

12<sup>TH</sup>

# WORLD CHAMBERS CONGRESS

Chambers for  
global prosperity

## 2021 REPORT

# DUBAI

**GENERATION NEXT:**  
CHAMBERS 4.0

**23-25 November 2021** | Dubai  
United Arab Emirates

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Federation

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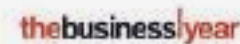
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## FOREWORD

# EXPLORING GENERATION NEXT IN A POST- PANDEMIC WORLD

**I**n the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 12th World Chambers Congress called on business and chamber leaders to work together towards a sustainable – and resilient – economic recovery for all. I was delighted to join our Dubai Chamber of Commerce co-hosts and World Chambers Federation for this unique and truly pioneering event.

Converging via our hybrid platform and in person in the modern metropolis that is Dubai, the Congress brought to the fore the pressing need to deliver on the promise of digital technologies to enable a brighter future for people and the planet.

With our focus firmly set on the potential of technology and data to transform business models, our thought leadership discussions – combined with hands-on workshops – sought to equip participants with the knowledge and know-how needed to foster the best conditions for the real economy to operate in.

Encouraging SMEs, startups and entrepreneurs to operate is key to our ICC mission to enable business to work for everyone, every day, everywhere. The work that chambers undertake is vital to ensuring a positive impact in this regard at both regional and local level.

**#12WCC**

By showcasing the role of open trade and investment to build back better, our 12th World Chambers Congress illustrated the pivotal role chambers can play in enabling private-sector enterprise, expertise and innovation to deliver practical solutions to our interconnected challenges.

## **“OUR FOCUS WAS FIRMLY SET ON THE POTENTIAL OF TECHNOLOGY AND DATA TO TRANSFORM BUSINESS MODELS.”**

Providing a platform – both in person and virtually – for open exchange with those who share our values and goals for a better world for all, was what we set out to do. We thank you for your participation and were pleased to have had this opportunity to introduce you to our range of ICC digital tools and solutions that we are delivering to support resource-stretched businesses, such as our TradeComm platform connecting SMEs to alternative forms of trade

finance. It was also thrilling to see chamber innovation on display thanks to the presentations of our World Chambers Competition finalists.

The pandemic has been a stark reminder that “going it alone” in an interconnected work will, very simply, not yield results. Our strength lies in the connections we make, our diversity, and our drive to ensure chambers remain relevant and trusted partners to business in the 21st century.

Chamber agility and resilience in the face of global disruptions never fails to impress, and I look forward to hearing how the action plans established in Dubai are working to enable the transformation to Chambers 4.0 worldwide. Thank you for your continued engagement with ICC.

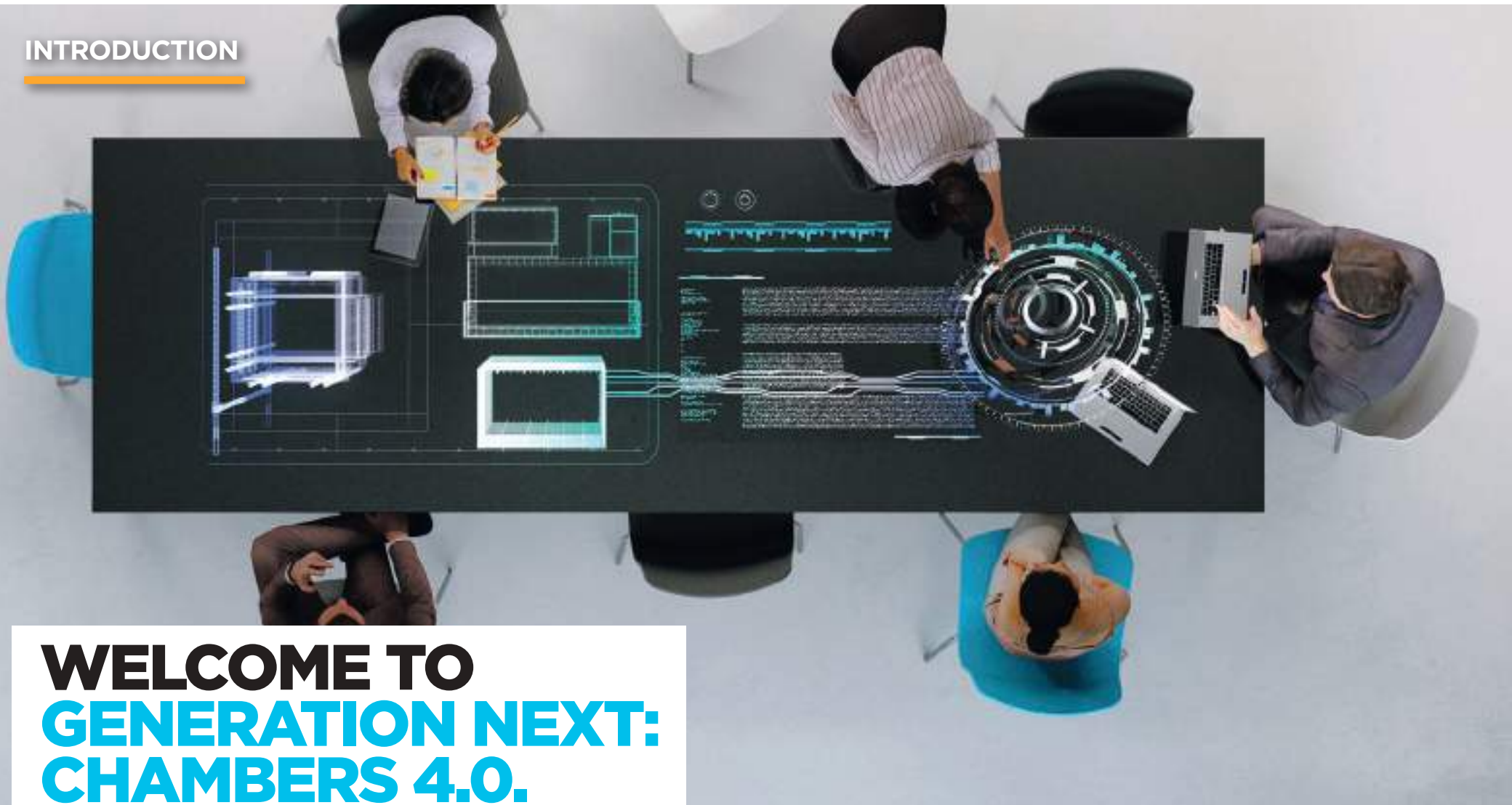
Until we meet again in Geneva in June 2023 – stay safe, stay well, stay connected!



**John WH Denton AO**  
Secretary General  
International Chamber of Commerce  
(ICC)

“ENABLING SMES,  
STARTUPS, AND  
ENTREPRENEURS TO  
OPERATE IS KEY TO  
OUR ICC MISSION.”

INTRODUCTION



WELCOME TO  
GENERATION NEXT:  
CHAMBERS 4.0.  
THIS IS #12WCC

Organised by International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and its World Chambers Federation, the World Chambers Congress (WCC) is the largest and the only international forum that enables chamber leaders and professionals to share best-practices, exchange insights, develop networks, address the latest business issues affecting their communities and learn about new areas of innovation from chambers around the world.

Held every two years in a different region across the globe, the WCC provides unparalleled opportunities to connect and strengthen relations with a diverse and international group of individuals representing more than 120+ countries.

Growing ever since its launch in 1999, it is a valuable and dynamic forum that facilitates the exchange of real-world ideas and best practices on both chamber and business activities.

**#12WCC**  
For the year 2021, in a post-pandemic world, the #12WCC gathered 1,500 delegates from more than 123 countries for three days in the heart of Dubai. It was a hybrid event, which theme was “Generation Next: Chambers 4.0.”

Featuring both formal and informal occasions to cultivate networks, #12WCC provided the ideal environment to establish institutional ties and promote trade and investment opportunities from attending companies located in diverse countries and regions.

**#12WCC PROVIDED  
THE IDEAL HUB  
TO ESTABLISH  
INSTITUTIONAL TIES  
AND PROMOTE TRADE  
AND INVESTMENT  
OPPORTUNITIES.**

**WORLD CHAMBERS  
CONGRESS: CORE  
OBJECTIVES**

- To offer insights into today’s most significant global issues
- Stimulate new ideas through inspiring keynote events
- Bridge expertise gaps with educational workshops
- Offer access to solutions to help conduct better business
- Connect chambers and business leaders
- Promote trade and investment opportunities

In this continuously evolving business climate, #12WCC addressed some of the most significant global issues of our time – from challenges related to sustainability and diversity, to slowing global trade and digital growth.

Featuring renowned speakers from all over the world, #12WCC delegates benefitted from first-hand knowledge and diverse perspectives on a broad number of pertinent topics discussed during the event’s extensive three-day programme.

Also forming part of the event is the popular World Chambers Competition, which debuted in 2003 as an integral part of the WCC. It aims to identify and appreciate innovative projects by Chambers and idealise them, so that chambers across the globe can try and learn from them.

This flagship event is much more than just a chambers’ gathering. In convening the globe’s most prominent leaders and brightest minds, we aim to help transform the future of business.

We thank you for joining us.



