

Joint AFIR and LIFE Colloquium
Munich, September 6-11, 2009
(AFIR Opening, September 10)

Thank you for your kind introduction.

Distinguished speakers, honored guests, and dear colleagues,

I am privileged and honored to give this address at the opening ceremony of the AFIR Colloquium 2009, representing the International Actuarial Association - the IAA - in my capacity as President. On behalf of the IAA, I would like to express my congratulations and sincere thanks to everyone who has worked so hard to make this Colloquium possible.

Last year, I had the pleasure of attending the AFIR Colloquium held in Rome as President-Elect of the IAA. I still hold fond memories of a very successful Colloquium in Rome and the high quality of the papers presented. Looking at this year's program, I am already convinced that the 2009 Colloquium will make another great contribution to the promotion of actuarial research in financial risks and problems.

Now, I would like to point out two important aspects of this year's Colloquium.

Firstly, this Colloquium is the outcome of joint collaboration between AFIR and the IAA Life Section - IAALS. A colloquium jointly held by these two sections has already proven to be very successful as was evidenced in Stockholm in 2007. Because many of the current challenges which life insurance companies face are related to various kinds of financial risks, I strongly believe that the life insurance industry all over the world will greatly benefit from the collaboration and interaction between AFIR and IAALS, especially in this post global financial crisis era.

Speaking of the global financial crisis, how to deal with the consequences of the global financial crisis is one of the greatest challenges the actuarial profession must address. This past February, the IAA published a paper entitled “Dealing with Predictable Irrationality – Actuarial Ideas to Strengthen Global Financial Risk Management” in order to demonstrate to the world the actuarial profession’s response to the crisis.

Our February paper was more focused on the banking sector, but a follow-up paper entitled “The Global Financial Crisis – What Next?” issued in July focuses on the consequences for the pension and the insurance sectors.

We as actuaries need to be heard by the world outside the actuarial community, including regulators, industry executives, academics and the general public. In order for our voices to be heard, we must speak with scientific credibility backed up with quality research. In this sense, since the occurrence of the global financial crisis, I believe activities of AFIR have become even more important because it is imperative for our voices to be heard in order to prevent such crisis in future. This is the second aspect I would like to stress.

Whenever I address an opening speech at an actuarial conference, I always strongly encourage every participant to make the best use of this opportunity. I urge each of you to actively engage in discussions. Do not only passively listen to the presentations and lectures.

Last but not least, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to our German colleagues for your warmest welcome and hospitality to all of us. It is your efforts that have made this Colloquium even much more worthwhile to attend.

Thank you very much for having invited me and for your attention. I wish every participant a memorable experience over the next two days.