

Forward:

1. Greeting from President of the Canadian TCSL Association

Dr. Robert S. Chen,

President of Canadian TCSL Association

My TCSL friends, the dual factors of continuing economic globalization and the rapid and sustainable growth of China's economy have spawned an intense worldwide interest in learning Chinese language. With currently 30 million Chinese learners, more than 2,300 universities, and an increasing number of primary and middle schools in over 100 countries around the world offering Chinese language courses, the Teaching of Chinese as a Second Language has inevitably become an international concern.

A testament to this phenomenon was the first World Chinese Conference, which was held in the Great Hall of People in Beijing on July 20, 2005. A vast assembly of 500 policy-makers, educators, scholars, and experts from 65 countries and regions were called together to speculate on the theme of "the Development of Chinese in a Multicultural World" and explore the topics of international demands, developmental trends, policies and strategies, as well as international cooperation in Chinese teaching. This conference was historically significant in that it had laid down a new milestone in the development of Teaching Chinese as a Second Language.

Undoubtedly, both the practical and potential value of Chinese as an important business language is ever increasing. Furthermore, promoting the Chinese traditional culture can be an excellent counterbalance to the negative homogenizing tendencies of cultural globalization. Cross-cultural understanding can also be a vital tool for enhancing international stability and sustainable economic growth, and to promote international cooperation for the benefit of all. Under its fundamental national policy of Multiculturalism, Canada is one of the first nations in the world to implement regulations and practices for the teaching of ethnic languages as second languages. The teaching and promotion of Chinese as a second language in Canada, and especially in BC, has been most successful. Chinese now ranks as the third most commonly spoken language in Canada, and Chinese culture has become an essential part of the mosaic of Canadian culture.

In order to promote the teaching and studying of Chinese language, to further develop the cultural mosaic, and to provide a platform for research, communication, exchange, and collaboration among the nation-wide community of Chinese teachers and scholars, Canadian Chinese language teachers and scholars have jointly incorporated the

Canadian TCSL Association, the Canadian National TCSL Database, and the Canadian TCSL Journal, offering online services free to all. These projects have been accomplished with great support from local communities and public institutes, as well as the Education Office of the Chinese Consulate-General in Vancouver and the National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language of the People's Republic of China.

Today, on behalf of the Canadian TCSL Association, I would like to welcome you to the Second China-Canada TCSL Symposium to discuss and exchange views on the topic: "Innovations, Challenges, and Solutions of TCSL in the 21st Century". I would also like you to join me in extending our gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the improvement of TCSL in Canada.