DUBAI 2021:  
WELCOMING  
THE WORLD

**AS THE FIRST** hybrid event of its kind to be hosted in the COVID-era, the 12th World Chambers Congress (#12WCC) in Dubai proved to be a Congress like no other as it offered chamber leaders a glimpse into what chambers of the future will look like.

Co-organised by Dubai Chamber, the International Chamber of Commerce and its World Chambers Federation, the Congress started important global conversations about the need for chambers of commerce to change their services to adapt to new realities at a time of unprecedented change.

If COVID-19 has taught us anything, it is that the world’s most pressing issues demand more than mere discussions. They require collaboration, strategic thinking and concrete action. That is exactly what 12WCC in Dubai was able to achieve as chamber leaders leveraged the platform to connect, collaborate and develop innovative solutions to address common challenges.

The #12WCC set the stage for new and valuable ideas that will serve

the World Chambers Federation community and provide members with the tools and resources needed to innovate, boost competitiveness and drive the change we aspire to reach.

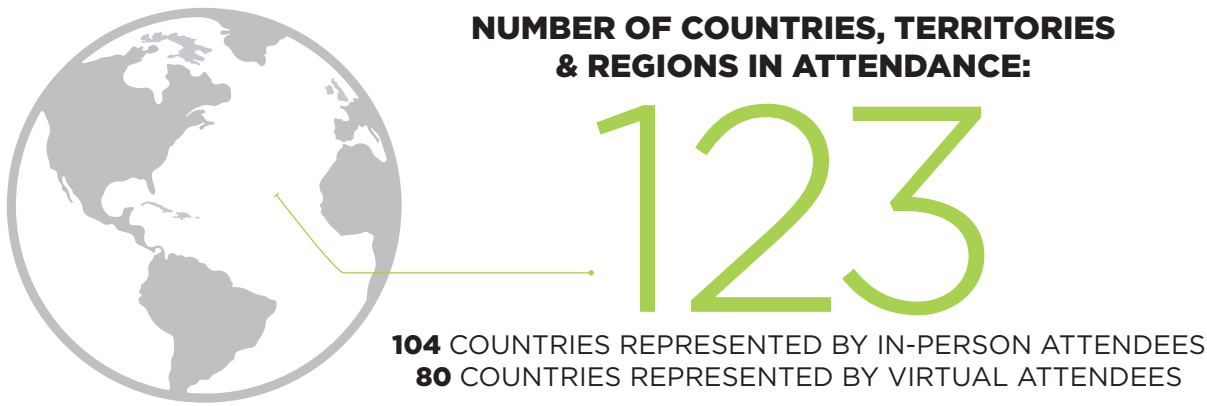
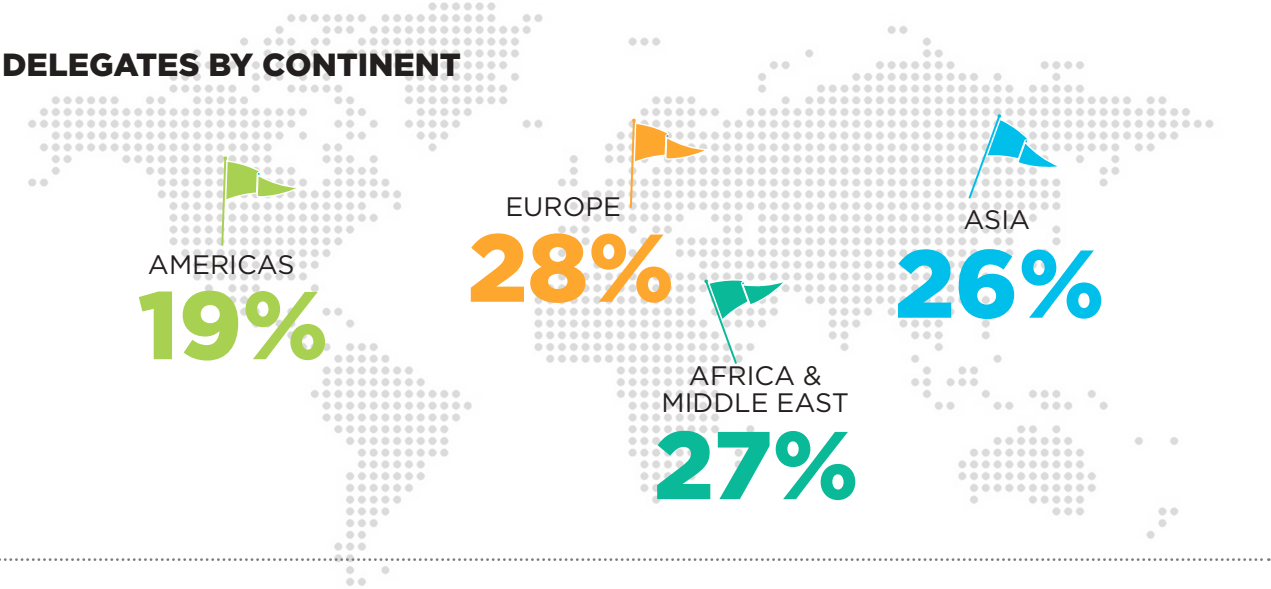
Coinciding with Expo 2020 Dubai, the Congress was a prime example of a successful hybrid event that created lasting impact and practical solutions. When putting this Congress together, we wanted to ensure that geographical boundaries would not be obstacles to driving participation, and encourage participants to share knowledge and adopt innovative tools and action plans that they can take back to their organisations.

We look forward to evaluating the impact of the 12WCC and the progress achieved by global chambers when we all reconvene for the next Congress in Geneva in 2023.

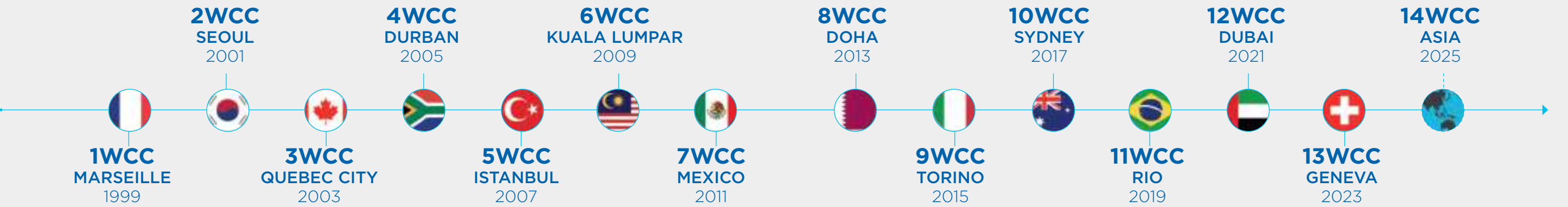
**H.E. Hamad Buamim**  
President & CEO, Dubai Chambers  
Chair, ICC-World Chambers  
Federation



# OVERVIEW



## WORLD CHAMBERS CONGRESS HISTORY





Great first day in Dubai ahead of our #12WCC. Good to be connecting with chambers, the gateway to our small business network, to ensure #12WCC impact at global, regional and local level.

Hamad Buamim  
Chair, ICC World Chamber Federation  
United Arab Emirates

John W. H. Deston AO  
Secretary General  
International Chamber of Commerce  
Paris



## Charting the course: #12WCC kick-off

Moderator



Mike Van der Vijver  
Meeting Designer & Co-Founder  
MindMeeting  
Netherlands

Speaker



Hamad Buamim  
Chair, ICC World Chamber Federation  
United Arab Emirates

Speaker



John W. H. Deston AO  
Secretary General  
International Chamber of Commerce  
Paris



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#13WCC
- 50 **Generation next**  
Building tomorrow's chambers





He continued: “Chambers of commerce are in a stage of change and revolution as they cope with what’s happening within the economy, [and] when we bid to host this event in Dubai [nearly four years ago] we saw back then that one of the most important themes for the future of chambers is the disruption and increasing relevance of digital transformation.”

THE PLAYBOOK

Another addition to the Congress this year, Mr Buamim said, was the introduction of the “World Chambers Congress Playbook”, aimed at facilitating a tailored approach to learning.

“One thing we wanted to do differently this time is go beyond the three days, [and] look at the congress and ways to improve it,” he said. “[And the Playbook is] the start of a long-term journey aimed at educating and sharing best practice that delegates can take back and apply at their own organisations and chambers.”

Stressing the importance of knowledge transfer and applied learning, Mr Buamim added: “Chambers of commerce have existed for 400 years, and survival has always been a challenge for them...We’ve always done well in addressing the problems, but never the solutions.”

THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

For delegates to make the most of the Congress, Mr Denton said the optimum learning attitude was to remain open to embracing change.

“We have wonderful institutions, but unless organisations are open to thinking about the future and building the capability to help them deliver the future, then they will become stuck, and inertia will take over,” he said. “So remaining open to constant learning is a healthy attitude and mindset which will increase the probability of achieving Chambers 4.0.”

Agreeing with Mr Denton, Mr Buamim added that chambers are legacy organisations, and trying to address the big changes within the business community can be difficult, hence why solution-oriented dialogue is important.

The #12WCC Kick-off closed with the inauguration of the Congress’ crowd-sourced mood board, with Mr Denton and Mr Buamim both responding to questions displayed on screens in the main networking area.

