



Beating the Drum for ICA 2010



ICA 2010 Newsletter, No 4 October 2009

Dear Colleague

With registrations for ICA 2010 coming in steadily, I would like to thank you once again for the responses to the previous newsletter and use this one to deal with two issues that were raised in those responses, i.e. distance and safety.

To begin with, and bearing in mind the preferences of those more interested in technical aspects, let me share four sets of facts with you:

- The Frommer's travel guides named Cape Town one of their top travel destinations in 2009, and the city features among the 12 destinations collectively described as "value picks that'll wow you".
- Indian Hotels Company Ltd (IHCL), which owns and operates 75 Taj hotels, resorts and palaces across the world, is building a five-star hotel in Cape Town. This marks the company's first major investment in South Africa.
- A total of 9,591,828 foreigners visited South Africa last year, compared to 9,090,881 in 2007. The global financial crisis saw growth in the global tourism industry shrink by 1.3 per cent last year, while South Africa recorded a 5.5 per cent growth in arrivals over the same period.
- The XIX FIGO World Congress of Gynecology and Obstetrics, the largest gathering of obstetricians and gynecologists from around the world, taking place at the Cape Town International Convention Centre from 4 to 9 October this year. It attracted more than 6 000 delegates from 120 countries.

I think this should allay some of the concerns about distance and cost. Cape Town may be off the usual conference route, but this does not mean it is inaccessible or unaffordable. And, as you would have seen on the forms, registration fees for ICA 2010 itself are lower than those for ICA 2006. The combined registration, travel and accommodation costs compare very favourably to previous Congresses.

Regarding concerns about safety, a few comments may help to put the matter into perspective. On 18 April this year, the Indian Premier League (IPL) cricket tournament kicked off in Cape Town, a mere three weeks after the Board of Control of Cricket in India announced that the tournament would be hosted in another country. From 14 to 28 June, South Africa hosted the FIFA Confederations Cup soccer tournament. Some 30 000 supporters followed the British and Irish Lions during their ten-match tour of South Africa from May to July.

While hosting the IPL, we managed to hold our national elections on 26 April. It is noteworthy that our elections were never cause for concern; at no stage prior to, or during, the IPL was there ever any media coverage expressing concern over the safety of the IPL tournament. The South African cricket authorities were not troubled by the confluence of this international tournament and our national elections. And this position was affirmed by the organisers of the

multi-million dollar IPL tournament, who had already moved the tournament on the grounds of safety.

It should be noted that violent or contact crime in South Africa has decreased by 24% over the past five years. It should also be noted that both FIFA President Sepp Blatter and FIFA General Secretary Jerome Valcke have said that they do not regard crime as a problem for the 2010 Soccer World Cup Tournament, and that US President Obama has indicated that he may attend the opening ceremony of that event.

I am not suggesting that South Africa is crime-free. But Cape Town is as safe, or unsafe, as any other world city. This is one of the reasons why global icons are putting their money where their mouths are by investing heavily in South Africa. I am talking about people of the calibre of Kofi Annan, Sir Anthony O'Reilly, Oprah Winfrey and Sir Richard Branson.

Perhaps you would like to discuss your doubts with someone closer to home. The following eminent actuarial personalities have visited South Africa during the past few years, and have graciously agreed to us providing their details:

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I look forward to seeing you in Cape Town in March next year – seven months away. Don't forget: early bird discounts on registration fees apply until 13 November (this year).

Kind regards

Desmond Smith - Chair: Organising Committee

