

Closing Ceremony

Christopher Daykin

Thank you very much. We are all too quickly coming to the end of our 2-day colloquium and I have been asked to summarize the proceedings before formally closing the meeting. I think you will recognize that to summarize everything would be impossible, because so much has been said and discussed in the last two days. Also, for much of the time the action has been going on in three separate places and I still haven't worked out how to be in three places at once.

We had 140 people from 19 countries registered to participate, together with 19 accompanying persons. I would like, first of all, to say how impressive the organization of the colloquium has been, with very efficient administration and on-site management of everything that we have done, reflecting excellent work by our organizers and their assistants.

No meeting of this sort would be complete without a range of great social activities, including the wonderful welcome reception we had on Sunday evening. A highlight for the foreign visitors was the boxed lunches - very different from the sort of picnic lunches that we get in Western countries, but a great idea. There was a delightful dinner for the speakers and the committee members last night and we are all looking forward to the official PBSS dinner tonight. Many of you will also be attending tomorrow night at Tokyo Kaikan for the special Japanese Society of Certified Pension Actuaries 20th Anniversary Party.

We had some excellent plenary sessions, starting with Professor Hideo Nagai, who gave us a very interesting presentation, especially challenging for some of us whose stochastic integration is a bit rusty, or maybe was not even part of the actuarial education when we studied actuarial exams a number of years ago. My son who has recently qualified as an actuary seems to find these things more straightforward. Professor Nagai's presentation was followed by my own talk,

which attempted to give an overview of the causes of the global financial crisis and some of the impacts of the crisis on social security and pensions.

After that we had a very good presentation by Yoshihara-san on the Japanese Pension System, which is always quite complicated for foreigners to understand. He was very clear in the way he presented it, even though he was more reluctant to make predictions as to what will happen in the future as perhaps we'd hoped his now detached status from the government would enable him to do.

We had a large number of parallel sessions, on which I will not attempt to talk in detail. In all there were 30 papers or presentations in the parallel sessions, covering a wide range of topics. Yesterday I enjoyed a good session where we had material from several different Asian countries, in keeping with one of the main themes of the conference - Social Security and Pensions in Asia - to which we returned today.

Yesterday, there were also parallel sessions on corporate pensions, including investment and accounting for pensions, and a special session on IACA, which was led by Hideyuki Yoshida and Ken Buffin (Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively of IACA, the IAA Section for consulting actuaries). It is worth noting that at present we have both a Japanese President of the IAA (Katsumi Hikasa) and a Japanese Chairman of the IACA section.

This morning we had some very good plenary sessions, with Professor Wang Xiaojun from Renmin University, Beijing, together with Yvonne Sin and Hiroshi Yamabana, who gave really outstanding presentations overviewing social security and pensions throughout Asia, with a specific emphasis on China from Professor Wang. That was followed by what I think for me was one of the highlights of the conference - the plenary panel discussion under the expert moderation of Sakamoto-san, which brought out a lot of points from the four panelists about the experience, not only in their own countries, but right across Asia.

For the rest of today we have had a lot of different papers presented in parallel sessions, including 12 papers on corporate post employment benefits. Obviously, this was a very popular topic and central to the interests of the members of our host association - The Japanese Society of Certified Pension Actuaries. I did not attend many of those particular sessions, but I was interested to attend one just now when Ignacio del Barco Martinez interspersed his talk with pictures of his gastronomic activities in Tokyo.

There were also a number of social security sessions, which covered other interesting topics. These parallel sessions have been a very important part of the meeting. We really want to thank all the people who put together papers and presentations. They did a great job. Quite a high proportion of participants were involved in making presentations. These meetings are made effective by the contributions of lots of people in preparing papers and presenting them. Thank you all very much for your active participation in the meeting.

I will not attempt to draw any erudite conclusions about pensions and social security, because we covered so much material. Different things will have interested different people. I hope you will all go away with some new information, some new learning experiences, so that you can say that you have learned something interesting, something you want to explore further, something you can use in your work or in your research.

This points to the conclusion that I do want to draw, which is that the meetings of the PBSS section are very important for sharing knowledge and not only for gaining new information but for really educating ourselves. This is true continuing education about all sorts of things with which we don't come into contact every day, because they are international in flavour.

We can learn about things from other places and from other situations. We also meet actuaries from other countries, which is very important for networking. I hope it also encourages us to go away and think about new topics to explore and to research. Because really the main functions of the sections of the IAA are to achieve greater knowledge-sharing amongst actuaries and also to facilitate and encourage the expansion of actuarial knowledge and research.

