

President's Report—Flooding Doesn't Stop Us

Dear Colleagues,

The IPBA's 2008 Mid-Year Meeting was scheduled to be held in Hanoi, Vietnam, in early November. The meeting was to feature the traditional business meetings of the Council, Committee Chairs, Jurisdictional Council Members and Officers. In addition, we had organized a full day of educational programs to be presented in collaboration with the Vietnamese Lawyers Association, which had gone to great lengths to secure necessary governmental approvals and to make other necessary arrangements in support of our efforts. Participation by 100 or more lawyers from Vietnam was anticipated.

Unfortunately, a few days before the Mid-Year Meeting was to begin Hanoi was hit by flooding reported to be the worst in more than 30 years. After a hectic period of communications with our Mid-Year Meeting hotel as well as other observers in Hanoi, with our Secretary-General, Arthur Loke, skillfully coordinating a series of emergency conference telephone calls, it became apparent that we had no alternative but to cancel our Mid-Year Meeting. This was the first time it has ever been necessary to cancel a major IPBA event, and we thank our reliable Secretariat staff in Tokyo for their tireless efforts over a period of several days in November in corresponding with Council Members, cancelling hotel and other arrangements in Hanoi, and notifying speakers and others scheduled to participate in our Hanoi educational programs.

But in the IPBA we persevere, and so on November 25, Tokyo, Japan time, we held our first ever Council-wide telephone conference call, to attend to the business matters which would have been taken up in Hanoi. Several of these warrant special mention. The Council adopted an updated version of the IPBA manual, setting forth all IPBA policies and charter documentation, representing a major effort led by Jerry Sumida, our Deputy Secretary-General. The Council decided to hold our 2009 Mid-Year Meeting in Hong Kong, most likely during November, 2009. And the Council took a major step toward increasing the IPBA's "infrastructure" in the major Asian jurisdictions, by authorizing the establishment of "Leadership Committees" in all Asian jurisdictions represented on the Council by Jurisdictional Council Members, that is, jurisdictions having 25 or more IPBA members. These Leadership Committees will be chaired in each case by the Jurisdictional Council Member in question, and will include as well a small number, perhaps three to five, of additional members from that jurisdiction. It is hoped that in time these Leadership Committees will be the cornerstone of expanded IPBA activity in, and augmented membership from, these key jurisdictions.

As we head now into the second half of the 2008-09 IPBA year, it will be useful to note the IPBA programming offerings during this period. On February 10, 2009, our Women Business Lawyers Committee is holding a one-day program in New Delhi, India, discussing topics of specific interest to women lawyers, under the heading of Women Lawyers Conference: Encouraging Success and Maintaining Balance. This program, which will be held at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi, will focus on three primary areas of professional development for women: increasing and exercising influence inside and outside of a law firm, building and strengthening client relationships, and achieving and maintaining balance in one's work and personal life. This will be a unique opportunity for women lawyers throughout India to explore issues of personal importance to the development of their careers. For more information, see the conference website, www.womenlawyersconference2009.com.

March of 2009 will bring one of the highlights of the IPBA programming year, our traditional "Asia M&A Forum", organized in cooperation with the International Financial Law Review. The 2009 Asia M&A Forum, to be held in Hong Kong as in the past, will undoubtedly again draw keen interest, and participation, from throughout the Asia-Pacific region, and indeed elsewhere as well. And this IPBA year will conclude with the 2009 Annual Conference in Manila, where the Manila Host Committee, under the leadership of our President-elect, Rafael Morales, is in the process of organizing a truly outstanding Annual Conference.

In short, the IPBA continues its mission: to be the pre-eminent association of business lawyers in the Asia-Pacific region.

Gerold W. Libby
President