy. Let me extend a warm congratulation to all of you.

I am proud because the AIA, a prestigious and dynamic Association, had made tremendous achievements in providing technical assistance and Continuing Professional Education to our young accountants. I would like to take this opportunity to thank AIA for your stupendous contributions to the accounting profession in the past 31 years.

I feel hopeful because the AIA has made very significant transformations, academically and organizationally. Looking into the future, I am hopeful that we as a community will be able to pull our strengths together and scale new heights.

Dear Graduates, it comes as no surprise that your learning experience has profoundly transformed you. Your experience has opened up your minds to so many possibilities. You have learned how to “think like accountants”. But you have also learned a more profound lesson, and that is that the accounting education you have gained is a means for public advancement and private welfare. The research, analytical, critical and communication skills you have developed carry little weight if you do not use them to ask the right questions in the context of broader issues connected with our society, and to promote the virtues of fairness, integrity, mutual respect and responsibility in our community.

Now seeing the steady improvement in the economy, companies are becoming more active in hiring than at any time since early 2001. Confident about the macro-economic outlook, I expect this trend to continue well into next year. There is likely to be good news about pay rises in the next few months. In terms of numbers, most vacancies in accounting and marketing are for junior positions. Personality is repeatedly identified as the most important factor for doing well in an accountant role. You should know your strengths and weaknesses and pick jobs accordingly.

Dear Graduates, our future depends not only on hard work by the professionals but also, and more importantly, on the performance of successive classes of graduates including you. It is no exaggeration to say that on your shoulders lays the reputation and success of the AIA.

For your own sake and for the sake of your alma mater, I hope you will do your best to contribute to our community, our country and humankind.

I wish all of the Graduates the best of luck in your future endeavors. Thank you.