FEATURING



**HAMAD BUAMIM**  
President & CEO,  
Dubai Chambers  
Chair, ICC World Chambers  
Federation (UAE)



**JOHN W.H. DENTON AO**  
Secretary General,  
International Chamber of  
Commerce (Paris)



**MIKE VAN DER VIJVER**  
Meeting Designer &  
Co-Founder, MindMeeting  
(Netherlands)

**W**elcoming delegates to the 12th World Chambers Congress (#12WCC) in Dubai, Hamad Buamim, President and CEO of Dubai Chambers, and John W.H. Denton AO, Secretary General of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) kicked off the event by expressing their excitement at physically reconnecting with world chambers in a post-pandemic world.

Lessons learned from the year 2020 prompted a new addition of virtual attendance to this year’s Congress, explained Mr Buamim: “We wanted to be inclusive, and wanted all country chambers to have the opportunity to reconnect.”

Expressing a preference for in-person events he added, “we didn’t [however] want to exclude those who couldn’t be here.”

Referencing ICC’s pandemic learnings, Mr Denton added: “One of the things we worked on at ICC amidst the pandemic was reestablishing global mobility, and we are proof positive

that global mobility is good for people, good for mental health, and good for the economy.”

**GENERATION NEXT: CHAMBERS 4.0**

With Mr Denton likening chambers to “capillaries that make communities and nations work,” the speakers explained that the theme of the #12WCC was centred around ensuring chambers always remain relevant.

“The context that chambers have confronted through the pandemic has been extraordinary,” he said. “And the level of agility and innovation that’s been displayed has been extraordinary. [The theme is about] capturing the ability to change to ensure we are purpose built for the 21st century.”

Stressing that the theme – and subsequently the contents – of the Congress were curated to support chambers of commerce worldwide through a difficult and challenging time, Mr Buamim said: “We associated Chamber 4.0 with the Fourth Industrial Revolution.”

**“[THE THEME IS ABOUT] CAPTURING THE ABILITY TO CHANGE TO ENSURE WE ARE PURPOSE BUILT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY.”**

– John W.H. Denton AO

IN SUMMARY

- Post-pandemic learnings were key to the #12WCC
- The #12WCC sought to be inclusive by offering virtual participation
- The #12WCC’s theme was curated to support chambers worldwide through challenging times
- An openness to change and learning are key to achieving Chambers 4.0





# SCHOOL'S OUT: LIFELONG LEARNING'S IN!

**I**t is said that as adults, our desire to achieve sound outcomes can bolster our ability to learn. For Candace Johnson, Executive Board Member of ICC and Vice-Chair of NorthStar Earth and Space (France), it is crucial to continue learning.

In fact, it has been proven that the smartest companies employ continuous learning to engage, compete and succeed.

A champion of lifelong learning herself, Ms Johnson stated that constantly assessing and re-evaluating how adults learn and keep learning is essential. And while children are good at learning, the question is how to

**FEATURING**

**CANDACE JOHNSON**  
Executive Board Member, International Chamber of Commerce  
Vice-Chair, NorthStar Earth & Space (France)

keep learning relevant for adults.

Referring to chambers of commerce, she stressed they are a key player in this journey of lifelong learning, and must play a part to help educate and empower not only their members, but the communities in which they operate.

"Times are changing," she said. "The power of chambers in this lifelong learning [is] teaching young entrepreneurs how to do business.

"If these young entrepreneurs are already digital, chambers must go further to initiate them into the world of finance, HR, management and other functions, and additionally, engage large corporations which are open to bringing about change," she added.

"Chambers are at the pulse of entrepreneurship, small business and large corporations."

**A HUB FOR CREATING SOLUTIONS**  
Ms Johnson also pointed out that chambers must act as a hub for creating solutions to the world's challenges – from climate change

**IN SUMMARY**

- Chambers must inspire the community to find solutions to the problems facing them
- The power of the chambers in lifelong learning is to teach young entrepreneurs how to do business
- Chambers are at the pulse of entrepreneurship, small business, and large corporations
- Many jobs today did not exist 20 years ago; this ability to keep moving forward is part of lifelong learning and transformation

to world hunger, job creation and digitisation – challenges she described as "huge".

She continued: "When we talk about bringing about change, we are so happy with chambers because they're so close to entrepreneurs. The thing about entrepreneurs is that they bring about change, technological, financial, social and political change."

Ms Johnson also noted that many jobs today did not exist 20 years ago, therefore this ability to keep moving forward and bring about change is part of lifelong learning and transformation, of which chambers must be active players, alongside entrepreneurs and corporations.

ICC has worked with chambers around the world to create ICC Centres of Entrepreneurship in territories such as Lebanon and Kenya, which have been critical in empowering

**"CHAMBERS IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES MUST INSPIRE THE COMMUNITY TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS FACING THEM."**

– Candace Johnson

communities – including women and children – with digital and business skills.

"Chambers in local communities must inspire the community to find solutions to the problems facing them [whether digital, HR, financial or geopolitical]," she said. "It's the most important thing chambers can do."

Sharing her years of global expertise, Ms Johnson offered her tips for success, including avoiding negative sources, people, things and habits.

"Surround yourself with positivity to success."

Other tips included believing in oneself, and not giving up.

"Quitters never win and winners never quit; visualising goals and successes; and the ultimate action of zeroing in on the target and boldly moving forward," she concluded.





**“FOR CHAMBERS, IT IS CHANGE OR DIE.”**  
– Frédéric Ronal

# CHAMBER MOVEMENT: THE POWER OF COLLABORATION



a lot of responsibility. It was a chance for the chambers of commerce to remember the place we have in the organisation of the economic activity.”

Digitalisation is also very important, he said. “A lot of projects of the chamber are based on digitalisation. We want also to be experimental to try to test new digital solutions before these solutions are used by the company.”

**PUTTING DIGITAL & AI TO THE TEST**  
CCI Marseille Provence has established its own lab to test out new digital tools and AI solutions, said Mr Ronal.

“Zoom is an amazing tool to work together and to enhance the link between entrepreneur, the link between chamber,” he said, lamenting the fact that entrepreneurs and startups tend not to engage with chambers of commerce.

“You have to also work on your data, [because] data is probably the treasure of tomorrow.”

“We need to find people; young people [who] are able to use this

data and transform this data into a service.”

**LOST IN TRANSLATION**  
The future for chambers of commerce, according to the vice-president, is a club model.

“The chamber of Dublin, for instance, is a totally different model – it is a club, a very large club, but it’s very interesting to see the power [and] the place of this club in the economic life of Ireland. We have to learn to [work] this way, not because it’s necessary, it’s [because] we are obliged to.”

Finally, to survive the coming years, Mr Ronal highlighted the importance of investing in a region’s assets and infrastructure.

“[We have] to invest in assets necessary to economic development like infrastructure. The future of the chamber of commerce is like an investor – but not an investor only in a private company. Invest in the infrastructure, the tools which are necessary for the economic activity of our territory.”

## FEATURING



**FRÉDÉRIC RONAL**  
Vice-President,  
CCI Marseille Provence  
(France)



**REBECCA MCLAUGHLIN-EASTHAM**  
Broadcast Journalist,  
Moderator & Media Trainer  
(UAE)

**A**ccording to Frédéric Ronal, Vice-President of CCI Marseille Provence, chambers today face two main problems – finding resources and engaging in new activity.

In this session, Mr Ronal explained that the Marseille chamber traditionally relied on tax to fund its activities. However, for Marseille, the tax has been “divided by three in five years”. This has pushed the chamber to seek out new activities and services that it can offer its clients.

“We have to sell new services,” he stated. “Before it was free for the company, it was free for our clients, because we [were] paid by tax. Now we have to imagine a new service and we have to sell this service.”

Mr Ronal continued: “We need to change and to go [from] a public model to a private model or a mixed model between public and private,

but the problem is the speed of these changes. It’s normal to change – all the organisations need to change – but the time we give has to change... We don’t have enough time to change...the whole model.”

### PROACTIVITY IS KEY

Describing the current state of France as “very passive”, it is up to the chamber to manage its infrastructure, Mr Ronal stated. For Marseille, this has included its ports, airports, conference venues and schools among others, and using them to “enhance” the chamber’s activities and offerings.

“It [the pandemic] was a chance for us to be in the middle of the game, to be in the middle of the war, because we are naturally the bridge between public and private in all the country,” he said. “During the pandemic, the French government remembered that we are this bridge and [we were given]

## IN SUMMARY

- Tax was a pillar for some chambers of commerce
- Chambers are under pressure today to offer new services and generate income
- Data is crucial for chambers, but they need to know how to utilise it
- There are different chamber models and partnerships to explore, but time is of the essence





# WAKE-UP CALL: IN TECH WE TRUST

## FEATURING



**ZIAD CHEHADE**  
Head of Business Marketing in the MENA,  
Google (UAE)



**REBECCA MCLAUGHLIN-EASTHAM**  
Broadcast Journalist, Moderator &  
Media Trainer (UAE)

**T**his session focused on the need to adopt and invest in technology. Ziad Chehade, Head of Business Marketing for Google in the MENA discussed a partnership between the tech giant and Dubai Chamber to help businesses digitise in a post-COVID world.

