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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# Reflections on a Tough Year

Few of us will look back on 2009 with any real fondness, other than the fact that as it is drawing to an end, future prospects look better than anything we've seen to date. Economic recovery is underway in most parts of the world; the underlying strength of the international community has been demonstrated once more and our business has been shown to be very resilient in the face of huge pressures. Nevertheless, we continue to learn important lessons that we should reflect on as we prepare for the holiday season. Here are some more that occur to me:

**FIRST**, we now know what kinds of reactions we can expect from governments faced with an ugly recession – and the fact that few of these reactions will be positive. In fact, it was governments in most parts of the world that were first to impose restrictions on meetings and travel at a time when somebody had to be setting an example for others. This suggests that we will not likely be able to count on their support in the future either, which again has important implications for how we plan for future downturns. It also says that we haven't made much progress in terms of how they see our industry and the role it plays in essentially supporting their own policy objectives including the all-important area of economic development.

**SECOND**, we know better than ever where our vulnerabilities are; which business we can count on and which will react to a recession immediately. We can now also see which clients are the most stable and which will be immediately looking for concessions when things get challenging. As mentioned in previous issues of Communiqué, I think it can be agreed that association conventions have been a tower of strength relative to other business areas such as the corporate sector in that they had very few cancellations and maintained attendances in most areas far better than might have been expected – all points we might want to remember in our future dealings with them.



**"We have emerged from a period of challenge as an even stronger and more adaptable industry. And if that sounds like a holiday message, it probably is – because this is a holiday season we deserve more than most!"**

**THIRD**, we can see that many things we attributed to recessionary impacts were simply a product of how the industry is evolving and that, if anything, the recession may have simply accelerated the rate of change rather than taking us in an entirely new direction. In fact, change appears to be one of the few constants today, and something we need to get used to. In many respects there will be no going back to the way things were before the recession as the industry has just moved on, and new efficiencies and business methods that emerged during the tougher times will simply be adopted as a new way of doing things.

These are all valuable insights – but none is better than the realization that once again, we have emerged from a period of challenge as an even stronger and more adaptable industry. And if that sounds like a holiday message, it probably is – because this is a holiday season we deserve more than most!

# Gold Coast Centre Latest to Qualify for AIPC Quality Standards

**Susan Magi, Business Development Manager at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre, explains why achieving AIPC Quality Standards certification was a priority;**

**Communiqué | Why did you decide to pursue AIPC Quality Standards qualification?**

We saw AIPC Quality Standards as the only industry program of such a high level for centres that would deliver international recognition.

**Communiqué | How challenging was the process for your staff?**

The internal audit process was very rewarding and gave opportunity to acknowledge team members for doing a great job over the past five years of operation. The process was time consuming but it was rewarding to discover we had so many of the procedures in place. It also provided other benefits, including the opportunity to reflect on areas we have covered well and also opportunities to discuss areas where we would like to improve on, bringing together at times departments that don't on a daily basis generally sit down together. Team work and networking with each other has probably been one of the unexpected highlights of the process!

**Communiqué | What benefits do you think your "accreditation" will provide?**

The benefits we see include the upgrading of various operational procedures which will further benefit staff and clients alike. In addition, it will give us a level of international recognition and status



which will be important, particularly when preparing bid documents, given that we are so far away from where many of our delegates come from. At the same time, it will enable us to solidify and recognize practices where we sit above the average benchmarks and have done so since the centre opened five years ago.

**Communiqué | How do you intend to use your new qualification going forward?**

We will issue a media release to our comprehensive database, and include the Quality Standards logo on all e-material including the launch next month of our new website and the regular e-cards we send to clients both locally and on a national basis. Overall, we are proud to join the prestigious group of convention centres around the world who have achieved AIPC Quality Standards certification, and it is great for our centre to be formally recognised by the AIPC for delivering excellence in the arena of convention centre management. The result provides us with a great marketable opportunity, and we look forward to striving towards the next level of achievement.



