PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

A Solid Base for Future Planning

It’s both an honour and a bit intimidating to be taking over the leadership of an organization like AIPC in a period when so much is happening that demands a very strategic response. As we all continue with our efforts to come to grips with a rapidly changing market and a very diverse set of economic conditions in different parts of the world, it helps to look at those things that have generated value to date and see where there are further benefits to be had – and as we’re all on this ride together, I’d like to share some of my thoughts with you in this, our first formal communication.

The good news – as I can assure you from a very thorough look at our organization in my time as Vice President – is that we are in a great position from which to set out our future directions. AIPC is in solid financial shape, and operates with policies that will ensure this continues to be the case for the foreseeable future. We also have a good collective view of what the priorities should be, largely because of having a stable and well defined membership base that has enabled us to have a very clear focus.

We also benefit from having gone through a period where a variety of new initiatives have been developed, tested and implemented, and courtesy of our recent member satisfaction survey and accompanying focus group, the evidence that the vast majority of these are seen as relevant and appropriate to today’s top issues.

In my view – and this is also supported from the results of the member surveys as well as discussions that have taken place both in and around our Association events – the priority now is to chart a course that means we can maintain key activities and programs while at the same time advancing other areas of growing importance that could use more attention. Chief amongst the latter is to further develop our role as industry advocates and at the same time deliver the materials and data that better enable AIPC members to do the same in their own communities.

As a group, we are heavily reliant on the support and understanding of governments and to secure this we must be able to demonstrate how what it is we do facilitates their own aspirations and political agendas.

At the same time, I believe we need to continue to advance standards and procedures that enable us to demonstrate performance to audiences that may have little idea of what it takes to be successful in this industry. This will give us all better benchmarks to point to as a way of illustrating that while our industry necessarily operates under a wide variety of conditions and constraints, it is still one of high expectations that must be met in order to remain competitive.

Finally, I think we need to increasingly look to (and plan for) the future of the industry and the work that must be done to ensure we have good succession strategies in place not just as individual operations but as a group of professionals overall. This means an ongoing investment in the kind of training, networking and professional development activities that will enable the next generation of management take full advantage of the collective experience and expertise in our organization and help ensure we retain control over our future as an industry.

As I said at the beginning, we have what we need to do all this: good programming, relevant research, a knowledgeable and professional membership, sound finances and a clear sense of where we want to go as a group. I look forward to sharing the process with you as we move forward from here!

Geoff Donaghy, AIPC President
This year’s Annual Conference in Cape Town was rich in content, interactions and insights as a program combining global expertise and local knowledge around strategies for an emerging economy addressed key aspects of all major issues identified by members.

Amongst the top areas to be addressed – the presentations of which are now posted online at www.aipc.org – were Cape Town Keynotes who related South African issues to broader industry challenges and how the strategies developed for their rapidly emerging economy carried valuable lessons for destinations that had long since taken for granted many aspects of the economic equation and their role in it.

Amongst the Conference highlights were;

> Opening keynote Wendy Luhabe detailed the actions she had taken to develop incentives and particularly funding sources for those trying to enter the work force and suggested how similar strategies could and should be employed by convention centres as a way of establishing a more central role in the life and economic development of their respective communities. In addition to attracting new business, “South Africa has used meetings & conventions strategically to enhance their country’s profile and prestige”, she said. “You must redefine yourself as a ‘formidable’ industry in economic development”; she added, noting as well that projects like the AIPC / CTICC Master Class at the University of Cape Town were an ‘admirable’ way to leave a knowledge legacy from an industry and Annual Conference.

> Daniel Silke, political analyst, commentator and Director of the Political Futures Consultancy looked at how the development of the overall African economy parallels that of the global economy but with an additional edge based on the extraordinary transition it is going through as it emerges from earlier periods in its development. “The GDP’s of emerging markets are overtaking ‘developed’ countries, and that has many implications for established economies”, said Silke. “Business events can and must play a role in this transition but are not yet as established a factor as they are in developed countries”.

> Thebe Ikalaheng, the founder and Managing Director of the Brand Leadership Group reflected on the role of branding as a vehicle to create an integrated image for an entity as vast as the whole of Africa or as specific as a convention centre. He illustrated his presentation extensively with examples of how images will develop regardless of whether or not this is managed and it is in the interests of the ‘owner’ to take control of that process to the extent that they can. He also used the African experience to illustrate how branding can evolve under changing conditions and even benefit by adapting more traditional and perhaps recognizable imagery to re-engineer a brand.