“During COVID, [many] businesses weren’t online, so [they] couldn’t communicate with users,” he explained. Learning the so-called hard way, since the pandemic, an estimated 64% of businesses have increased spending on digital.

However, only 4% of those have a solid strategy for digital adoption, Mr Chehade revealed.

“They’re spending because they think it’s the right thing to do. Very few have a plan. What we suggest is to focus and to do fewer, but bigger and better projects, with chambers – focusing on education and data.”

### EVERYONE CAN BENEFIT FROM KEY LEARNINGS

Mr Chehade went on to state that learning is not just beneficial for smaller companies. Even the likes of Google had to rethink strategies post-pandemic, he admitted, saying that a learning journey

is not only for SMEs, but for global giants too.

Looking to the future, Mr Chehade said that chambers can play a much bigger role educating markets with most members citing digital capabilities as the biggest challenges today.

“Post-pandemic, the chambers can own this area and go full-fledged on this,” he said.

Dubai Chamber and Google collaborated on a project aimed at onboarding businesses far from full digitisation.

“We’ve added 100,000 members to get Dubai online and continue the journey to engage the chamber on different initiatives,” he continued, adding that the project is easily transferable to other markets.

“It’s taken time for us to get where we are now but I think today we are scaling to two or three markets,” Mr Chehade said. This includes creating a roadmap for businesses – whether an SME or a global player – and simplifying the process regardless of industry.

Pre-pandemic there was just a 4% penetration for e-commerce, but much has changed in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with “brutal consumers” expecting businesses to step up.

## IN SUMMARY

- Chambers can play a bigger role in educating businesses on tech
- Data will be a key pillar for chambers in the future
- Digital spending is now high but a lack of digital strategy remains a challenge
- Cybercrime must be or remain a priority for businesses as digitisation grows

Now, with its rapid advancement, the UAE is set to surpass huge e-commerce markets such as the United Kingdom, for example.

The session also outlined how Google has been assessing how chambers can play a bigger role in the digital world, as well as play a bigger role educating businesses and laying down fundamentals for them to move forward post-pandemic.

The tech giant has been assisting Dubai Chamber in “positioning the chamber as an enabler for education and a centre for insights” with many businesses keen to access data and insights.

However, in today’s post-pandemic world, this must go one step further.

“A lot of people want data, so being a centre for this builds on what chambers

**“EVERYONE IS ON A JOURNEY AND PART OF THIS JOURNEY IS REALLY UNDERSTANDING HOW DIGITAL CAN HELP BUSINESSES DO BUSINESS BETTER.”**

– Ziad Chehade

have historically done in the past such as lobbying and sharing data on things such as exports,” he said. “Everyone is on a journey and part of this journey is really understanding how digital can help businesses do business better.”

Part of the process of changing the positioning of the chamber as an enabler for its members has involved a great deal of working sessions and building capabilities in-house.

“We know we don’t have the full solution but how we get there is collectively, and by adjusting along the way,” he said. “It’s a journey and we don’t have all the answers but we learn as we go.”

One more area chambers need to look out for, Mr Chehade concluded, is cybercrime. It remains a critical issue for businesses of all sizes, he warned.





# #12WCC OPENING CEREMONY



**“IF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS TAUGHT US ANYTHING, IT’S THAT THE WORLD’S MOST PRESSING ISSUES DEMAND MORE THAN MERE DISCUSSIONS. THEY REQUIRE COLLABORATION, STRATEGIC THINKING AND CONCRETE ACTION.”**

– Maria Fernanda Garza Merodio

## FEATURING



### OMAR BIN SULTAN AL OLAMA

Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy & Remote Work Applications  
Chairman, Dubai Chamber of Digital Economy (UAE)



### MARIA FERNANDA GARZA MERODIO

First Vice-Chair,  
International Chamber of Commerce (Mexico)

**W**ith Dubai being the host city of the #12WCC, H.E. Omar bin Sultan Al Olama – Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy and Remote Work Applications for the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Chairman of Dubai Chamber of Digital Economy – took the audience back in time to 1912, to the birth of Sheikh Rashid Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, the Founding Father of Dubai.

“This child was born into a city with great ambitions and came from a family that believed the future is always going to be positive if we forward plan and invest today, for a better tomorrow,” he said.

Referring to Sheikh Rashid as one of the first believers in globalisation, H.E. Al Olama recounted the story of how under Sheikh Rashid’s leadership, Dubai grew to become a city of merchants and traders.

“He invested in creating global ports

and airports and being even more open than ever before,” he continued. “Many people around him thought his investments were farfetched and maybe too forward looking.

“And although he did not see the city he built, today his children continue to make his city, and country, one of the leading commerce hubs in the world.”

### THE FUTURE OF CHAMBERS

In a year when the UAE was hosting a gathering of 192 countries at the largest World Expo in history – Expo 2020 Dubai – H.E. Al Olama expressed his confidence in shaping a new phase of Chambers 4.0 – to take the world of commerce beyond the digital age, and into the age of intelligence.

“We’re here to learn from each other, and we’re here to build the future from Dubai, from the UAE, because we believe this is the best place to talk about the future.”

## IN SUMMARY

- Dubai was founded on Sheikh Rashid’s belief in globalisation
- The Congress is an opportunity to learn from each other with the goal of building a better future
- Leaders must be prepared to innovate together to face new and existing challenges
- Chambers 4.0 will enable peace, prosperity and opportunity for all

## CONCRETE ACTION

Maria Fernanda Garza Merodio, First Vice-Chair of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) echoed the minister’s sentiments by saying the power of digital technology and connectivity is what enabled the #WCC to be the most collaborative and inclusive to date.

“If the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it’s that the world’s most pressing issues demand more than mere discussions,” she said. “They require collaboration, strategic thinking and concrete action. [And] as leaders, we must be prepared to innovate in the face of new and existing challenges.”

## TECHNOLOGY IS KEY

Ms Garza expressed her pride in ICC’s global campaign to save SMEs during the pandemic as the institutional representative of more than 45 million businesses worldwide.

“We have been working together [with governments and chambers] to support systems that hold up trade globally, including supply chains that have come under increasing pressure during this pandemic,” she said. “Technology adoption and digitalisation are key to enabling access to international markets.”

Ms Garza said that being mindful of this shift, ICC is introducing a suite of new tools and services, such as its trade finance marketplace, powered by Finastra, TRADECOMM.

“Working together, we are rising to the challenge to lead, inspire and connect Chambers 4.0 to enable greater peace, prosperity and opportunity for all in the face of major challenges,” said Ms Garza. “And there is much work to be done.”





market, saying that organisations are often slow to change and weighed down by formalities.

“We must use leaders for the project to move through resistance, finding that someone willing to leapfrog and lead to the future. You must use them as a role model for success that others will want to follow,” he said. “Identify ‘champions’ within the organisation who are ready and highlight them.”

Discussing the bureaucratic nature of chambers, he stated automating internal operations within chambers should be one of the first things to be addressed in order to benefit customer experience, insights and decision making, as well as improving back office functions.

**“THE CHAMBER CAN ACT AS A HOLDING COMPANY TO BENEFIT MANY OF ITS MEMBERS AT ONCE.”**

– Kaveh Vessali

FEATURING



**KAVEH VESSALI**  
Digital Services, Data & AI,  
and Smart Cities,  
PwC (UAE)

**D**igital fitness means recognising the importance of effective data and technology, and that includes by chambers, explained Kaveh Vessali, Digital Services, Data & AI, and Smart Cities at PwC.

Discussing ways to better lead and run chambers of the future, he said: “Starting from the top, the most important thing to do in leveraging technology is have a strategy. Without a true north you may end up implementing lots of data and technology initiatives, but it’s critical they’re pointing in the same direction, serving members, staff and the organisation’s mission.”

Mr Vessali cited three major components of successfully running an

organisation harnessing technology. For instance, customer and member experience is critical, offering not only technology, but access to data and the use of digital channels.

“Services provided can and should be digitised,” he said, giving the example of the transformation of back-end operations being automated through the likes of robotics.

“Intelligent automation can free up your resources to do more value added activities. We need to turn big data into rich data to better serve,” Mr. Vessali continued, stressing the importance of the gathering and management of information and ensuring it is good quality and integrated. “These are what we use AI for, increasing digital saviness of the organisation.”

DATA FOR DECISION MAKING

The digital expert went on to ask the audience to engage in a series of questions regarding the digital fitness of their respective organisations, addressing issues such as which tools are in place to support digital activity, how secure data is, the organisation’s digital mindset, and the impact of and ROI on digital channels and digital marketing spend.

Data should be a tool to improve decision making at management level and to benefit stakeholders, he noted. With a data strategy and quality standards in place, it can be of huge benefit to an organisation.

