

## **MIDDLE EAST SPEECH SUMMARY – Sung –Joo Kim (MCM)**

### **Opening remarks**

I'd like to start by saying that it is a great honour to be invited to this gathering in the Middle East ... I know Dubai very well, as my fashion company MCM is making great strides in this region... The subject of my speech today is: "Why I want to empower women"... Why I have chosen this title? You will understand when you consider my background, which is rather unusual... my father ran a huge Korean conglomerate... I had a very traditional upbringing... unfortunately girls were not considered business material... I was treated differently from my brothers... discrimination... I was expected to become a wife and mother... When I decided to pursue my goal to enter the business world I was disinherited... But I stand here now as a Chairman and CEO in charge of MCM, a global fashion company. How did I achieve this?

### **Improving society**

Firstly, I am achieving this by clearly setting out my mission and my values. My overall mission is to improve society... and women's place in a society... in today's global competitive economy. Many of my staff are women... As I will explain to you later, I am fortunate enough to have the resources to empower women... I know what it is like to be pushed into the background... but I want to demonstrate that it is possible to achieve success even against a background of discrimination... moving from passive to self-reliance....

### **Business ethics**

One of my heartfelt subjects is business ethics... Global success means nothing without ethics... not adhering to an ethical code will be destructive to society on a global scale... in a knowledge-based economy, damage will be bigger... Financial fraud and selfish leaders... corruption... huge development of Russia and China... transparency is key...

### **MCM background**

I have endeavoured to follow these fundamental moral values throughout my business career... My company MCM is an intriguing case study... Brand originated in Germany... popular in Korea... the company imploded following the Asian crisis and mismanagement... I acquired the brand... I used to run the Korean franchise... Today I am rejuvenating MCM... turning it into a successful international firm ...hired Creative Director Michael Michalsky... In fact, the brand was launched in the Middle East market last year... in Harvey Nichols department store.... great news... brand received so well here... Strategy is to launch worldwide... best luxury retailers in Europe... Harrods, Colette in Paris... And further afield... China... Beijing... Russia... looking forward to entering Japanese market... end of next year... biggest Asian fashion market... new license partner... cleaning up the market... Travel retail an important channel... Airports in the major cities of the world... we have obtained

biggest store in Beijing Terminal 3... You will soon see the MCM in key locations around the world.

### **Looking to the future**

What of the future? Long-term strategy is for an IPO in 2011.... Half a billion dollar business... Korea contributing US\$130 million.... Gross revenue including wholesale US\$160 million... Japan and licensed products US\$220-240 million... This will not be without challenges.

### **Challenges**

It is not easy for an Asian company headed by a woman to run a European brand... After 17 years, I still come across discrimination against women... There are big cultural differences... I have six offices scattered throughout the world... Milan, NY, London, Seoul, Beijing, Zurich... staff of nine nationalities... distance and time differences... conference calls... international flights... working round the clock... The virtual office is an advantage...

### **Importance of communication**

Today's networked society certainly contributes to the successful running of my business. And it will also contribute to the partnership between Asia and the Arab world... importance of communications in modern society... we cannot live without proper communications... women are key to this.... Women are excellent communicators.... And we have the power to harness this skill for the good of the world...

### **Conclusion**

Rise of women as a major economic force... we are corporate leaders... We listen to customers and we are caring... We work together with men... we work with different cultures... Asians are working together with the Arab world... Asians are working in partnership with Europeans and the rest of the globe ... so that future generations can inherit a peaceful existence.