> A Compliance Panel representing the South African Medical Device Industry Association and EUCOMED as well as IPCAA addressed the issue of the impacts that pharmaceutical and medical equipment producer constraints are having on medical meetings and conferences, noting that key areas of compliance once maintained by the industry itself are increasingly becoming the subject of legislation and government opinion. The result is that they are increasingly becoming a part of the ‘thinking’ around such events and their financing that must be understood by suppliers such as centres.

> MCI’s Oscar Cerezales and Ben Hainsworth of the European Society of Cardiology delivered their respective (and not always agreed!) perspectives on the challenges faced by key client groups and their organizers that will inevitably translate into centre issues. “Attendance, sponsorship and membership are top issues for associations today, and content equals revenue” said Cerezales. According to Hainsworth, “regulatory, demographic, legal and economic realities are reshaping every association’s focus, and help explain their new demands.”

> Two perspectives on the evolution of the exhibitions sector were delivered by UFI’s Sonia Thomas and David Pegler of London ExCeL. These research-based presentations indicated how trade shows and exhibitions are evolving and the ways in which facilities also need to evolve and reconfigure in response, particularly given a growing need seen by organizers to link educational content with the traditional exhibition elements.

> In a new approach to delegate interaction Todd Voth, Populous and Rafael Viñoly-Menendez, LMN Architects used audience feedback on major factors in design transition to shape the content of their exploration of how practical architectural solutions could be applied to both client and community challenges.
AIPC / CTICC Master Class Delivers Global Expertise in Cape Town

A new initiative at this year’s Annual Conference was the delivery of a one day “Master Class” program to students of the University of Cape Town as both a legacy from the conference and a means of expanding awareness and enthusiasm for the industry to a new audience in a rapidly emerging economy.

Entitled “From Global to Local: The Meetings Industry in Context”, the target audiences included a range of participants including university-level students currently engaged in related studies or in adjacent areas with an interest in the role of meetings (i.e., business, professions, political) and local professionals currently engaged in the industry looking for a professional update. The learning outcomes included understanding the scope and global reach of the meetings industry and the key role played by centres; identifying the major components of the industry; understanding the overall economic role played by centres in their own communities and having a chance to clarify areas / issues of particular interest, including potential career opportunities.

The Master Class addressed these objectives with a series of interactive sessions over the course of the day, delivered by a number of AIPC members and associates including AIPC Academy faculty members. These sessions included:

> **Convention Centres in Context:** A global overview of major industry components, current practices and issues and the key role Centres play in supporting and managing events to the benefit of both organizers and investors, presented by AIPC’s Rod Cameron.

> **The Community and Economic Development Roles:** CTICC CEO Rashid Toefy explained how the Cape Town International Convention Centre engages with local and national governments and business interests to deliver broad economic and professional development benefits.

> **A World of Diversity - Industry Practices and Prospects around the Globe:** A panel presentation identifying regional issues and strategies in Europe, the Americas and Asia from the perspective of three regional industry representatives: Jan van den Bosch – Amsterdam, Carol Wallace – San Diego and Aloysius Arlando – Singapore.

> **Designing for Interaction: Planning and Architecture in Today’s Center:** How centres are designed to be effective and efficient vehicles for interaction and key factors such as sustainability and technology that are shaping today’s design, presented by LMN Architects’ Rafael Viñoly-Menendez.

> **Exhibitions and Trade Shows: a Critical Industry Component:** London ExCeL’s James Rees, London ExCeL.

> **Winning the Business in a Competitive World:** An overview of the communications, sales and marketing processes that drive today’s industry with particular reference to those aspects that are unique to convention centres and destinations and suggestions as to how particular regions such as SA can enhance their competitiveness in a joint presentation by Marta Gomes from Paris and James Rees, London ExCeL.

The Master Class concluded with a session entitled “You Tell Us about the Future” in which participating students were encouraged to give their perspectives on how they saw the industry evolving based on their own views about important forms of interactions and developing technologies.
Meet Your New Board Members: The General Assembly at the 2013 AIPC Annual Conference in Cape Town produced a significant change in AIPC Board membership as a result of a number of terms completing at the same time. The outcome is one of the strongest and most senior Boards we have ever had, with a wide range of experience and expertise to drive Association activities. Here's the lineup:

Peter Gunn Vice President

Our new Vice President Peter Gunn has senior industry management experience spanning over 20 years within 4 of the UK’s largest stand-alone leisure and event destinations culminating in his current role as Managing Director of the Bournemouth International Centre (BIC), one of the UK’s premier large scale conference centres. During that time he has been committed to achieving sustainable business growth and maximising the economic, social and well-being benefits to the community and has achieved some important distinctions, including leading a centre to the highest quality rating of over 1000 assessed in the UK as well as being voted UK Manager of the Year in 2002.

