

# Foreword

This book has been written to mark the first 25 years of existence of the AsiaConstruct Conference.

The AsiaConstruct Conference, an annual meeting of Asian Construction Industry representatives, exists to promote mutual knowledge, to recognise and discuss factors affecting industry performance and share information on recent trends and progress. The book participants are organisations representing the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China and the seven countries of India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. The first conference was held in November 1995. Each chapter in the book relates to each of these eight construction economies for the period 1995–2019.

The Research Institute of Construction and Economy, Japan had the privilege of hosting the first 1995 AsiaConstruct Conference in Japan and is pleased, therefore, to be accorded the honour of writing the Foreword to this book. The project was conceived in Kuching, Malaysia, in November 2018. A publisher was then found, followed by project confirmation in Madurai, India, in November 2019. Professor Mike Anson, representing the Hong Kong Polytechnic University Team was appointed Coordinator by the AsiaConstruct leadership. His continuing dedicated efforts in that role, with his team, are warmly acknowledged.

All eight contributors are regular attenders at the annual AsiaConstruct Conference hosted in rotation by network members. AsiaConstruct exists, ‘within a spirit of friendship and cooperation’, to share knowledge among its members, of construction industry practice, progress, difficulties and standards, including the construction market, methods of procurement, resources provision, standards of constructed quality, site safety, productivity and others, as they apply in the different countries. At the annual conference, alongside a paper on a topic chosen by the host country (e.g. financing construction, resources supply and disaster management), each country also submits a construction economics report for the year, providing up to date statistics on the construction market, construction investment, labour and materials costs and trends, the proportions of private and public investment and contributions to gross domestic product (GDP).

In the same spirit of sharing knowledge, the eight main chapters outline 25 years of recent construction industry progress in Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. Chapter 1, an overview chapter, identifies concerns common to all eight industries on the one hand and the more unique concerns which exist, on the other. For example, land shortage stands out as a serious constraint in Hong Kong.

The eight chapters differ considerably in the emphasis placed on the different factors affecting industry progress and performance, although all are unified in their ambition to employ the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to the maximum useful extent in the coming years. Japan, for example, says much about the consequences of the massive earthquake of 1995 and the 2011 major earthquake and tsunami event. India, very large scale, is notable for its programme to develop 100 smart cities with differing focusses. The chapter by Hong Kong, a single city, is at a totally different level of detail. Indonesia is a big population country, and one widely dispersed geographically with many islands. The eight chapters also divide between economies with high levels of GDP per capita and those with lower levels.

This book is intended as an interesting ‘good read’ for the construction professional or student of construction, interested in a broad appreciation of the contribution made by construction industries to the economic progress of the nations they serve, the issues of quality, productivity, safety and resourcing which affect that progress and the differences which exist between the industries of different countries. All construction industries have the same general objectives, but unlike the car industry, for example, all are ‘home grown’ long-term derivatives of the local culture, history and geography, economic circumstances and economic and political ideologies.

Indeed, this book is not without interest to *any citizen*, immersed in the outputs of his/her construction industry and concerned for the surrounding built environment, but is most likely to engage construction industry professionals with wide interests and construction industry development policy makers within governments. The book is not a scholarly reference work of the type sought by academic researchers containing large amounts of comparative statistical data, but remains not irrelevant to such persons.

I hope all readers will enjoy this book and widen their understanding of construction industry progression and achievement, and of the attendant constraints affecting them.

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