Mr Vessali then asked the pertinent question of how chambers can change the business model to be more fit for

IN SUMMARY

- Organisations should not be afraid of AI and automation, but instead see them as a better way to harness and utilise existing resources
- Data security is a key pillar of digital fitness
- Big data must be turned into rich data so organisations can better serve members and customers
- Digital strategy is key to digital fitness



# CHAMBERS 4.0 – PART I: IS YOUR CHAMBER READY FOR CHAMBER MODEL INNOVATION?

## FEATURING



**HAMAD BUAMIM**  
President & CEO,  
Dubai Chambers (UAE)



**REBECCA MCLAUGHLIN-EASTHAM**  
Broadcast Journalist,  
Moderator & Media Trainer  
(UAE)

**G**oogle search results for “chamber of commerce” have dropped by 93% since 2004, which according to Hamad Buamim, President and CEO of Dubai Chamber, makes them “93% less relevant” today.

“Chambers need to evolve to survive,” he said. “The business model of chambers of commerce doesn’t work anymore, because of the Internet. [It] made information very cheap, it made the services very accessible. If you want to network, I’m not going to go to [a] chamber of commerce, I’m just going to go to LinkedIn and connect with people way, way faster than any other organisation in this room.”

Old mentalities and models need to change if chambers are to survive the frequent disruptions of technology, he stated.

“Usually think we know what [the] customer wants. We go and we create solutions and we try to sell these solutions to customers, because we’ve

spent a lot of money on it,” Mr Buamim explained, adding that this was the typical approach adopted by many chambers.

However, Dubai Chamber decided to take “a few steps back” recently. “We talked about the value proposition from the points of views of customers; we need to understand the needs of customers... and then we need to come with ideas,” he said. “We realised that we are different, everybody is different so you cannot have ‘one-size-fits-all’. [When] finding solutions, we need to keep in mind, because of the rapid changes of our customers’ needs, these solutions will be applicable today but they will not be applicable in the future.”

**BUT ARE CUSTOMERS WILLING TO PAY?**

After brainstorming ideas, Dubai Chamber was convinced it had some “brilliant ideas”, Mr Buamim noted, but soon realised they were not

**“WE HAVE TO MOVE AWAY FROM OUR CURRENT SUCCESS; WE NEED TO UNLEARN WHATEVER WE KNOW.”**

– Hamad Buamim

feasible after customers did not want to pay for the services.

“[This] means it is not a viable business model. With public chambers of commerce, we always believe we are creating value.”

An idea that did work however, was one that catered to Africa-based companies looking to conduct business in Dubai.

“We thought businesses in Africa, they would like to connect with businesses in Dubai,” said Mr Buamim, so the chamber held webinars to introduce the companies to the emirate. However, these companies

were not looking to network; rather, they were looking for ways to validate trusted companies, for credit rating scores, and other practical matters. Providing them with the service they wanted proved a success, resulting with nine paying members.

“We continue this cycle of experimentation, cycle of ideation and validating learning to be able to grow our new bundle of services,” he continued. “We need innovative business processes that can allow us to deal with different markets, different customer needs at different times in the future. We will be able to make these chambers of commerce and our organisation able to cope with any change that will happen.”

## A TAILORED APPROACH

Mr Buamim cautioned that in future, each chamber will require its own strategy since no two chambers or organisations are the same. Smaller chambers are considered more agile and dynamic, while bigger chambers have more infrastructure, he said.

However, one thing they have in common is that they all require more partnerships and collaboration.

“[There’s] no way we can catch up as organisations with technology, [so] we need to look at partnerships. We partnered with Google, because we know [they’re] much better than us in doing this type of work.”

Keeping pace with technology is important, and so is sustainability.

Young people who are part of the digital economy are opting to live and work in economies where sustainability is high on the agenda, and so sustainability is “not an issue of just a good brand to have, but it has become an economic delivery and economic development agenda that is required for the future,” said Mr Buamim.

This new mindset requires organisations like chambers of commerce to “unlearn” their old ways, he concluded.

“We have to move away from our current success, we need to unlearn whatever we know.”

## IN SUMMARY

- Without agility to change, Chambers are at risk of becoming irrelevant
- Chambers need to “unlearn” traditional and legacy ways of thinking
- Chambers should think with a customer mindset
- Partnerships, especially with technology companies, are necessary



# CHAMBERS 4.0 - PART II: HOW, WHY & WHERE WE NEED TO MOVE

FEATURING



**ADAM J. BOCK**  
Executive Education Instructor & Coach,  
Wisconsin School of Business  
Interim CFO, Endsulin (USA)



**TODD LETTS**  
CEO, The Brampton Board of Trade (Canada)



**WOUTER VAN GULCK**  
General Manager, Federation of Belgian  
Chambers of Commerce (Belgium)



**NOLA WATSON**  
Deputy President, Australian Chamber of  
Commerce & Industry (Australia)



**“I PERSONALLY HAD TO UNLEARN SOME OF MY 90S ERA MBA. WHEN YOUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS SEE THAT VULNERABILITY AND YOU EMBRACE THE EXPERIMENTATION, THAT’S WHERE CONFIDENCE BUILDING HAPPENS.”**  
– Todd Letts

Experts from around the world gathered to address the issue of chamber innovation and how best to take chambers beyond a pandemic and global economic crisis. Adam J. Bock – Executive Education Instructor and Coach at the Wisconsin School of Business, and Interim CFO for Endsulin – told the audience that chamber model innovation is “critical” so that, as institutions, they continue to be relevant and successful. It is not a “one-size-fits-all” solution, he noted, adding that each one needs to address the innovation strategy individually for its own stakeholders. Calling it the “innovators’ dilemma,” Mr. Bock said: “The better an organisation becomes at what it does, the more difficult it will be to do something different,” noting the difficulty facing chambers that have

retained a consistent strategy through the years, until now. Todd Letts, CEO of the Brampton Board of Trade agreed, saying that chamber innovation is a process of “learning and unlearning”, especially for those who have been in business for decades, as he has. “Targeting segments on popular social media platforms, assessing analytics, designing landing pages for a website... CEOs don’t tend to have those skills. I personally had to unlearn some of my 90s era MBA,” he admitted. “It got me here but it isn’t going to get me to the next level. When your staff and volunteers see that vulnerability and you embrace the experimentation, that’s where confidence building happens.” **MOVING FORWARD QUICKLY** For Wouter Van Gulck, General Manager of the Federation of Belgian

Chambers of Commerce, a key issue is that change is much slower in Europe than other markets such as the United States, with Europeans being more risk averse, he noted. “The decision-making process can be long and tedious in chambers with different levels of management involved,” he explained. “Lazy organisations tend to move very slowly and don’t change rapidly. We have to empower our people – the members, the board – to question us too. It’s a process of trial and error.” Meanwhile, offering the audience the Australian perspective, Nola Watson, Deputy President of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry joined the panel virtually to discuss innovations made in her home country, and the influence of a global pandemic. “Strategies we thought we’d roll out [over time] changed overnight,”

IN SUMMARY

- Innovation should be uniquely tailored to each chamber
- Cultural change starts with staff
- Technological investment is key to innovation within chambers
- Chamber reluctance to change is a challenge to be addressed for the future

she said, including communications and membership strategies. “Had we not already adopted a digital-first and data-first approach, we wouldn’t have been able to make the gains we made, in addition to the technological investments.” A new, free members option was introduced, offering the likes of SMEs the chance to experience what the benefits of membership might be before committing financially. Though this did not always convert paying members, the huge surge in numbers – from 21,000 to 69,000 members within one year – came with benefits such as the greater ability to garner sponsorships and partnerships. Ms. Watson noted that even across the state of New South Wales alone, each chamber has a different need and audience, so as others observed, innovation across chambers will be of enormous value. But localisation is key.

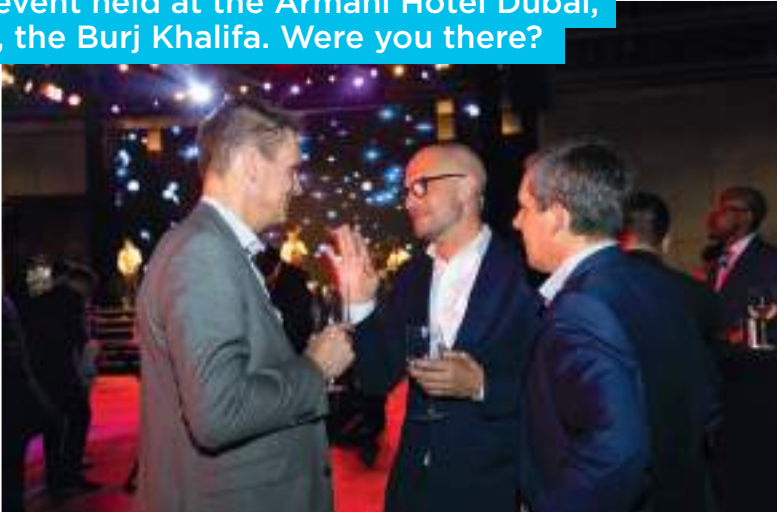
One challenge that must be addressed moving forward is that of cultural change within chambers, some of which are decades-old and rooted in history and outdated tradition, Ms. Watson concluded. “Staff must be onboard,” she said. “Getting that cultural change will take quite a long time so without that support, it will be much more challenging.”





# #12WCC WELCOME RECEPTION

At the end of the first day of the 12th World Chambers Congress, it was time for guests to relax and unwind, and meet Congress hosts, participants, and colleagues at an exclusive gala event held at the Armani Hotel Dubai, part of Dubai's iconic skyscraper, the Burj Khalifa. Were you there?