“As a member of the previous Board, I am familiar with the executive function of the organisation and well aware of the challenges and opportunities facing the industry as a whole. I believe our organization needs to become even more relevant in the years ahead as the industry evolves, and I would like to see it performing more of a role in facilitating the important discussions which must take place around areas like change management and the need to provide innovative solutions to the current economic challenges”.

Hilmar Guckert Treasurer

New Treasurer Hilmar Guckert has been Managing Director of DüsseldorfCongress Veranstaltungsgesellschaft in Düsseldorf, Germany since 1994. The company has subsequently become one of the largest event providers in Europe, uniting 10 event locations used for conventions, congresses, business events, incentive programs, concerts and sporting events. In addition, he headed Düsseldorf Marketing & Tourismus GmbH from 2003 to 2006, cofounded the convention bureau Düsseldorf and held related positions including Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors of the German Convention Bureau and Chairman of the Central European Chapter of ICCA, for six years. He also lectures regularly at various colleges and supervises theses in the field of convention management.

“The meeting industry of the future builds on exchanging experiences today – that is why I have been dedicated to AIPC for years”, says Guckert. “As a veteran member of AIPC, I am very familiar with its organizational structure and value the fruitful exchanges with colleagues across cultures. At the same time, my industry experience spans many areas needed to capitalize on existing potential. In my eyes, this forms the basis for developing AIPC and our congress centers in a mutually beneficial way”.

Jan van den Bosch Board Member

New Board member Jan van den Bosch is the Executive Vice President of Amsterdam RAI Convention Centre, and formerly Director General Affairs at the Maastricht Exhibition and Congress Centre Director for the RAI. He was responsible for the construction of the new RAI expansion facility Elicium and will shortly begin development of the Amtrium, a multifunctional and highly sustainable congress building with offices and a restaurant. With over 23 years in the industry and more than 16 years operational experience he has a wide range of knowledge in convention centre management.

Says Van den Bosch “As a dedicated member of AIPC I had the privilege to host AIPC’s successful 2012 Annual Conference and have supported both the AIPC Facility Operations Summit and the AIPC Academy. These involvements have given me the opportunity to meet and discuss industry issues and developments with a lot of AIPC members, some of whom I have known for many years. I believe that knowledge sharing and education is very important and look forward to contributing to the continuing growth, profile, positioning and activities of AIPC in the global conference industry”.

Jim Rooney Board Member

New Board member Jim Rooney is Executive Director of the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA) where he oversees operations of a number of facilities including the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center (BCEC) and the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center in Boston's Back Bay (both AIPC Gold Level Quality Standard Convention Centers) as well as the MassMutual Center, a combined convention center and 6000-seat arena in Springfield, Massachusetts. His career in the conventions and meetings industry started as an MCCA board member followed by a transition to Director of Development and Construction where he oversaw construction of the $850 million BCEC project and the $72 million expansion and renovation of the MassMutual Center.

“In line with the mission of AIPC, I strive for continuous excellence in convention center management, and I am passionate about studying and promoting the importance of the global hospitality, tourism and meetings industry”, says Rooney. “I advocate strongly for our industry to embrace and champion the benefits of meeting and conventions “beyond tourism” and to include the value of destination branding, urban development, business and commerce, and knowledge and information exchange in our value proposition”.

2013 AIPC Innovation Award: Creativity on Display

Who says there are no good new ideas these days? The 2013 AIPC Innovation Award competition was overflowing with them, and all were on display at the poster session held at the Annual Conference to both share concepts and help select a winner for this year’s highest honours.

As has become the standard, there were two awards made; one a result of the assessment of the Award Panel and the other the “Popular Choice” Award as selected by delegates who had the opportunity to interact with entry representatives and get into more detail. While the jury’s still out on which if either takes precedence the fact is that both awards are a direct reflection of the relevance and applicability of the winning innovations.

This year’s winners were;
For the Jury Award, the Fira de Barcelona for their Near Field Communication Badge concept:

This innovation was the development and introduction of an NFC badge for registration and access control as an enhanced badge-based service to customers and exhibitors. Available on the attendees and exhibitors’ mobile devices, it enables the virtual badge to communicate with the access control readers while improving the customer care multi-mobile platform, working with Android, Windows Phone and Blackberry devices.

