

Dear Colleagues,

It has been a hectic year on many fronts and I am sure all of you are looking forward to the festive season ahead. It is hard to imagine that this year has gone by so quickly.

Stuttgart Meeting

Our 2010 Mid-Year Council Meeting was held over a cool weekend in October in the beautiful city of Stuttgart, Germany. A mid-year meeting in Europe allows us to support and encourage European membership and this year's meeting was held at an enticing and exciting location: the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart. The meetings were very enjoyable and productive and we had excellent attendance from many Council members. Besides the proper meetings, we also had an opportunity to tour the museum and admire the museum's fabulous architecture, as well as the striking designs of many legendary Mercedes-Benz cars. Most of us left the museum with bags full of toy cars and other delightful Mercedes-Benz souvenirs!

I am sure all the Council members will join me in thanking Gerhard Wegen, Axel Reeg and the German host committee for their meticulous planning of the Mid-Year Council Meeting and great social events, as well as the use of Gleiss Lutz's impressive offices for our Officers Meetings. We were extremely well looked after by the very helpful and organised staff at Gleiss Lutz and had a wonderful run of their modern and stunning office building. We also had excellent meals and wine at Gleiss Lutz, and our Council night out saw us enjoying even more good food and wine, as well as an engaging dinner talk followed by questions and answers by Judge Prof. Dr. Ferdinand Kirchhof, Vice-President of the (German) Federal Constitutional Court, Karlsruhe and Professor of Public and Tax Law, Tuebingen Law School.

APEC Collaboration

One of the extremely exciting developments that was reported at this year's Mid-Year Council Meeting is the proposed collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). APEC is a forum for 21 Pacific Rim economies to promote free trade and economic cooperation throughout the Asia-Pacific Region. APEC was established in 1989 and its members account for approximately 40% of the world's population, more than half of the world's GDP and some 44% of world trade. Annual APEC meetings are attended by heads of governments of APEC economies. The current APEC chair is from Japan, with its Executive Director from Malaysia; APEC is headquartered in Singapore.

Given the importance of APEC as an organisation, its geographic commonality with the IPBA and its focus on business and trade, the proposed collaboration holds much promise for the IPBA. A draft Friendship Agreement between the two organisations is currently being negotiated. This would be the first time in history of APEC that it is signing an agreement of this kind with another organisation.

Indeed, as you have seen from the special announcement made in December, collaboration is already underway with respect to the creation of an APEC-accessible databank of IPBA lawyers.

At our Mid-Year Council Meeting in Stuttgart, it was agreed that an Ad-Hoc Committee would be formed for collaboration activities with APEC. This Committee will be chaired by Nobuo Miyake, with Gerald Sumida, Shiro Kuniya and myself as members, and a joint session with both APEC and IPBA representatives is proposed for the Kyoto Conference.

As a follow-up to these discussions at our Mid-Year Council Meeting, in November, Nobuo Miyake, Shiro Kuniya and myself paid a visit to the Japanese Ambassador to APEC, His Excellency, Shigeru Nakamura in Tokyo.

Kyoto Conference

Preparations for our 21st Annual Meeting and Conference from 21-24 April 2011, in Kyoto, continue apace and it is expected that the detailed programme should be available soon. Key speakers for the Kyoto Conference include: His Excellency John Roos, the US Ambassador to Japan; Dr. Hiroshi Matsumoto, President of Kyoto University; Dr. Shinya Yamanaka, a brilliant Japanese physician and stem cell researcher; and Mr. Yasuchika Hasegawa, the President and CEO of Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Ltd. The social programme will include a dinner at the historic and beautiful Ninna-ji Temple, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. I urge you to register quickly to take advantage of the early bird rate. Online registrations are available at <http://www.ipba2011.org>.

Promotional Activities

To promote the Kyoto Conference and the IPBA, a series of visits, seminars and/or receptions are planned in numerous jurisdictions across the world. Please attend and support those that will be held at your home jurisdiction and bring as many IPBA members, as well as potential members to these events.

Scholarship Committee – Silent Auction

A silent auction is being planned at the Kyoto Conference to raise funds for IPBA Scholarships. Suggested donations can include the use of IPBA members' vacation homes around the world, bottles of wine, hotel stays, airline and travel packages, restaurant gift certificates, art, collectibles and antiques. This is a wonderful initiative and a very worthy cause and I appeal to you to please to donate generously.

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Please have a wonderful new year and I look forward to seeing you in Kyoto, in April 2011, if not before

Lee Suet-Fern
President