# LEADERS OF TOMORROW: IMAGINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CHAMBERS

FEATURING



**ALANOUD AL HASHMI**  
CEO & Founder,  
The Futurist Company (UAE)



**RANA BARAKAT**  
Head of Growth & Global  
Business Solutions  
(METAP), TikTok (UAE)



**ARTEM DALEVICH**  
Vice President, Moscow  
Chamber of Commerce  
& Industry (Russian  
Federation)



**MIKE VAN DER VIJVER**  
Meeting Designer & Co-  
Founder, MindMeeting  
(Netherlands)



**KEVIN HIN**  
Secretary General, Junior  
Chamber International  
(USA)

**R**elevancy is the key to bridging the gap between chambers and younger generations to help build a better future for all. Talking about the overall vision of the future, Alanoud Al Hashmi, CEO and Founder of the Futurist Company stated that different generations need to work together.

“The younger generation is passionate, informed, tech-savvy and solution-orientated, but they lack certain experience – which the older generation has,” she said. “Working together, instead of in silos, is the essence of why collaboration is important, because we need each other.”

**LISTEN BETTER TO BUILD BETTER**

Ms Al Hashmi also stressed the importance of being mindful that today’s leaders are making decisions for the generations of tomorrow.

“[Today] the older generation are making decisions for the younger generation, they are making these decisions within governments and organisations,” she said. “It’s really important for them to listen to [the younger generation’s] thoughts and concerns in order to build a better future together.”

Ms Al Hashmi went on to laud the United Arab Emirates’ (UAE)

government’s approach to engaging younger generations by appointing young ministers and key business leaders to help bridge dialogue gaps.

**TIKTOK AS A TOOL FOR BUSINESS GROWTH**

Agreeing with the fact that chambers need to start listening to businesses, Rana Barakat, Head of Growth and Global Business Solutions for METAP at TikTok, brought the social media company’s corporate perspective to the discussion.

“TikTok actually has audiences of all ages that make up one billion monthly active users,” she said. “To shatter some misconceptions about TikTok, we do not classify it as a social media app; [it’s about a community] that can bridge older generations with younger ones over topics they are passionate and want to learn more about.”

Explaining how the platform enables businesses to authentically connect with audiences she continued: “[The connection] can become quite real and impactful for brands, helping them trigger certain actions, so in general TikTok has become very important for businesses.”

Ms Barakat illustrated the importance for chambers to learn how to use TikTok, and subsequently educate business communities on the

Moderator



Mike Van der Vijver  
Meeting Designer & Co-Founder  
MindMeeting  
Netherlands

Moderator



Kevin Hin  
Secretary General  
Junior Chamber International (JCI)  
United States of America

Speaker



Alanoud Alhashimi  
CEO & Founder  
The Futurist Company  
United Arab Emirates

Speaker



Rana Barakat  
Head of Growth and Global Business Solutions  
(METAP) Tiktok  
United Arab Emirates

Speaker



Artem Dalevich  
Vice President  
Moscow Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
Russian Federation



IN SUMMARY

- Chambers need to bridge generational gaps
- Older and younger generations need to collaborate in the building of a better future
- Younger generations can help generate new ideas and innovations for chambers to become relevant
- TikTok is an impactful growth tool that chambers can help educate their communities on

tool to maintain relevance with their audiences.

“We’ve seen how some advertisers in the MENA region have amassed so much success which has resulted [for some] in the global franchise of small businesses,” she said.

**THE TIME IS NOW**

However, the onus of bridging the generational chamber gap does not only lie with the more experienced, said Artem Dalevich, Vice-President of the Moscow Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

“At the age of 26, I was the youngest vice-president in the Moscow Chamber of Commerce, and [ever since] it has been my mission to generate new ideas and test new innovation directions for chambers to stay relevant for younger generations,” he said. “The world has changed so fast, [and in dealing with the next generations of entrepreneurs] we need to remember that they had the Internet and access to information from the beginning [of their lives].”

And to enable proper growth in chambers, and most importantly, sustainable impact, chambers need to become and remain of interest to new generations.

To conclude, all the speakers

**“THE FUTURE DOESN’T WAIT FOR THOSE WHO SIT AND CONTEMPLATE, [BECAUSE] TECHNOLOGY WON’T FIX PROBLEMS... [INTEGRATING IT] WITH HUMAN SOLUTIONS, WHILE KEEPING THE PLANET IN MIND IS HOW WE CAN BUILD A BETTER FUTURE.”**

– Alanoud Al Hashmi

agreed that the time for action is now.

“The future doesn’t wait for those who sit and contemplate, [because] technology won’t fix problems, [integrating it] with human solutions, while keeping the planet in mind is how we can build a better future,” commented Ms Al Hashmi.





# PORTRAITS OF SUCCESS: BUILDING BUSINESS RESILIENCE

**“NO MAN IS AN ISLAND. IN EVERYTHING WE DO WE HAVE TO COLLABORATE. THE MORE WE CONNECT AND COLLABORATE, THE FURTHER WE GO.”**  
- Itai Manyere



**A** panel of global business leaders gathered to discuss the key factors for businesses and leaders to survive and thrive in uncertain times. This included disruption, and the importance of innovation and strategy.

Christian Stadler, a professor at Warwick Business School, highlighted challenges that business changes bring – and the key to successful strategy implementation.

The problems are often two-fold, he said, the first one being that CEOs tend to be in an “echo-chamber.”

“They are surrounded by the same people day in and day out,” which he said leads to a stagnation in creativity, because being surrounded by the same people fosters the same behaviour traits and same ideas.

The second problem is getting people excited about a strategy.

“Strategies most often fail in the implementation phase when people don’t like what they hear or just don’t know what to do.”

The solution, Mr Stadler continued, is for businesses to bring people from outside the organisation who can think clearly, stimulate new ideas, and help people adjust to organisational changes.

## REDISCOVERING RELEVANCE

Malte Heyne, CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hamburg, also spoke about business disruption.

Offering a case study, he explained that several years ago, a group of entrepreneurs attempted a takeover of the Hamburg chamber by presenting a new business model and offering cut-rate services. This gave the chamber a wake-up call.

“It was very obvious that we needed to regain the trust of stakeholders,”

he said. “We needed to rediscover our relevance as the voice of the economy and we needed to make our chamber resilient for the future.”

Firstly, the chamber had to define its purpose, said Mr Heyne.

They conducted a large study, quizzing the community on their expectations of the chamber. They found respondents wanted the chamber to not only help shape the future of business, but to also play a role in shaping the future of society in Hamburg.

“This gave us a new identity,” said Mr Heyne. “This gave us a new structure.”

## NEW IDEAS POST-PANDEMIC

For Rajat Jain, Founder and Managing Director of Sunfox Technologies, disruption during the pandemic paved the way for existing players to rethink and strategise.

He offered the example of how the technology conglomerate recognised the growing importance of the shift to home healthcare. As a result, Sunfox came up with new ideas to capitalise on this shift, such as introducing a new pocket-sized ECG device that patients at home can use to detect changes in cardiovascular health.

Also using the COVID-19 pandemic to spark change was Itai Manyere, Past President of the Junior Chamber International (JCI), who discussed the effects the crisis had on businesses.

“The world came to a standstill in March 2020 – we had lockdowns, we were fighting an enemy we didn’t understand. We found ourselves in disruption.”

The chamber launched the JCI RISE initiative, which stands for “Rebuild, Invest, Sustain, Evolve”. It called upon enterprising young leaders to work

## IN SUMMARY

- Disruption in business can foster positive change, and make businesses more resilient
- For new strategies to work, people have to be engaged and excited about an idea
- Listening – whether to an employee, a business leader or community members – is key
- The pandemic is an example of disruption, sparking change and resilience among companies

together to make economies and workforces more resilient.

With support and dedication, the chamber found its enterprising young leaders completing thousands of actions to rebuild the economy, revitalise the workforce through entrepreneurship, and focus more on the mental health and wellbeing of employees and individuals.

“We have to speak to the needs of business; it has to be relevant,” explained Mr Manyere. “No man is an island. In everything we do we have to collaborate. The more we connect and collaborate, the further we go.”

## FEATURING



**MALTE HEYNE**  
CEO, Chamber of Commerce Hamburg (Germany)



**RAJAT JAIN**  
Founder & Managing Director, Sunfox Technologies (India)



**ITAI MANYERE**  
Past President, Junior Chamber International (Zimbabwe)



**CHRISTIAN STADLER**  
Professor, Warwick Business School (Kenya)



**VINCENT O'BRIEN**  
Director, ICC United Arab Emirates (UAE)





# LEADING WITH VISION: NAVIGATING THE NEW NORMAL



**IN SUMMARY**

- Disruption is not only digitisation, but crises like the COVID pandemic
- Chambers and organisations can help future-proof themselves with contingency plans and training exercises
- Future crises could include water and food shortages so the world must be ready
- Contingency plans are important but not enough – they must be practised

FEATURING



**YASSIN AL SUROOR**  
Founder, President & CEO, A'amal Group  
Vice-Chair, International Chamber of Commerce (KSA)



**HANS-JÖRG SCHMIDT-TRENZ**  
Chair, ICC World Chambers Federation Membership Committee; Past CEO & Counsellor, Hamburg Chamber of Commerce (Germany)



**IDE JOHN CHINYELU UDEAGBALA**  
National President, Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines & Agriculture (Nigeria)



**MIKE VAN DER VIJVER**  
Meeting Designer & Co-Founder, MindMeeting (Netherlands)

**I**mpactful leadership strategies are essential for turning disruption into opportunity. In this session, experts from around the world gathered to discuss the importance of contingency planning and futureproofing organisations. Yassin Al Suroor, Founder, President and CEO of A'amal Group, and Vice-Chair of the International Chamber of Commerce, spoke of the need for preparing for the future, as luck is not enough to prepare for a crisis.