**Barcelona International Convention Centre (CCIB)**  
Marc Rodríguez has been appointed as General Manager

**World Trade and Convention Centre, Halifax**  
Scott Ferguson has been appointed President & CEO, Trade centre Limited

**Palacio de Congresos de Madrid**  
Salvador Pernas Riaño has been appointed Director

**Parc Chanot - Marseille Congrès & Expositions**  
Christophe Gabreau has been appointed Directeur Général adjoint

**Palais des Congrès de Montréal**  
Marc Tremblay has been appointed President and CEO

**Kenyatta International Conference Centre, Nairobi**  
Betty Makawiti has been appointed Managing Director

**Perth Convention Exhibition Centre**  
Dean Lee has been appointed General Manager

**Phoenix Convention Center**  
John Chan has been appointed Director

**Stockholm City Conference Centre**  
Monika Malmén has been appointed CEO

**Zagreb Fair Congress Center**  
Mirela Bartolec has been appointed Director General of the Zagreb Fair



# Vanessa Cotton

## on EIBTM and Beyond



As most *Communiqué* readers know, there have been some changes at EIBTM, with Vanessa Cotton taking over the position of Chair of the Meetings and Incentive Events. We review her perspectives on where the Reed shows are going and, in particular, the role that the new AIBTM to take place in Baltimore in 2011 will play in their development.

**Communiqué | What impacts have you seen in the industry over the past year?**

The major impact has been a more cautious look at the where, how and when of a meeting. Meetings are still taking place but there is a much tighter approach to budgets and justifying return on investment.

**Communiqué | What do you think the industry outlook is for 2010?**

The exhibition business is a resilient one but also one of great opportunities. What has been particularly pleasing to report is that figures for GIBTM in Abu Dhabi, UAE; AIME 2009 in Melbourne, Australia and CIBTM in Beijing, China, on the back of record EIBTM 2008 numbers, show the importance the industry is placing on RTE events and their brand values of best business, best professional education, best networking opportunities and Hosted Buyer Programs, delivering quality business enquiries and return on investment. These results highlight the industry's recognition of all our international events as places to conduct business, meet new buyers, achieve objectives and drive return. The events are a testament to the need and importance of bringing buyers and sellers face to face to do business. Despite a tough 2009, I believe we can look forward to 2010 with confidence. Meetings, events, conferences and incentives are still taking place all over the world; what is more

important than ever to clients everywhere is that their events are smartly priced, innovative and deliver first class ROI.

**Communiqué | Has the role of a trade show like EIBTM changed as a result?**

The key to success is that as event organizers, we provide the right environment and forum for suppliers and buyers to come together to do business, to expand their industry knowledge and to network. We must ensure that all participants attending our events feel that they are achieving return on investment. Research has shown that organizations choosing to maintain or increase their marketing budgets stay ahead of the game and thrive, while those who cut budgets will have to face the consequences of doing so.

**Communiqué | How do you intend to evolve your shows in the next few years?**

I would like to take all the shows in the portfolio to a new level, making them even more relevant to the people and organizations that exhibit at and visit them. This will include some exciting new initiatives and an innovative development of the shows' educational content, including those designed specifically to attract Generation Y exhibitors and buyers.

**Communiqué | Will you be taking a different approach to AIBTM from other Reed events? If so, in what ways?**

Our aim is to establish AIBTM as the industry's

major annual event in the US by responding to what our research shows is wanted, namely the best business and networking opportunities along with the best professional education. It is very much a tailor-made event targeted at the Americas – including the US, Latin America, South America, Canada and the Caribbean – as well as countries further afield. It is not just a replica of other RTE established shows, but has been created to suit the needs of the Americas market.

AIBTM is a joint venture with Reed US, the largest exhibition organizer in the US, so from the outset the event has a 300 strong US team to access, and event headquarters and suppliers in place ready to establish the exhibition. We are looking to attract meeting planners with a wide range of domestic and/or international interests. Those with high value and/or international events will be accredited as VIP or Hosted Buyers and we are expecting a total of 500 in this category – of which 100 will come from outside America. In addition, we expect a total of 2,000 trade visitors, which will be made up largely of US based meeting planners with domestic, interstate business. From an exhibitor perspective, we aim to attract 325 exhibitors, including sharers, with a ratio of 50% domestic and 50% international.

In particular we have recognized the importance of holding an event on the East coast of US. There are

over 10,000 meeting planners operating within a three-hour train journey of Baltimore alone. With time out of the office so precious and return on investment playing such an important role in deciding what events to attend, Baltimore as host city provides us with the location that best suits the requirements of the meetings industry.