For the Delegates Choice Award: Massachusetts Convention Center Authority, Boston for their Event Management System with Mobile Interface:

Here the concept was the development and implementation of an all-encompassing event management system interfacing with a mobile ecosystem targeted at enabling access to real time information by service delivery staff as well as external service partners and clients. The process was driven by internal stakeholder teams in combination with service provider focus groups.

The two winners illustrate well the growing role of mobile technology in streamlining the interface between organizers and delegates in delivering information and services – a demand that will be doing nothing but growing in future years. By addressing these opportunities now – and sharing the concepts with other members – our 2013 winners are helping set the stage for a more productive and efficient event experience.

CTICC Awarded AIPC “Gold” Level Quality Standards Accreditation

Our AIPC 2013 Annual Conference hosts the Cape Town International Convention Centre welcomed guests to a facility that had just been audited for AIPC Quality Standards and been awarded the “Gold” level of accreditation. Communiqué spoke with CTICC CEO Rashid Toefy in Cape Town;

What made you decide to pursue AIPC Quality Standards now?

With CTICC playing host to the 2013 Annual Conference and 55th General Assembly, we felt that we were ready to take the next step and join the elite group of convention centres, who have achieved their gold status in operational excellence. The centre has set itself the goal of being one of the world’s leading long haul convention centre’s by 2020 and through pursuing the AIPC Quality Standards certification, I believe we have moved one step closer to making that goal a reality.

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CTICC Awarded AIPC “Gold” Level Quality Standards Accreditation

As an AIPC Member, we also felt that we needed to set the bar for Africa. We are proud to be the first convention centre on the African continent to be awarded Gold status and to join the ranks of some of the world’s leading convention centres.

On reflection, how challenging did you find the process?

The CTICC is continually setting the benchmark in terms of international standards of best practice. The centre's operations have already been certified according to the ISO Standards 14001 (Environmental Management), 18001 (Occupational Health and Safety) and 9001 (Quality Management). Due to the fact that the centre already has these ISO's in place, the accreditation process was seamless. Our staff were familiar with the stringent auditing procedures and measures and were able to comply and meet all requirements. Having said that, achieving the certification required a concerted team effort by all the operational departments to integrate the various processes and procedures. Under the expert guidance and leadership of Aage Hansen, General Manager for Operations, the CTICC was able to ensure that its services and processes met all the stringent requirements to achieve the AIPC Gold status.

Was it worth it? What other benefits did you see (or do you see coming)?

One of the key benefits was that it gave the centre an opportunity to review its integrated management systems from a different perspective. This allowed the centre to further improve and enhance its business processes and services in order to increase its value proposition to its clients. In addition, achieving this accreditation advances the centre's goal to be one of the world’s leading long haul convention centres – and as well as being a further endorsement to the centre's commitment to world class service and operational standards, I believe that having this certification will give the centre a competitive advantage.

What will you do with the accreditation now?

Cape Town is a globally competitive meetings and events destination and is continually leading the way. Achieving the AIPC qualification significantly raises the bar in terms of international standards of best practice and the CTICC will continue to use its qualification as a platform to continually enhance the way it operates and does business and to monitor progress in this regard. By attaining this certification the centre has also paved the way for other venues on the African continent to follow suit and collectively raise the stature of Africa as a leading meetings and events destination.
AIPC Academy 2014 Breaks New Ground with an “Issues Based” Curriculum

After a highly successful 9 years and well over 200 graduates the AIPC Academy Professional Development Program will be evolving further in the 2014 edition into a program and content based on directly addressing the key management issues of today as identified through AIPC and related industry research.

Program content will still address the full spectrum of convention centre management responsibilities – thus continuing to fulfill the original Academy mandate of providing a broad-based understanding of the range of functions required for a successful centre operation – but will be applied in a way that encourages and supports a focus on the most immediate challenges and opportunities facing managers.

Leading issues will be those not only relating to operational and marketing issues but also the questions of reporting, managing standards, developing leadership and structure and adapting the facility and service product to the new demands of the market. Along with a core faculty based on AIPC member professionals, the Academy will be drawing in research, market measurement, problem-solving and leadership development expertise from a range of disciplines outside of the industry in order to provide the best-rounded content in its history.

One immediate outcome of this new approach is that it lends itself well to returning participants who may have experienced it in the past but will find a significant change in content and approach given the new emphasis on current industry issues. In this respect, the Academy will be following the successful lead of the AIPC Sales and Marketing and Facility Operations Summits, which have evolved annually to focus as specifically as possible on evolving conditions and challenges.

