Welcome to FDI 2015 Bangkok, an event that has generated a great deal of excitement ever since its launch in New Delhi last year. The theme for this year’s event is “Dentistry in the 21st Century” and much of the vital equipment and material is on display in this year’s sold-out exhibition, which will offer 5,500 square metres net of the latest in high-end technology and cutting-edge products. This does not come as a surprise. Current market research places growth in the Thai medical device market (including dental equipment, especially high-end) at an attractive 13.7% per annum in the medium term, to reach around US$ 2.3 billion by 2018.

We are delighted to announce a record-breaking six national exhibition reservations, so look out for some thrilling moments in the German, United Kingdom, United States, Chinese and, for the first time, Italian and Indian pavilions.

I would also recommend you visit the FDI pavilion, where you can gain a special insight into the latest updates on ongoing activities and details of emerging areas of focus and their corresponding projects. You will also see a report on the 2015 edition of World Oral Health Day, held 20 March, as well as highlights on new products such as the 2nd edition of FDI’s landmark Oral Health Atlas, due for official launch during the congress.

FDI World Dental Federation serves as the principal representative body for more than one million dentists worldwide, through approximately 200 national member associations and specialist groups in some 130 countries. The Annual World Dental Congress has been FDI’s flagship event for well over 100 years, promoting international understanding and exchange of knowledge and experience in dentistry, challenging preconceived ideas and widening perceptions.

This is the first ever FDI Annual World Dental Congress to be held in Thailand. I would like to thank our partners, the Dental Association of Thailand, for putting together such an exceptional event. Cooperation between FDI and the local team has been, I’m told, in every way exemplary. I would like to congratulate the local organizing committee for lining up such an impressive group of 7 national and 63 international speakers from all continents of the world to deliver a truly exceptional choice of lectures.

During the congress, we will also be highlighting some of major issues facing dental practitioners, in particular, and health services in general. One of these is improving access to oral health care, within the context of oral health as a fundamental right. Another is oral health care for ageing populations, which will be the subject of this year’s World Oral Health Forum under the title “Challenges of oral health care in an ageing society.”

Thailand itself is rapidly gathering a reputation for excellence in the field of dentistry, attracting patients from around the world and taking the lead in areas such as access to oral health care, caries prevention and minimal intervention dentistry. Moreover, the country has the particularity of having a ratio of 2:1 of female-to-male dental graduates entering the workforce.

I sincerely hope that congress participants will have the opportunity to visit the natural and cultural gems of Bangkok and Thailand during their stay. Among other things, the country has five World Heritage Sites.

On behalf of FDI, welcome to the most significant international dental event in this year’s calendar, the 2015 FDI Annual World Dental Congress.