**Communiqué | What roles do you think your shows can / should be taking in overall industry advancement?**

Our international portfolio of events will continue to offer best business and networking opportunities, best professional education and a Hosted Buyer program that ensures that key decision makers are matched with exhibitors in an environment conducive to business. Our role is to act as a business catalyst, and to have our fingers on the pulse of an industry that is continually changing and developing.

**Communiqué | What is the future of trade shows in general, given the many competing forms of marketing?**

So long as trade shows continue to provide the meetings industry with an environment delivering business, education and networking opportunities and a good return on investment then they will continue to be seen as a major force in businesses' marketing strategies.

# The AIPC Academy

## As Seen by our Graduates!



The AIPC Academy is about to enter its fourth successful year as AIPC's principle professional development initiative for centre managers, and in each year it has evolved forward with the benefit of the experiences and insights of participants. As we approach the 2010 edition of the Academy, here are some of the perspectives offered by those who participated this year;



**Communiqué** | *What were your expectations in coming to the Academy?*

"To have a deeper overview of the different models worldwide in the management of convention centres, to share experiences and challenges with industry colleagues and to get new ideas to implement in my venue."

M<sup>a</sup> del Mar Carnero Rollán  
Conference Area Director,  
Seville Conference and  
Exhibition Centre – FIBES

"I had no specific expectations but came away with a very positive attitude and a willingness to implement many of the ideas learnt on the course. I was surprised and very happy to meet colleagues from all over the world who worked in similar venues."

Don Hurley  
Operations Manager,  
Brighton Centre

"As I was aspiring to be the next operations head for the Convention Centre I was expecting to learn all the aspects of operations beyond the Food & Beverage area where I currently work"

Prashanth Kuchimanchi  
Manager Convention  
Operations, Hyderabad  
International Convention  
Centre

"I came in order to broaden my knowledge of the Industry, through the faculty panel and other colleagues on the course, and to build networks with similar colleagues in the industry"

Angela Foley  
Commercial Executive,  
Irish International Convention  
& Exhibition Centre, Dublin

"When I was advised I could attend the course, I was looking forward to starting this new experience, as it could give a "key way" to better understand and upgrade my staff's industry knowledge. I also hoped that the Academy would support my professional development goals in a positive way in the management plans for the company I work with."

Barbara Beretta  
Fiera Milano Congressi S.p.a.

**Communiqué** | *Did you find the content worthwhile? How did it compare with other professional development activities you have participated in?*

MdMC | Absolutely. It was very useful as the Academy is focused mainly on the convention centre concerns; it is a tailor-made program.

DH | It is a very good interactive course. The content was well designed and delivered with a lot of thought into the development of the participants. Having done a number of courses in the past I would rate this as the best all round course for any venue. It offers so much more.

PK | The content was extremely handy and useful as I am trying to implement some of the learning's and have been quite successful. The program was very industry specific and hence had my full attention to the program.

AF | Yes, I felt that content was structured well, and included all the fundamental aspects of managing a convention centre. I particularly liked the group activities and class discussions, they were very beneficial as the same issues come up in all centre's across the world. Compared with other programs, it had a lot more group interaction, the faculty panel really welcoming and open to discussions with the class even outside course time.

BB | Absolutely, the entire program had analyzed many aspects: human resources, industry and economic processes, client relations and operational systems. In particular all topics provided broad overviews. The Faculty engaged us in discussions to create a sort of general framework of the key challenges of congress centres we represented. I found it very interesting and stimulating that each lesson covered with practical application of the subject content, and we always interacted with groups and created meaningfully and relevant discussions. I think this experience had been unique, because we could understand

all aspects of Congress Centre Management, always contributing to the lessons with our own experience.

**Communiqué** | *Did you find the interactions with other attendees of value?*

MdMC | Yes. It is one of the better things you have as the group is small and it lets you interact more easily

DH | This was very useful and achieved a much better understanding of how different venues and people work.

PK | I still find it of great value as we continue to share our knowledge and experiences.

AF | Definitely, I learned a lot from chatting to the other attendees and listening to how their centre's run and the issues they face day to day.....

BB | Yes, the opportunity to interact with other colleagues was for me a way to be part of an international group of industry representatives, building a management network and put these aspects into the daily working scheduling process.

