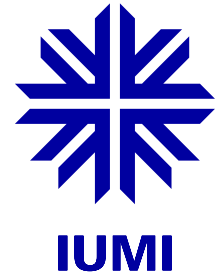


“At long last we are here” – our conference blog part 2



17th September 2018

“Wow” is probably the most well-used word we’ve heard around the conference so far. In the shadow of Table Mountain lies the stunning city of Cape Town – that’s a “wow” all by itself. Last night’s opening beach party reception hosted by the South African Insurance Association (SAIA) was another “wow” – particularly when delegates were encouraged to take off their ties and shoes and let the sand squeeze between their toes! And kicking off the conference in the state-of-the-art conference centre in an enormous hall overlooked by a panoramic image of the city gave us our third “wow”. There will be many more to come.



Keynoter Vivienne Pearson, CEO of SAIA spoke for everyone when she said “at long last we are here”. It’s taken 144 years, but IUMI has begun its annual jamboree on the African continent – and judging by the buzz around the conference hall, it’s not a day too soon.

Nearly 550 attendees have flown in from 38 different countries. Eight African countries are represented and almost 80 delegates – the largest contingent ever – are from South Africa itself.

Another keynoter – Helen Zille, Premier of the Western Cape Province urged delegates not to work without play. She highlighted the delights of the region and encouraged us to play hockey. “Go climb Table Mountain, visit Robben Island, see the Cape of Good Hope and sample the local food”, she said. I’m sure many will do just that – the temptation is just too great!

Onto more serious stuff and President Berg gave a comprehensive round-up of all things impacting, or likely to impact, marine and energy underwriters in the near term. “Emerging risks are a real issue for underwriters in these disruptive times”, he warned. “There will soon be unprecedented change, unimaginable technological advances and nothing will be left unscathed”. The conference theme encourages us all to “think the unthinkable”, but instead Berg urged us to “manage the unthinkable”. Good advice indeed.

A well-earned shout-out followed for those who had so ably led IUMI as members of the Executive Committee. Agnes Choi, Frank Costa and Lars Rhodin were standing down after many years of service and, if accepted by the Council on Wednesday, their places will be filled by Frederic Deneffe (France), Jan-Hugo Marthinsen (Norway) and Mike McKenna (USA). Importantly, Richard Turner (UK) was nominated to take over from Dieter as the next President

(and, interestingly, the first ever president to be nominated from the UK). Wednesday's election should confirm these nominations – watch this space!

Onto the Ocean Hull workshop and a great series of presentations including a sobering overview of the severity and impact of containership fires. On average, our industry can expect to see a major fire onboard a boxship every 60 days. Something must change.

As the first day begins to wind down, delegates are readying themselves for an evening of less frantic activity. There is time to catch-up with colleagues and friends over a glass or two. And, perhaps, to discover another of the “wows” that Cape Town is just waiting to show us.