Tzu-Pao Yang: from Deputy Mayor to Deputy Secretary General

Marking a major career shift from local government to international cooperation, Dr. Tzu-Pao Yang assumed the role of Deputy Secretary General of the ICDF in August of this year. His previous position, to which he was appointed in April 1998, was as Hsinchu City’s Deputy Mayor. In that capacity, he was instrumental in bringing the first light rail rapid transit system to the Hsinchu municipality in northern Taiwan.

An expert on rail-based transport systems, Dr. Yang is no stranger to the ICDF. In 1997, for example, his expertise was tapped in connection with the preliminary survey for the Northern Block Railroad Corridor Project of Central America, covering El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. The diversified experience that the new deputy secretary general brings to the ICDF will be invaluable, especially in view of the infrastructure projects in which the organization is frequently called upon to participate.

A native of Hualien, Taiwan, born in 1963, Yang graduated from National Taiwan University’s Department of Agricultural Engineering. He then earned a master degree from the Institute of Building and Planning at the same university. While pursuing his studies for a doctorate in engineering, he spent four years at the esteemed French engineering college École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées. At the same time, Dr. Yang qualified as a PhD candidate in sociology at Europe’s highly respected École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales.
Dr. Yang believes that his diversified educational background and professional training (including his work as Chief Engineer for THI Inc., a leading Taiwanese transport engineering consultation company, and as a consultant to the Taipei Rapid Transit Corporation) can fulfill some special needs at the ICDF. There are numerous areas in which he can contribute to international technical cooperation—agricultural projects, urban and village planning, or civil engineering. His understanding of the social aspects of cooperation and his analytical abilities in this regard will also serve him well, just as his French language skills and working experience with the Paris transport authority (RATP), where he worked as a research and development engineer and led the “New Transport Systems” group for two years, will be seen as strengths in dealing with francophone countries.

Role of coordinator

While the ability to initiate, plan and execute projects is vital for a deputy secretary general, Yang considers the role of “coordinator,” which he is required to play by virtue of his position, to be equally important.

Over the past few years, under the direction of Secretary General Ping-cheung Loh, the ICDF team has delivered a commendable performance on several fronts. Professional foreign assistance strategies have been put into place, resourceful programs have been successfully implemented, and a culture of transparency and equity has been developed. Although he admires the accomplishments to date, Yang nevertheless feels that, as a newcomer, he can assist the ICDF leader in creating an even better environment, in order to ensure that the entire team executes its responsibilities in the most effective and efficient way possible. Perhaps a fresh approach will emerge from Yang’s communication and integration with his coworkers.

More active future

“I am delighted to be joining the ICDF at this time,” says Dr. Yang, “for we foresee an era of international cooperation that will be more active, increasingly innovative and, we hope, more meaningful and valuable to the recipient countries.” Reiterating some comments made by Foreign Minister Hung-mao Tien recently, in an address on new assistance approaches, Yang expresses the conviction that international cooperation will help to solidify diplomatic partnerships with non-governmental organizations. “Also, it is our hope that the results of our foreign assistance operations will help to build a public sentiment that encourages the extension of assistance, the transparency and legitimacy of operations, the expansion of our Overseas Volunteer Corps, and the implementation of a new foreign service program tied to the exemption of military service.”

The new Deputy Secretary General emphasized: “It is an honor to participate in the important work that the ICDF is doing at this critical time. I look forward to contributing my best as we incorporate “new thinking” and “new ways” in the way we handle our responsibilities.”