All respondents stated that they would recommend attendance at the Academy to their colleagues, for both educational and professional advancement reasons, and most said they had already done so. Overall, it was the specific nature of the experience and the depth of content that impressed participants the most.

The 2010 AIPC Academy takes place in  
**Brussels February 7-12**

Details are available through the AIPC Secretariat office.



## AIPFC's Second Operations Summit Continues the Good Work

Following on the inaugural AIPFC Facility Operations Summit in 2008, this year's edition picked up on many of the issues identified last year as well as adding new topics that reflected the challenges which emerged during a year of economic concerns and, for many, reduced revenues.

Taking place at both the Palau de Congressos de Catalunya and the Fira Gran Via, with a visit to the Barcelona International Convention Centre (CCIB), the event combined site visits and presentations with workshops that collectively explored a wide range of key operational issues. Included in the program were;

- > A session on the implications of current industry trends for centre operations, along with an update of issues that participating centres saw for their own facilities;
- > A review of operating standards and best practices in use today, along with an up-to-date assessment of their importance and application in this rapidly evolving area, and including a practical guide to AIPFC Quality Standards;
- > A session on how safety management systems deliver value for money for clients and venues entitled Stress and Safety: Keeping Safety Simple;
- > A workshop on case studies in operational and event management issues in which case problems were addressed by working groups who prepared solutions for the case problem as assigned;

- > A review of current trends in sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR);
- > A session entitled: The Sales / Operations Interface: Do They Communicate? which was a follow up to one of our more lively discussions of last year in which the all-important hand-over process was discussed at length;
- > A presentation and workshop on "Meetings Technology in Troubled Times: How to Do More with Less" which addressed the need to identify and acquire the right resources in these financially challenging times.

This comprehensive program concluded with a "town hall" session on key operations challenges and solutions and a debrief and program evaluation intended to help shape next year's program along with a site visit of the Gran Via venue in the midst of EIBTM, one of the largest and most complex events in our industry.

Our thanks go to EIBTM for their generous support in providing facilities and hospitality for this event and contributing as well their insights as a major show producer with broad experience in many of the areas covered by the agenda.

# AIPFC 2010

## Liverpool July 3-7



## Get ready for Liverpool 2010!

AIPFC will be observing the first decade of the century at our 2010 Annual Conference in Liverpool, UK. Mark the dates July 3-7 in your calendar now and stay tuned for more program details early in the new year!

# The Politician's Forum

## An Important Opportunity to Connect with our Governments



**As of the past year, AIPC has taken a more prominent position in the organization and content of the Politician's Forum, an event that has been staged as part of the IMEX trade show in Frankfurt since its inception.**

The reason is simple: the vast majority of centres are owned by some level of government and thus more vulnerable to government decisions and attitudes than virtually any other segment of the industry and the Forum is one of the only vehicles we have to advance political understanding and support. By taking advantage of the Forum, AIPC members can advance their own agendas by providing your local government elected officials with the chance to educate themselves in the industry, exchange views with others in the global industry and achieve some prominence for themselves in a global forum.

The program for the Politician's Forum program is designed to enable participants to get a complete overview of the global industry and their place in it as well as participate in high level discussions about where the industry is going and how they can help maximize the benefits they receive. Key components include the Politician's orientation, which as the first session they attend is designed to give them a broad and current overview of the industry; a show tour, where they can experience the show and gain a better appreciation of the scale and nature of the competition; the Forum itself, where the program consists of current perspectives by key industry figures and government representatives followed by an open discussion of issues and opportunities in today's industry.

A reception and dinner follow where attendees are able to continue discussions and exchange views with each other and the event organizers. As an AIPC participating centre, you are of course able to join with your government guest in all aspects of the program and provide a further orientation of your own.

Centres who have brought local politicians to the Forum and related activities have uniformly found benefits in the form of a better understanding of the industry, an appreciation of the challenges and opportunities faced by centres and an improved relationship with government owners. The direct benefits of the Forum can be enhanced further by scheduling time for meetings with key clients, many of whom will also be at the show, or with colleagues from other centres.

In deciding who would be best to approach, you will want to assess which of your governmental leaders are most likely to benefit from this opportunity as well as where you and your facility would most benefit from improved local government awareness and understanding of the industry.

