



UIA
ASSOCIATIONS
ROUND TABLE

UIA Associations Round Table 2014

Wednesday 22 and Thursday 23 October 2014
Plaza Hotel, Seoul, South Korea

On 22 and 23 October a diverse group of 115 representatives of international associations and of city and national tourist authorities met together in Seoul, Korea for the 2nd UIA Associations Round Table in Asia to share experience and knowledge and to gain practical skills and tools.

Our hosts at the Korea Tourism Organization treated the participants royally from the first moment to the last, welcoming us all with a magnificent view of the city from the elegant and spacious Diamond Room on the 22nd floor of the Plaza Hotel.

Cyril Ritchie, Vice-President of the UIA and President of CoNGO - the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations, started the Round Table off by putting the role of associations worldwide in perspective with his inspiring opening keynote presentation on "What do international organizations contribute to society? What stops them from contributing? What will they contribute in the future?" He underlined the influence and impact associations – we! – have had in initiating and executing major international projects, and reminded us of the essential humanitarian values animating our work. Following Mr Ritchie's presentation we engaged in round table discussions on the questions: What are my organization's assets and strengths? What stops my organization from achieving more? Where will my organization be in five or in twenty years?

In the second session, Greta Kotler, Chief Global Development Officer of ASAE: The Center for Association Leadership, outlined recent research and practice on "Building Membership Value Through Connections and Engagement". This was followed by a question and answer session which, once again, illustrated how associations, however seemingly diverse, face similar challenges. It also showed the high level of experience and expertise in the room.

The first day ended in style with a gala evening at beautiful Samcheonggak, with traditional music, a wonderful eleven-course dinner, and continuing lively discussions around the tables.

On the second day of the Round Table three association representatives each told the story of a particular challenge. Steve Tunstall, General Secretary of PARIMA – the Pan-Asia Risk and Insurance Management Association, told us why and how he founded PARIMA. Henry Ta-Heng Huang, former Global Secretary of IVSA – the International Veterinary Students Association, spoke of the challenge of running an organization when the membership of the Board changes completely every year. Dr Han Moon Hee of the Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute explained the steps needed to bring a major international meeting to his country (IRPA15), where he found help, and what the most important factors were: according to Dr Han, professional help and a committee with passion are the keys. In small groups we explored these three challenges further and shared our experiences. In a second round of discussion three more topics were added, drawing on the challenges identified on the first day: membership growth, communicating with members and with funders, and international relations.

The Round Table closed with a passionate and motivating message from Jack Sim, Founder and Director of the World Toilet Organization. "Remember your mission", he advised us. "If you spend all your time looking for funds then what you are doing is looking for funds, not fulfilling your mission." He brought our thoughts back to the opening session, reminding us again of the influence and impact associations can have.

One of the participants wrote: "The event has given me many insights and directions as to what and how I should approach the things I'm facing now in my association." A most encouraging evaluation!