Meetings as a facilitator of change at a time of economic challenge

With COVID-19 continuing to affect ICCA members and associations globally in both professional and personal terms, there has never been a more important time for ongoing communication and support amongst our membership.

As an industry we frequently measure our success based on our economic impact. For now though, the tables have turned, and economic impact is demonstrating the challenges ahead for us all. With potentially USD 6 billion worth of international association meetings being cancelled between 1 March and 1 September 2020, we are all feeling the effects of this unprecedented situation. As this figure just represents registration fees and total delegate expenditure (flights, hotels, local expenditure) rather than additional direct or indirect expenditure there are many beyond our venues, destination, supplier and PCO partners who are also suffering, not to mention the economic, scientific and societal development driven by association meetings.

Such a challenge does however give us an opportunity to be a part of the global solution. Business events, and especially association meetings, have always been facilitators of change. We achieve more when we come together and work together on solutions for the betterment of all people. ICCA has already significantly increased its output of virtual events and online content to support our members and the Association Community, to keep on facilitating knowledge sharing.

At this time, due to the significant uptake in home and remote working, we expect hybrid meetings...
to significantly increase in the future, which will no doubt also be a part of the solution; but most importantly this crisis will show just how powerful and important live events and face to face gathering are to the hearts and minds of the people around the world.

Ultimately, the meetings industry is gathering people in their home offices, living rooms and kitchens, and that ability to gather will not change. We will not only recover ourselves; we will be a part of the recovery.

Yours sincerely,

Senthil Gopinath
ICCA CEO

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