In deciding who to approach and what kinds of arguments would be most likely to convince them to participate, you may wish to remind them that as major investors in the industry, governments have a responsibility to understand at least

the basics of how it works, and the Forum is a very efficient and effective way to get this kind of an overview. Conventions and exhibitions are also ideal vehicles for governments to address their broader public policy agendas in key areas such as economic development, health, education, resource development and social / cultural programming. Finally, politicians who choose to attend can help raise the profile of their respective centres and destinations in the global industry, which is a major marketing benefit that will support their local industry.

Participating politicians will be given free access to all show functions as well as the activities associated specifically with the Forum. They will also be given assistance with flights and accommodation.

Politicians typically have long lead times to their calendar due to many commitments, the need to prepare justification and competing priorities, so you can't start too soon to encourage them to attend. AIPC staff can help support your efforts in many ways, including liaison with IMEX, organizing a place on the program for politicians who wish to speak and even helping provide justification for them to attend. Contact the AIPC Secretariat office for further details.

# AIPC WELCOMES NEW MEMBER CENTRES

## BORNEO CONVENTION CENTRE KUCHING

BCCK, the first purpose built convention centre on the mythical island of Borneo, opened for business in October 2009 and is situated just 20 minutes from the Kuching International Airport and 15 minutes from the city centre. It's organic shape was inspired by that of the "Ririg", a wild flowering plant which is widely used in the day to day activities of the indigenous Dayaks of Borneo.

The BCCK can accommodate up to 5000 delegates theatre style or 2,070 for a banquet. The 2,793 sqm pillar free Great Hall, which also features a 10m high ceiling, can be divided into four soundproofed halls for segregated events, without compromising on comfort

and ambience. Also available on the same level and surrounding the Great Hall, are 14 breakout rooms for 40-500 delegates. The facilities are further complimented by extensive reception and registration foyers and a 200 seat restaurant with stunning views over the Sungai Sarawak River and the adjoining rainforest.

Says Chief Executive Trevor McCartney **"The design of BCCK's building signifies our commitment to promote environmental conservation, recycling and better waste management through our operating policies. As Borneo is one of the most alluring islands in the world we want to bring the world to BCCK while growing according**



**Trevor McCartney**  
Chief Executive



**to AIPC's quality standards and ultimately becoming the world-class convention centre that organizers can rely on for all-round efficiency."**

## ALFÂNDEGA CONGRESS CENTRE, PORTO

The Alfândega Congress Centre is one of the largest congress centres of Portugal. Located in Porto's historical centre on the Douro River, the scale and singular architecture of the building restored by architect Eduardo Souto Moura position the congress centre as a unique venue for business, scientific, cultural and commercial events.

The congress centre offers a wide range of services at the highest standards. It's flexible spaces include 22 multifunctional rooms (3 of which equipped with translation booths), total Wi-Fi coverage and parking for 400 cars. The centre shares the building with the

Transport and Communication Museum, which provides a cultural feeling in all events. With a totally renovated airport and new railroad and road systems, Porto is now becoming the new centre between America and Europe, and a privileged place to hold national and international events.

Says António Gouveia Santos, General Director **"One of the main goals of Alfândega Congress Centre is to establish itself in the international market of event industry and business tourism. We are certain the membership with AIPC is an added value in this matter, enabling us to broaden and**



**António Gouveia Santos**  
General Director



**enrich our contacts and creating an excellent opportunity to improve our knowledge, promote our venue and establish networking with the major international membership".**

## PALACONGRESSI DI RIMINI

Great flexibility including modular conference and expo areas, the ability to host numerous events simultaneously, extensive underground parking and care for the environment are the key features of Rimini's new conference centre, which may be Italy's largest once finished. Characterized by two main sections connected by an impressive system of foyers and galleries, the centre offers three entrances and a total usable area of 29,000 square meters with 42 rooms and a total seating capacity of 9,300. The first section has a 1,600 seat shell-shaped amphitheatre, which can be divided into two 800-seat rooms and is 23 meters high. The second is 17 meters high and includes a 4,700 seat main hall.

The new Palacongressi di Rimini is actively taking up the challenges of sustainable

development from the design of advanced eco-friendly features, to the implementation of energy saving procedures. Designed by architect Volkwin Marg, the centre is part of an important landscape upgrading project which also features a complete refurbishing of an urban park and the creation of an Auditorium for musical performances.

