Mes chers collègues

Merci pour l’honneur et le privilège que vous m’accordez de servir notre profession et de vous servir durant la prochaine année comme président de l’Association.

Mon rêve de jeunesse était de devenir actuaire. Mon premier plus grand jour de ma vie professionnelle a été lorsque j’ai été reçu Fellow de l’Institut canadien des actuaires. Un autre grand jour de ma vie professionnelle fut mon élection par suffrage universel comme président de mon institut canadien. Je suis demeuré bouche bée : j’ai eu besoin de deux scotchs pour retrouver la parole!!! Aujourd’hui, je ne trouve pas les mots pour vous remercier pour la confiance que vous me faites.


Mais surtout, surtout, je compte sur la générosité et l’énergie des autres volontaires qui dirigent les comités. Ils sont l’épine dorsale de notre organisation. Sans eux, le succès de notre organisation est impossible.

Je n’ai pas l’intention de vous faire un long discours, mais je voudrais profiter de l’occasion pour remercier en votre nom et le mien tous nos prédécesseurs qui ont aidé à bâtir cette association dont nous sommes tous fiers.

At this moment, my thoughts go to our colleagues who pioneered the transformation of our association only a few years ago. I salute
their dedication to our profession, their foresight and their wisdom. Many of those visionaries are among us today and we are indebted to them for their efforts.

Much has been accomplished in a span of a few years, thanks to the many volunteers that come from your respective organizations. Please thank them on our behalf when you have a chance.

Given our limited resources, both manpower and financial, we can take pride and satisfaction in our achievements in the recent past. We can take pride and satisfaction, but it would be a mistake to sit on our laurels. Much remains to be done.

We are working on a strategic plan and I will not repeat its main features here. However, I would like to bring to your attention the fact that the population served by our 50 or so Full member associations and the two dozen Associate member associations adds up to roughly 3.5 billion people out of 6.5 billion in the world. There are many people on this planet who are not served by member associations of the IAA. We need to grow the membership of this association.

You have heard today about the progress being made by all associations in meeting the education requirements. You also have heard today about a project to study the feasibility of creating an international education and examination system. We all aware of the level of volunteer efforts large associations put in maintaining their education system: many hundreds of volunteers. For smaller associations, the amount of work is a little less, but it remains a formidable obstacle to grow the smaller associations quickly. It is easy to imagine the difficulty of new associations to get started and to get up to speed with the rest of us on education, standards, discipline, professionalism, continuing professional developments etc, etc.
We need to think outside the box to help kick start the creation and the organization of new actuarial associations around the world. For the good of the general public, and for the good of the profession.

You are aware of our progress in producing more international standards. I think that these are crucial for the profession. On the topic of standards, I hope that progress can also be made on the development of standards of practice at the national front as well. This little chart is instructive. I have excluded the associations with more than 1000 actuaries just to make the chart easier to read.

Nearly half of our existing full member associations do not have national standards of practice. As you know, it is not compulsory to have standards of practice to belong to the IAA, and rightly so; there are more important priorities when you start a local association. It takes a lot of efforts to create standards. We all know that. Surprisingly, to me at least, there are a number of associations that managed to establish some standards, despite their small number of actuaries. Maybe there is something to be learned from them.

I welcome a dialogue between those associations that do have national standards and those that do not. I invite association leaders to participate in a sort of mentoring system whereby associations could be paired, say for a year, to exchange on standards of practice and other issues of interest.

In many instances, the wheel has been invented you know. Often times, modifications are necessary to make the wheel fit. Still, this is better than to start from scratch.

I cannot over-emphasize the importance of having standards of practice at the national level. In the last two days, we talked about relevance and recognition of our profession.
Actuaries are renowned for their knowledge and for the high level of their education. Knowledge is power. But knowledge is not enough. To me, professional associations distinguish themselves by putting the interests of the publics they serve at the top of their priority list. Professional associations distinguish themselves through:

- their code of conduct,
- their education (basic and continuing),
- their standards of practice, and
- a serious discipline system.

These are the pillars of any professional association that bring relevance and credibility in the eyes of the public.

Standards of practice are in the interest of the public, but also in the interest of actuaries. They serve as a safe harbor for novice actuaries. This is particularly valuable in our business, where the financial impact of our work is always major.

Novice actuaries are not necessarily young actuaries. In our fast moving world, even actuaries, long in the tooth like I, end up applying stuff we learned only a few years ago. So standards of practice are useful to all kinds of actuaries.

We live in a shrinking and a fast moving world. When one person catches a cold, another person, twelve time zones away, sneezes. That is true of associations and professions too. We are all too well aware of that phenomenon with the recent events of the last few years.

Our reputation is our biggest asset. That is particularly relevant as we globalize. So I urge each of you, official representatives of your own association, to help increase the number of Full member associations with standards of practice.
Je termine là-dessus.

Encore une fois, mille mercis pour la confiance que vous me témoignez aujourd’hui.

Soyez assurés de mon entière collaboration.

Au plaisir de travailler ensemble en 2006.