"Everybody has to build up [financial] reserves so we have money to spend on days when there is no income," he said. "Today, businesses expect a lot from chambers so they will only be expecting more." Mr Al Suroor asked: "In every business there is a contingency plan for crises and catastrophes but do today's chambers have that?" "We need to create the tools to be ready for the next crisis, not only as chambers."

**PREPARE, PREPARE, PREPARE**  
For Hans-Jörg Schmidt-Trenz, Chair of the ICC World Chambers Federation Membership Committee, and past CEO and Counsellor of the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, disruption is not just defined as "digital"; it also describes major events and developments like the COVID-19 pandemic. Calling these events "a very special kind of disruption," he said: "Overnight it affected everyone all over the world and we were completely unprepared, [and] it will happen again." "COVID is only the symptom of a broader problem; the over consumption of this planet. We are facing food shortages, water shortages, diseases and conflict. Chambers have a responsibility to deal with these questions." Preparation must be a strategy for chambers to move into a post-pandemic era. "Contingency plans are important but not enough. You have to exercise these," Mr Schmidt-Trenz said, noting

that the true quality of staff can only be discovered in the midst of a crisis. "There has to be some training," he said, adding that digital tools can help simulate such events, even if virtually, to build strength and resilience in organisations and prepare them for future crises. Mentioning that Hamburg's chamber is 365 years old – surviving 10 wars and a long history of crises – Mr Schmidt-Trenz described the pandemic as "a third world war without bombs." He added: "These crises will come, but we have to ensure they're handled peacefully and without conflict, which is the challenge of our century."

**RURAL CHAMBERS AND LACKING DIGITAL CAPABILITIES**  
In Nigeria, where the population has already been dealing with endemic malaria, Ide John Chinyelu Udeagbala – National President of the Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture – said he believed that the chamber's function was more limited.

**"COVID IS ONLY THE SYMPTOM OF A BROADER PROBLEM; THE OVER CONSUMPTION OF THIS PLANET. WE ARE FACING FOOD SHORTAGES, WATER SHORTAGES, DISEASES, AND CONFLICT. CHAMBERS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO DEAL WITH THESE QUESTIONS."**  
– Hans-Jörg Schmidt-Trenz

"COVID brought a lot of poverty to the country where we were already dealing with a lot of issues of disease," he said. "As a chamber, we tried to keep connected but the challenge was rural chambers which didn't have digital connections.."

However, there have been changes at least on a chamber and governmental level, he continued, saying the interface with governments was important to carry chambers beyond the pandemic. "COVID brought chambers and government together, because the chamber helped the government form committees for sub-groups such as SMEs at a very low cost to the government."

Building resilience requires simulation for future crises by constant risk assessments, collaborations globally between chambers and the creation of contingency funds, he added. "This is not going to be the last of the pandemic we saw," Mr Udeagbala said.



# DIGITALLY ENABLED TRADE: MAXIMISING THE BENEFITS OF CROSS-BORDER COMMERCE



**L**ivelihoods would not have survived without digital trade during the COVID-19 crisis, but how do businesses, of all sizes, receive the benefits of what some have been able to achieve throughout the pandemic? That was the question posed to panellists who discussed how equity in digital trade is essential to make sure societies and economies worldwide recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director of the International Trade Centre, said COVID-19 highlighted how dependent businesses were on digital platforms. However, the pandemic only exacerbated the digital divide between developed countries and poorer nations.

“There are significant gaps in the readiness and capabilities of developing countries and developed countries,” she said. “That should be a priority.”

And while digital trade is not new, Ms Coke-Hamilton said online trade had “significantly elevated” since the pandemic. However, those in developing countries, such as those in Africa, have been left behind.

“We know that 45% of the world’s population is still not able to access the Internet; costs need to be reduced. The cost of the Internet is significantly higher in developing countries, mostly due to a lack of competition.”

Ms Coke-Hamilton made a rallying call for a universally affordable and accessible Internet, and urged chambers across the globe to do their bit to ensure all businesses, everywhere, had better access to digital trade.

“Be at the table. If you are not at the table you cannot influence change,” Ms Coke-Hamilton continued. “I would like to make my own call to chambers; do your homework, especially if you are

in developing countries. If you are a member state, [then] advocate, advocate, advocate.”

Digital education also needs to be improved, she said.

“The use and relevance of connectivity needs to be improved by building digital skills.”

### SUPPORTING EMERGING MARKETS

John W.H. Denton AO, Secretary General of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) spoke of digital equality in businesses of all sizes in the post-pandemic world.

“If we want to ensure that SMEs and micro-SMEs in developing countries have the best shot, we have to ensure they have [the] tools to become digital and be able to operate effectively on digital platforms without barriers.”

And that can only happen with the creation of a global agreement, he said. Only by ensuring equitable digital access can global economies build back better after COVID-19.

“If you actually want to start moving the global economy, we have to make certain that the businesses populated by people in emerging markets are allowed to operate.”

Mr Denton also said that global vaccination coverage against COVID-19 was vital and underscored that a truly global economic recovery can only take place once vaccines are distributed equitably.

“We need to make certain that happens,” he stated. “Without that, the pandemic will continue and the inequality will continue, or get worse, and that [will actually exacerbate]

### FEATURING



**PAMELA COKE-HAMILTON**  
Executive Director,  
International Trade Centre  
(Switzerland)



**JOHN W.H. DENTON AO**  
Secretary General,  
International Chamber of  
Commerce (Paris)



**HAZEL JACKSON**  
CEO, Bizgroup (UAE)

**“THERE ARE SO MANY BRILLIANT MINDS OUT THERE AND ENTREPRENEURS IN THESE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THEY NEED TO HAVE ACCESS TO BOTH THE CONNECTIVITY AND THE TARIFFS IN PLACE.”**

– John W.H. Denton AO

### IN SUMMARY

- Equity in digital trade is essential
- Online trade significantly grew during the pandemic but those in developing countries, such as those in Africa, have been left behind
- Universally affordable Internet and ease of accessibility is essential
- Chambers must work together to close the digital divide

the absence of access to the digital economy.”

Mr Denton concluded the session by saying that chambers can play a very important role in ensuring their countries take very simple reforms to recognise electronically transmitted negotiable instruments.

“What I say to chambers: If you are serious about enabling business in chambers to be as effective as possible, [then] you want your countries to be involved in this discussion,” the ICC Secretary General noted. “There are so many brilliant minds out there and entrepreneurs in these developing countries. They need to have access to both the connectivity and the tariffs in place.”





# Pause for Thought: Content Contemplation

## THE #12WCC PLAYBOOK

With so much information and insight on offer during #12WCC, delegates were encouraged to “pause for thought” and contemplate the content presented. Throughout the event, there were breaks allowing delegates to make notes, and digest key takeaways from the programme so far.

What made it into your own action plan? What inspiring ideas did you note down during the discussions? We encourage you to revisit your own personal Playbook and discuss ideas with your colleagues!





# KEYNOTE ADDRESS – PIONEERS FOR PROGRESS: CALL TO ACTION

FEATURING



**TED SOUDER**  
Head of Industry – Retail, Google,  
Vice-Chair, Chicagoland Chamber  
of Commerce (United States)

**C**hambers of commerce need to lead by example to help lift the business community out of the pandemic, by embracing digitalisation and setting themselves up for a digital future. This was the main message offered by Ted Souder, Head of Industry – Retail for Google, and Vice-Chair of the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, in his keynote address.

“My belief is that digitalisation is going to have a profound impact not only on your business, but your community and your life,” he said. “And the megatrends of industry and business that have been able to emerge quickly out of the pandemic all share a common thread – digital.”

**HARNESSING MEGATRENDS**

Mr Souder said Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) are a growth area currently offering huge opportunities for chambers, while space is also an area to take note of due to the work of startups in this industry. The final megatrend he referenced was the return-to-work programme post pandemic, which is also generating opportunities for new business.

“[We’ve been talking about] the importance of data and the future treasure that is data,” he said. “Yet data is meaningless if it isn’t decision-ready... [because] making better use of data

will make you more resilient in the future.”

**THE CHAMBERS MOMENT**

Additionally, chambers need to be digital-ready for the next pandemic. “Chambers were built for this moment... because for the first time in world history everyone around the globe has experienced the same challenge at the same time,” Mr Souder said. “The chamber is best suited to be the lead that helps everyone rise [out of this pandemic].”

Positioned at the centre of communities, chambers are in a unique position to help their communities rise.

“We’re talking about helping the economy and jobs. If we [chambers] lead by example the chamber will be the one to lead everyone out of the pandemic, and we will find a new relevance for the future.”

