

Address
by Prof. Bernd Gottschalk,
President of the International Organization of Motor Vehicle
Manufacturers (OICA),
given at the Opening Ceremony
of the 2007 North American International Auto Show
in Detroit on 7 January 2007

– Check against delivery –

Dear Bob Thibodeau Jr.,
dear Carl Galeana,
dear Joe Serra,
dear Rod Alberts,
dear Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor for me to speak at the Opening Ceremony of this 2007 North American International Auto Show. This year you are celebrating the 100th anniversary of Detroit Motor Show – 100 years of an event that has become one of the most important dates in the international auto calendar.

Detroit always gives the starting signal for another auto year. It is, so to speak, the first time every year that we look into the crystal ball to find an answer to the question: What will the automotive year look like? One thing is for sure: This year will be most challenging. But another thing is also for sure: The new products that are presented here will show that the automotive year has a lot of potential.

Let me in my capacity as President of the International Organization of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers, OICA, deliver four messages today:

Firstly:

The automotive industry is and will remain – in a global view – a growth industry.

In 2006 more than 56 million passenger cars were produced worldwide. This is an overall growth of 3 per cent. This industry is a main pillar for national economies, not only in the developed countries but also to a growing extent in the emerging countries. The finance ministers benefit from this. Around the world, automobiles contribute more than 450 billion dollars in taxes per year. Over 50 million people earn their living from cars, trucks and buses. The automotive industry is an economic heavyweight.

It is true though, that traditional markets grow only little today. The US market demonstrates this right now.

But strong growth can be found in China, India, Eastern Europe and Russia. China has become the second largest car market in the world outrunning Germany last year and getting closer to Japan this year. India and China are planning to enter the European and the US market.

However, we should not forget: NAFTA and Europe remain important and attractive markets. And European and American OEMs have manufacturing facilities in Asia as well.

Therefore we should and must not see all these developments from a national perspective. This industry is a global one today. And so is and will be the battle for market shares and the customer's favor.

Secondly:

There have always been markets showing strong growth and markets that need restructuring in order to return to the path of growth. They go hand in hand.

This country became great by knowing how to tackle challenges. You see structural changes as opportunities. The US, the US car market in particular, has always been an example for us when it comes to confronting problems: The best way to deal with them is optimism. You have always presented yourself as an open and liberal market, even to new competitors.

That is why the US market remains the powerhouse in a globalized world! That is why the signs for this auto show are truly positive.

Thirdly:

This auto show will – in a way – kick off a new age of mobility.

Apart from the fact that we are celebrating an anniversary here, this auto show will in retrospect be a truly historic one for another reason: It will kick off a new age in which this industry will step by step reduce its dependency on fossil fuels.

That is why efficiency, alternative powertrains and fuels are in the focus here.

That is why natural gas, hybrids, bio-ethanol, bio-diesel, synthetic second-generation biofuels, the Clean Diesel and BlueTec are in the centre of attention. The modern Clean Diesel truly is an “energy saver”, a “clean operator” and a great “master of torque”, all in one.

High energy costs have made consumers change their priorities. We must listen to them. Now the technologies are there, and manufacturers and suppliers are ready to take action.

The great American inventor Thomas Alva Edison once said, "If there's a way to do it better – find it." This motto stands for the success of the American Dream and for the automotive industry as well.

There are two major challenges that need to be taken on:

first: CO₂ and climate protection

second: keeping individual mobility available and affordable also in the future through a transition to new climate-friendly energies.

This 2007 North American International Auto Show will give first interesting answers to these challenges and for this reason will be of specific significance.

**And finally, fourthly:
Congratulations and Happy Birthday!**

I am saying this as OICA President, who is proud of the fact that NAIAS has been accredited as an international Auto Show since 1989.

I am saying this as host of the Frankfurt Motor Show IAA – as your competitor so to speak –, who is paying you a compliment, for this auto show has turned from a local trade fair with hunters and fishermen 100 years ago into a highly professional international event. Hunting is still popular – however, nowadays rather for market shares and the customer's favor.

And I am saying this as Bernd Gottschalk, who loves to come back here every beginning of a year.

Happy birthday to the Detroit Auto Dealers Association!

Happy birthday to the Detroit North American International Auto Show!