We have seen during these two days some really important roles for actuaries in the corporate pensions environment - particularly in defined benefit plans, where actuaries usually have a very central role. However, we have also heard how in some countries the actuary has a central role for defined contribution plans. Certainly in the area of social security there is a big need for greater involvement of actuaries, both as individual actuaries advising governments, but also, I believe, of actuarial professional bodies interfacing with their own governments and policy-makers to help to improve decision-making.

This extends at the IAA level to contact with supranational or international bodies and we've been privileged to have with us Hiroshi Yamabana, a representative from the International Labour Office (ILO). Yvonne Sin no longer represents the World Bank, but she was, for many years, with that important supranational organisation. We have heard that the Asian Development Bank was admitted recently as an Observer Member of the IAA, and have been pleased to welcome two observers at the meeting from the ADB Institute. At the IAA level we are keen to develop these relationships and we are relying on Ken Buffin, who has been with us at this meeting, to take this forward, since he is now the Chairman of the Supranational Committee of the IAA, which is responsible for managing those relationships on behalf of the IAA.

I want also to emphasize that the PBSS is not just about organizing colloquia like this, although that is a very important part of our activities, but we are trying to do some other things. We have a monthly letter and reference list. We have a

virtual library about to be launched. Although you have an enormous thick book from this meeting, it only covers the PowerPoint presentations. There were written papers behind most of those presentations, which are available on the website. They will be made available through the PBSS website on a continuing basis and they will be referenced in the virtual library, as will all the papers presented at PBSS events.

We also would like to say from the PBSS that we have lots of experts in pensions and social security within the section. So, if individual countries are keen to organize some pension-related event, then we'd be happy to cooperate and co-sponsor from the PBSS, maybe even to provide one or two speakers who could give an international perspective.

We are also keen to pursue and develop our relationship with particular external international bodies. The International Social Security Association (ISSA) is one of those and we are very pleased to have had with us Jean-Claude Ménard from Canada, who is the chairperson of the Technical Commission for Actuarial, Financial and Statistical Studies of the ISSA. We are working with the ISSA also to make available to our members the materials from their conferences. They had one for actuaries and statisticians just a couple of weeks ago. The papers are already available to ISSA members but, because we have such a close relationship between ISSA and the IAA, we are hoping to be able soon to make those papers available also to PBSS members through our website.

As I mentioned earlier, we also have a lot of sessions planned for the International Congress of Actuaries in Cape Town in March 2010 and we are working on plans for future colloquia. Don't forget, if you are not a member already, to join the PBSS section. You can either do that through your national association or you can apply to join directly through the IAA Secretariat. The person dealing with section membership is Christian Levac, whose email address is christian.levac@actuaries.org.

I want to conclude by thanking those who were most involved in organizing this event. I want to pay special tribute to Kojima-san for his leadership of the organizing committee and to Oyama-san for chairing the scientific committee. Whenever an organization agrees to take on the preparation of such a meeting, they always start with great excitement and a sense of privilege for being allowed to host the meeting. And then they find that it really is quite a lot of work. I am sure the organizing committee has found that, but I hope they've also found it stimulating and that they've enjoyed doing it, and doing it well. When they have seen the results, they should have been pleased at the way it's gone, because it has really gone very well indeed. So, congratulations to everyone involved - perhaps we can show our appreciation to them now.

We are going to come on now to talk about the next event - the International Congress of Actuaries in Cape Town. As we mentioned yesterday, there will be a large number of special pensions and social security sessions, particularly on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of the Congress. Just to give you a flavor, here are some of the topics on which we will have parallel sessions.

We have sessions on Funding Public Sector Pensions; Managing Longevity; Managing Draw-down Pensions - that's the post-retirement period and how you manage investment and longevity risk.

Finding more sustainable ways of sharing risks in private pensions is an extension of a topic that's been discussed quite a lot for these last 2 days and we have had a number of people who have offered to present papers on that. Then follows Social Security reforms resulting from the financial crisis; Problems and issues in Social Security; Social Security Accounting; Automatic Balancing Mechanisms; and the Balance between Public and Private Pension Plans. Then, organized by the Pensions and Employee Benefits Committee of the IAA, chaired by Esko Kivisaari, who is with us in Tokyo, we have Accounting for Pensions, Risk Management for

Retirement Funds; Should Private Pensions have Capital Requirements; and Setting Actuarial Assumptions.

There will be IACA sessions on a variety of topics but in particular, relating to our interests, on Asset Liability Management and Pension Provision in Developing Economies.

So, we have a very wide range of topics for discussion. Of course, there will be other things happening as well during the Congress, which will all be of interest to actuaries. It's a great opportunity to come to Cape Town.

We are going to move straight on from this presentation into a DVD on the Congress and then a word of welcome from one of our South African representatives here to invite us all to Cape Town.

With that I close the meeting and I look forward to seeing you this evening for the dinner and, of course, in Cape Town in March of 2010. Thank you. Arigato.