5th UIA Associations Round Table in Asia-Pacific

by Nancy Carfrae and Clara Fernández López

For 110 years the UIA has been working to promote and facilitate the work of international associations. Since 2007 the UIA Associations Round Tables held in Europe have given associations and opportunity to learn through networking and through practice. Since 2013 the UIA Associations Round Tables take place annually in Asia-Pacific as well, this year on September 21 and 22 in the beautiful city of Chiang Mai, Thailand.

78 participants from 18 countries – professional societies, service organizations, interest groups, charities, and all other types, and active in all fields of human endeavour – met in Hotel Le Méridien Chiang Mai.

During these two days of the Round Table Asia-Pacific delegates met, networked, enjoyed and learned together with other international association representatives. The participants shared experience and knowledge with colleagues from all over the world, profited from the training by senior association leaders, and gained practical skills and tools.

Cyril Ritchie, President of UIA, was keynote speaker with the thought-provoking topic “Is your association ‘political’?” A panel with all speakers, followed by a discussion with all delegates, gave insight into the current challenges international associations face.

Association leaders presented case studies and shared their experience in meeting challenges, such as increasing impact by using the power of technology (by Arundhuti Gupta from Mentor Together) or “Staying alive, with or without funding” by Margareth Sembering from the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia.

Participants much enjoyed the pros and cons of discussing the consequences of “Getting accredited by UN bodies” (presented by Cyril Ritchie), how to deal with thousands of volunteers around the world (by Ping Ping Worakate Thangsurbkul) and ways of “Fostering global participation in an international organization” (by Kathryn Stewart from the International Council on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety).

The breaks, dinner and lunch, bubbling with interaction and spiced by fantastic food, gave plenty of time to network with colleagues from other associations and from other countries.

Association representatives and speakers, the hosts at Thailand Convention & Exhibitions Bureau, and the team of UIA – thanks to their active participation this Round Table was a success for all!

The next UIA Associations Round Table Asia-Pacific will take place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on September 26 and 27, 2018.