

**ICCA PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE: 2ND NOVEMBER 2015
BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA**

Edit Thursday, 22nd October 2015

Good Morning ICCA Members and Friends,

DIGNATORIES TO BE INCLUDED HERE

ICCA Past Presidents and Immediate Past President

ICCA Board members and chapter chairpersons;

ICCA Local Host Committee Chairperson Mariano Castex and Committee members;

It is indeed my great honour and privilege as the ICCA President to officiate the opening of our 54th Annual Congress here in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This however is not the first time that our members have gathered on the South American continent.

In November of 1968, 1975 and 1996 members met in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Montevideo, Uruguay played host to the ICCA congress in 2005. More recently in 2012 we met in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

At the ICCA Board meeting in Frankfurt in May **2012** the hosting of this year's conference was awarded to the Argentinian bid committee members. Our thanks and appreciation goes to the LHC Chairperson, Mariano Castex, ICCA board member Pablo Sismanian, Mercedes Lanzani and the entire committee and all ICCA members from the region for their hard work, passion and dedication to ensuring that all arrangements for the conference are in place for what promises to be yet another memorable ICCA.

Will compile something about the Rugby World Cup dependant on outcome - humorous

The ICCA board and our members whom all are actively involved in the association meetings and conference sector of our market know and appreciate that selecting a destination is not only about airlift accessibility, appropriate conference and accommodation infrastructure, health and safety, hospitality service delivery, good food and social tours. Yes off course these are the nuts and bolts of our business - the measurable aspects. But to understand our business model that of association meetings and conferences, one has to see the bigger picture and the real value that is often not measurable or immediately tangible.

At the Joint Meetings Industry Council Meeting [JMIC] in May in Paris this year, industry association leaders met for two days to agree on what would be the best approach to measure the true value of meetings. Extracts from the conclusions are:

- That the measures that best reflect the benefits associated with meetings conventions and exhibitions are those that capture their business, academic, professional and economic development benefits in addition to just their economic impacts;
- Secondly - That such benefits are more challenging to quantify as they don't always lend themselves to direct measurement and may involve long term, often complex outcomes;
- Lastly - That well documented case studies or "compelling stories" that illustrate the key values are an equally or even more effective way to illustrate and communicate overall value principles;

It is imperative that ICCA members, their governments and associations start appreciating that meetings and conferences are part and parcel of the knowledge economy.

To me it is therefore fitting that at this time in our history we are meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Historically, Buenos Aires has been known as Argentina's main venue for liberal thinking, free-trade and new ideas. Argentina has a colourful, interesting and challenging history of a dynamic people struggling to ensure democracy, economic stability and religious freedom.

With many public universities in Argentina, as well as a number of private universities education is given the importance it deserves. The University of Buenos Aires, one of the top learning institutions in South America, has produced five Nobel Prize winners.

The current socio-economic geo-political challenges that the world faces and the threat of a recession is a matter that cannot be disregarded.

The International Monetary Fund defines a global recession as "a decline in annual per-capita real World GDP, backed up by a decline or worsening of one or more of the seven other global macroeconomic indicators: Industrial production, trade, capital flows, oil consumption, unemployment rate, per-capita investment, and per-capita consumption.

According to this definition, since World War II there were only four global recessions (in 1975, 1982, 1991 and 2009), all of them only lasting a year, I hope that we will avoid another such recession.

Syria's civil war is the worst humanitarian disaster of our time. The number of innocent civilians suffering and the increasingly dire impact on neighbouring countries can seem too overwhelming to understand.

The migration of people into the European Union cannot be ignored and will have a direct impact on our business of managing and hosting meetings now and in the future. There are a number of meetings that have been convened and are planned between governments, humanitarian agencies and NGO's to address the challenges faced and we must urge the leaders and experts to find solutions in the hope that the many lives lost and suffering injured will not be in vain. Our role as ICCA members is to provide the appropriate environment and support such meetings as best we can to make our contribution to such solutions.

In the world we live in today there are many challenges we face personally and collectively, but to me there are two significant issues that cannot be ignored that of Climate Change and Global Warming. Secondly the constant threat of Terrorism in the so called name of religion.

On the matter of Climate Change I would like to acknowledge and congratulate our ICCA members for the number of positive initiatives that have been introduced into making meetings as carbon neutral as possible, using local products and services, saving energy and introducing creative approaches towards mitigation of global warming. But we all appreciate that more can still be done and we will strive towards improving the measures already in place at every opportunity

Many meetings and discussions have been held about the affect and impact of Climate change. However these meetings must have clear outcomes and give direction to governments and large industry in order to have the desired change that is necessary. No longer can we ignore or question the reality of food shortages, poverty and extreme weather conditions causing havoc around the world.

With the ICCA Head Office in Amsterdam it seems fitting to mention that Queen Maxima of the Netherlands was born in this beautiful city of Buenos Aires. But perhaps to me what is even more poignant is that Buenos Aires is the birthplace of the current Catholic pope, Pope Francis. With the Popes recent milestone, first ever visit to the United States of America and his address to the United States Congress sending a very strong message to us all. I would like to quote and extract from his Holiness speech:

“Our response must instead be one of hope and healing, of peace and justice. We are asked to summon the courage and the intelligence to resolve today’s many geopolitical and economic crises. Even in the developed world, the effects of unjust structures and actions are all too apparent. Our efforts must aim at restoring hope, righting wrongs, maintaining commitments, and thus promoting the well-being of individuals and of peoples. We must move forward together, as one, in a renewed spirit of fraternity and solidarity, cooperating generously for the common good.”

So I would like to remind you that you as ICCA members you have a responsibility to ensure that whilst attending this 54th conference you share ideas and knowledge in order to enable better meetings to be hosted around the world, that we believe will create the platform for deliberations that can have a positive outcome, be ethical and honest at all times, avoid corrupt practices and encourage greater transparency that will save lives with affordable and accessible health care , promote education, and make the world a better place for everyone.

Thank you