“The AIPC Academy has been one of our association’s greatest success stories, and this shift of emphasis is intended to make sure it stays on the sharp edge of what will deliver the most value to both participants and their respective organizations” says AIPC President Geoff Donaghy. “Now is the time for previous participants in the Academy to return and bring with them their accumulated knowledge and expertise in the kinds of exchanges this new format will facilitate. The program we have adopted will lend itself particularly well to repeat attendance, which is something many former participants have been asking for, as it allows them to both further update their own knowledge and networks while making their own contributions to the evolving content.”

As with all previous editions of the AIPC Academy, enrollment is limited so centre managers are encouraged to contact the AIPC Secretariat and ensure their organization has a place booked in the 2014 program.

The AIPC / Ipsos Economic Impact Tool: Open for Business!

With the recent progress report presentation at the AIPC Annual Conference program completed and the revised program guidebook scheduled to be available in September, the AIPC / Ipsos Economic Impact Measurement Model has passed the pilot testing stage and is ready for adoption by AIPC member centres.

The model and accompanying ‘tool’ were created through a partnership between AIPC and the global market research company Ipsos as a way of creating a consistent, affordable model for this all-important calculation that had the added credibility of a major ‘name’. According to AIPC surveys, economic impact is the second most important performance measure (after financial performance) in the world, and as the latter becomes more challenging to achieve, a solid estimate of the economic impacts created in the host community (not to mention to the benefit of government owners!) has become even more important.

The model, and the pilot testing carried out to date, have accommodated a variety of approaches ranging from situations in which the centre carried out all delegate surveys themselves, using their own resources, according to a statistically – valid formula as verified by Ipsos to those where the entire process was outsourced, depending on the resources available to the centre. In all cases, the system has proven reliable and achievable, resulting in the confidence that it will work under any set of circumstances.

Centres that wish to avail themselves of the model and the investment made by AIPC in its development should have a look at the relevant section at www.aipc.org and then consult with the AIPC Secretariat if they wish to proceed. AIPC will continue to fund the basic support required to enable members to access and deploy the model in their centres and then have the option of accessing additional levels of service from Ipsos if their circumstances require this. In either event, the resulting calculation will deliver credible results that are consistent with the best principles for such estimations.
Three Projects Illustrate Diverse Gala Technology Benefits

**Gala Moving Floor System highlights Edinburgh’s EICC expansion**

May 2013 saw the opening of the highly flexible and beautifully designed Lennox Suite at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre, which offers complete flexibility in a 1,600m² multi-purpose hall with unique flexible flooring system supported by over 200 stainless steel Spiralift columns. This enables rapid and automatic transformation, using a hand held operator’s control station, into many configurations ranging from raked auditorium, flat floor banquet hall, tiered banquet, catwalk, center–stage arena and even division into three separate rooms. “Almost anything is possible”, says EICC CEO Hans H. Rissman.

Gala Systems initially started working with CEO Hans H. Rissmann and the EICC team in 2002 to develop the multipurpose venue. Along with the moving floor system there has been a significant investment in audio-visual technology including a cutting-edge lighting gantry and presentation equipment which allows various different stage lighting positions throughout the multiuse facility and several stages and events running concurrently within the Suite.

**Gala’s Automated Venue System at the MCEC running successfully since 2009**

The Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) Plenary Hall Gala Venue System has been running since 2009, allowing for flexible arrangement of the seating and flooring into a wide variety of configurations without any manual handling. Approximately 1,600 seats can be automatically reconfigured in less than an hour. Forty two independent seating rows can be raised, lowered, and set to a fixed elevation in tiered or flat floors with many combinations in between. There are four or five transformations per week, and both operators and the marketing team are pleased with the number of transformations and the versatility and speed of concurrent and consecutive events.

**Gala Automated Venue System at The Swiss Tech Convention Center opens in May 2014**

Scheduled to open in May 2014, The Swiss Tech Convention Center is located on the campus of the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne at Ecublens. Primarily dedicated to hosting scientific and academic events the Center has a total capacity of 3,000 attendees: a 2,205-seat conference room with a 795-seat balcony that can be separated by up to three movable walls. Equipped with the latest in Gala Venue reconfiguration technology, The Swiss Tech Convention Center can be automatically reconfigured from a full conference auditorium to a 1/2 capacity seminar room to an exhibition hall or a banquet room (flat floor configuration) in about 15 minutes; each seat is also fitted with a keypad system and power plug.

The MCEC Plenary, EICC Lennox Suite and STCC Venue will be icons of flexible transformable auditoriums that will lead the development of future conference centers for many years.