

The Secretary-General's Message

Dear IPBA Members, Colleagues and Friends:

We have just completed a successful IPBA Annual Conference and Meeting in Manila (April 29-May 2, 2009), which builds on significant and well-attended previous annual meetings in Los Angeles (2008) and Beijing (2007). Much of the success of these meetings and the concurrent strengthening of the IPBA organization is the result of the intensive strategic planning initiative that the IPBA started at its Bali meeting (2005) and culminated in its Sydney meeting (2006) with the adoption of the IPBA's Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan refocused our attention on the IPBA's unique mission; identified key areas that the IPBA should strengthen to enhance its capabilities to fulfil its mission, invigorate its membership, and nurture the special collegiality that has been an inherent core value of the IPBA; formulated specific actions to ensure the IPBA's continuing stature as the preeminent international association of business lawyers in and for the Asia-Pacific Region; and reaffirmed the IPBA's commitment to promote the rule of law in this Region.

The IPBA's continuing efforts to implement the Strategic Plan's recommendations have already shown tangible and visible accomplishments. These encompass: a strengthened IPBA committee structure, including the process of leadership succession and the greater integration of programming development; a more systematic approach to program planning for IPBA Annual Conferences, with closer coordination of the IPBA's practice area committees; a review of membership recruitment and retention initiatives; the publication of a comprehensive IPBA Manual as a ready resource for IPBA's leadership to strengthen the IPBA's organizational framework and operational processes; the development of new leadership support groups within both national jurisdictions and broader regions; the expansion of the IPBA's outreach efforts through what will be an enhanced set of website and publications initiatives; the integration of the IPBA scholarship program and the IPBA legal training and development program into the IPBA's formal committee structure to strengthen two important elements of IPBA's mission; and a host of other innovative and important developments. All of these offer expanding and exciting opportunities for IPBA members to contribute not only to specific IPBA programs and committees and groups but also to the larger legal profession within this Region.

These efforts provide substantial support to the IPBA's 2010 Annual Conference and Meeting to be held in Singapore on May 2-5, 2010. This event very likely will be the first large-scale meeting of lawyers in the Asia-Pacific Region to address the critically important issues of climate change, and for us in the context of "Climate Change and Legal Practice". The global discussions on climate change have generally centered on scientific findings and implications and the appropriate political and public policy responses. Yet, we know that climate change implications have now pervaded virtually all areas of business, land use, financing, commercial, energy, transportation, capital markets, insurance, construction and other areas of law and legal practice. The IPBA's 2010 meeting will focus, in a comprehensive and integrated way, on many of these issues within this Asia-Pacific Region. In this way, the IPBA will be making a very significant contribution to the public discussion of these issues in one of the world's most important regions, and with implications of global proportions.

The IPBA's founders in 1991 affirmed that the IPBA is an organization originating from within this Asia-Pacific Region and as such is committed to the continuing development of the legal profession, legal practice and the rule of law in this Region, with specific emphasis on business and commercial law and lawyers. Several years ago, the IPBA recognized that changing conditions worldwide had created the survival challenges facing all organizations -- whether public, private or not-for-profit -- from competition, scarce resources and irrelevance. The IPBA acted, looked into what could be its future, reaffirmed its original purposes, and responded with its Strategic Plan.

We are very pleased to report that not only is the IPBA affirmatively moving to meet these and future challenges, but, equally important, we are identifying new opportunities and new approaches that will enhance the value of the IPBA to our members and to our broader constituencies and communities within this Region. We are very confident that with the full support of all of our members, colleagues and friends, the IPBA will continue its important role as the preeminent international association of business lawyers in the Asia-Pacific Region. We look forward to the future, and welcome your continuing and expanded involvement with the IPBA and your suggestions and ideas for how the IPBA can be even more effective.

With all best wishes,

Gerald A. Sumida
Secretary-General