Director Stefania Agostini says, **"Rimini's new Palacongressi has the power to attract international events that will place Rimini among the most important destinations on the international market. At the same time it will foster progress and cultural growth in our city which will be ready to seize the opportunities offered by the new centre. Our decision to join the AIPC is to be viewed within this perspective**



**Stefania Agostini**  
Director



**of challenge and globalization, and we are confident the AIPC can provide us with constantly updated know-how so we can come up with the best possible response to market needs".**

# Business Tourism- the India way



**Philip Logan** | General Manager  
Hyderabad International Convention Centre

Five years ago, India's tourism business conjured up imagery of the Taj Mahal, royal palaces turned into hotel stays and exotic colours of the country – a truly different holiday. The "Incredible India" campaign was instrumental in spreading the message far and out that India was opening her doors to new guests and that "Athithi Devo Bhavo" – the guest is GOD!!

Now things have changed, driven by a whole new level of business activity that is in turn stimulating both the convention business and the creation of highly competitive convention centres.

At the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank in May 2006 – the first event to be held at the Hyderabad International Convention Centre – delegates including 68 finance ministers of the Asian region and the bankers of the world heard from P Chidambaram, who was the Indian finance minister at the time, "Why the Elephant is dancing". His message was about the thrust on the development of business in India and the way ahead for the Indian economy.

With a centre that was truly world class, India was ready to do business with the world, and eager to bid for world congresses. The challenge was a lack of expertise and know-how, with few trained personnel in the meetings business and a lack of the world class city infrastructure needed to host large meetings. This was the first time that the city hotels were being told that cooperation was the way to win the business, and sometimes the sheer time lines of the event would have the meetings industry befuddled.

However, there were business opportunities galore. The FDI Confidence Report 2007 states that India is in the No 2 position globally as the most attractive destination for investment. Doing business in India has become the new mantra for many global corporations as a way of increasing networking opportunities and forging new business partnerships. In fact, the World Travel Tourism Competitiveness Report 2009 identifies India as the host for 33 international exhibitions and trade fairs.

At the same time, Indians are becoming members of trade bodies and associations to increase their business network, which means it now makes more sense for those associations to bring their meetings to India. There are benefits to organizers too, as a 15-17 % increase has been noticed in the registrations whenever a congress is being held in India.

At the Hyderabad International Convention Centre we have started work with local organizing committees for various associations to prepare bid documents for presentations and with state tourism authorities to facilitate the event. Training people in the meetings business is a big part of our agenda as more and more centres are coming up throughout the country and we need more trained people to run the business.

Now, the meetings industry in India is beginning to take off as our people learn, practice and perfect the art of welcoming the delegate who wants to attend his meeting and also go back with memories of fine Indian hospitality.



ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES PALAIS DE CONGRÈS  
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGRESS CENTRES  
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#### THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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[edgar.hirt@cch.de](mailto:edgar.hirt@cch.de)

VICE PRESIDENT | **Geoff Donaghy** | Cairns  
[gdonaghy@aegogden.com](mailto:gdonaghy@aegogden.com)

TREASURER | **Jonas Scharf** | Basel  
[jonas.scharf@congress.ch](mailto:jonas.scharf@congress.ch)

**Clare Amsel** | Athens  
[camsel@megaron.gr](mailto:camsel@megaron.gr)

**Marisa Marin** | Bilbao  
[mmarin@feriadebilbao.com](mailto:mmarin@feriadebilbao.com)

**Jacquie Rogers** | Liverpool  
[jacquie.rogers@accliverpool.com](mailto:jacquie.rogers@accliverpool.com)

**Carol Wallace** | San Diego  
[carol.wallace@visitsandiego.com](mailto:carol.wallace@visitsandiego.com)

#### SECRETARY GENERAL

**Marianne de Raay**  
[marianne.de.raay@aipc.org](mailto:marianne.de.raay@aipc.org)

Rue de l'Amazone 55, 1060 Brussels, Belgium  
PHONE +32 (0) 496 23 53 27  
FAX +32 (0) 2 534 63 38

#### EDITORIAL

**Rod Cameron**  
[criterion@axion.net](mailto:criterion@axion.net)

Vancouver, BC Canada  
PHONE +1-604-836-2123  
FAX +1-604-263-2173

#### AIPC CORPORATE PARTNERS 2009



QUINETTE GALLAY