**EMBRACING CHANGE**

Moving on to how chambers can effectively make change happen, he advised: “The first thing you need to do is have a mindset change, as leaders you need to embrace the opportunity that you need to change for the future.”

Re-assessing and re-evaluating organisational needs are other ways in which chambers can embrace change, he added.



“Take stock in your organisations to understand what your needs [and your members’ needs] are,” he said. “[And] make connections with the startup community, [because] there are entrepreneurs doing some incredible work.”

**RETHINKING STRATEGY**

In his conclusion, Mr Souder stressed the need for chambers to rethink their current strategies.

“Any [strategic] plans written two to five years ago are now outdated, [because] we’re not going back to the way things used to be,” he said. “[So] think about putting the old plans aside and taking aspects of what worked, and building a new strategic vision for the future - and then acting on it...[because] I can’t emphasise enough how much I believe that this is chamber’s moment.”

**IN SUMMARY**

- Chambers can help the business community recover by leading the way with digitalisation
- Megatrends emerging from the pandemic offer growth opportunities
- The startup community offers untapped partnership potential for chambers
- Chambers need to rethink their strategic visions and act on them quickly





# INSPIRING TALES: CASE STUDIES FROM THE CHAMBER FRONT LINE

FEATURING



**HASSAN AL HASHEMI**  
Vice-President  
International Relations,  
Dubai Chamber of  
Commerce (UAE)



**MICHAEL BARNETT**  
CEO, Auckland Business  
Chamber (New Zealand)



**ADOLFO DIAZ-AMBRONA**  
Secretary-General, Spain  
Chamber (Spain)



**JANE CUNNINGHAM**  
Managing Director  
Cunningham Consulting  
AB (Sweden)

In the session's first case study, Hassan Al Hashemi, Vice-President of International Relations at Dubai Chamber of Commerce, shared how vital the chamber had been during the pandemic to its 280,000 members.

"It's been critical for us to move quickly to support them as much as possible, so we had to unite to raise those members' voices."

He told delegates how the chamber had created its own Connect platform online, noting that government regulations were changing rapidly during the pandemic, and so the chamber needed to communicate with members quickly. If they had questions, they could raise these concerns to the proper authorities.

Dubai Chamber also helped many businesses go online with the help of a collaboration with Google. Mr Al Hashemi said it was an inspiring story for other partners to take on board, showing the importance of partnerships formed by the chamber to benefit members.

"Chambers are institutions representing their demographics, members, economic sectors and values," he explained. "We believe a digital economy is the way forward,

and we all know that."

Referencing multinationals, Mr Al Hashemi stated: "Some may say they're well-established and ask what support they would need, but it's about uniting the voices and being able to support everyone within the membership and to utilise such partnerships to add value to the SMEs.

"That's why we have the Dubai International Chamber [established to strengthen partnerships with global corporations, investors and entrepreneurs and boost Dubai's status as a major trade hub] now.

It's exciting times ahead coming to our region," adding that such chamber model innovation helps chambers stay relevant.

**"THE BEST  
RESPONSE  
IS TO HAVE  
GOVERNMENT  
AND BUSINESS  
WORKING  
TOGETHER AS  
A TEAM."**

– Michael Barnett

**NOT NEGLECTING  
MENTAL HEALTH**

Joining via live link from New Zealand, Michael Barnett, CEO of the Auckland Business Chamber, shared his experience of the vital role the organisation played during the pandemic.

As lockdown created a catalogue of devastation for businesses, he said the key was supporting the more human side of the devastation.

"What we need to realise is that business failing isn't only about business but family, partners, and relationships also failing," he said, explaining how mental health became a critical pillar of the chamber's lobbying agenda.



Requesting support from the government, the chamber secured a multi-million dollar fund to help leaders with mental health issues.

"My chamber was asked to design the response so we created an online platform including 24-hour emergency support, wellbeing assessment tools, counselling and webinars with psychologists," he said. "Lobbying and advocating and putting pressure on government has been a key role during the pandemic for the chamber to engage better support for business during tough times.

"It's about making it easy for the government to work with business," Mr Barnett said.

Auckland Business Chamber secured business support funding from the government, and identified a government mechanism which could deliver those funds so that the government didn't have to think of that.

"We acted as one voice," he said. "The best response is to have the

IN SUMMARY

- Each chamber must create its own unique policy for its respective market
- Digitisation is relevant to any market globally
- Economic crisis is not only about economics; the human impact must also be part of a chamber's concerns
- Mental health should not be neglected, even in business

government and business working together as a team."

**DIGITISING ONE MILLION COMPANIES**

Also sharing his inspiring tale was Adolfo Diaz-Ambrona, Secretary General of Spain Chamber, who announced that the day marked the launch of a major digitisation project for the chamber.

Funded by the EU, the Digital Kit Programme in which the Spanish chamber will play a major role, will spearhead digitisation across the country, helping digitise one million companies.

Calling it one "the most important project in the history of Spain chamber," the programme, Mr Diaz-Ambrona said, is part of the recovery plan for economic growth and job creation. The chamber plans to create 87 offices around the country to support the project and offer personalised attention to companies in this process.





# CHAMBERS CONNECT: UNITING OUR GLOBAL NETWORK

**P**anellists shared insights into the ICC World Chambers Federation's "Chambers Connect", a digital community platform developed specifically for chamber staff to connect, collaborate and innovate to positively impact and better serve their members.

Nicolas Uribe Rueda, President of Bogota Chamber of Commerce – who has been working with the platform already – stated it was “the greatest opportunity to serve chambers.”

He said: “Chambers Connect is a platform which will allow us to share knowledge and put into practice a lot of opportunities which chambers have developed to serve their members,” adding that finding new, faster ways to better serve members is a key goal of the new online tool.

“Societies want results and they want them now. Chambers have evolved in a great way in the past few years, so it's an opportunity for chambers to share what they're doing and build responses in quick and effective ways.”

Having been on the task force for the project, Mr Rueda explained how Chambers Connect had been developed in collaboration with several chambers around the world, based on a gaming format to help grow the community

whereby active community members have incentives and benefits for joining. There will also be specific groups for issues and industries, such as supply chain and renewable energy.

Over 220 chambers are involved already but the platform's creators expect a lot more, with a range of useful and easy-to-use functions, such as uploading documents all united in one place. A “topics” area is also present for members to share knowledge and insights on relevant issues to unite communities in expertise. There are an estimated 57 chambers in Colombia using it already, with 3,000 companies reached in just eight months due to the technology and thanks to the pooled resources of the chambers.

“It was a booster for collaboration and it's a good example of what we can do, reaching over 600 presidents

**“CHAMBERS HAVE EVOLVED IN A GREAT WAY IN THE PAST FEW YEARS, SO IT'S AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CHAMBERS TO SHARE WHAT THEY'RE DOING AND BUILD RESPONSES IN QUICK, EFFECTIVE WAYS.”**

– Nicolas Uribe Rueda

ACCESS CHAMBERS  
CONNECT HERE



## FEATURING



**NICOLAS URIBE RUEDA**  
President, Bogota Chamber of Commerce (Colombia)



**BASTIEN ODIC**  
Digital Transformation & Innovative Partner, Expertime.com (France)



**MIKE VAN DER VIJVER**  
Meeting Designer & Co-Founder, MindMeeting (Netherlands)

## IN SUMMARY

- Chambers Connect allows chambers globally to serve members better and faster
- It is a value-adding tool for chamber staff worldwide
- Its gamification format can help grow the global chamber community online
- In Colombia alone, the digital platform has reached over 600 presidents and CEOs in the eight months since its initial launch

and CEOs,” said Mr Rueda. “We’re an organisation which serves and this is something which will help us serve better and faster.”

## CHAMBERS CONNECT LIVE DEMO

Bastien Odic, Digital Transformation and Innovative Partner for Expertime.com, conducted a live demo of the technology in action so that audience members who had not yet accessed the platform could see its value.

Using slides and live examples on the large screen behind him, Mr Odic guided delegates on how to use certain functions to showcase the platforms whose success depends on its community's participation.

Everyone was invited to register in order to receive an invitation to connect to the platform and engage live as they were being given a demonstration.

“You can connect across your country and the world,” said Mr Odic, adding that the platform was a “place to share ideas” among other tools.





# LOOKING AHEAD: ANTICIPATING GENEVA

FEATURING



**VINCENT SUBILIA**  
Director General, Geneva Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Services (Switzerland)



**JULIEN TORNARE**  
CEO, Zenith, Branch of LVMH Swiss Manufactures SA (Switzerland)



**MIKE VAN DER VIJVER**  
Meeting Designer & Co-Founder, MindMeeting (Netherlands)

As the #12WCC drew to a close, discussions turned to Geneva in 2023, where and when the next Congress will be held.

Putting a spotlight on the Geneva Chamber of Commerce, Director General, Vincent Subilia likened it to a mechanical Swiss watch, for the level of quality and excellence it offers to its members. The chamber will be ICC's #13WCC co-organiser.

"Swiss watches symbolise Swiss excellence and also reflect what's in the DNA of our [country's] chamber," he said. "At our chamber, our role is to ensure we assess our relevance and make sure we deliver daily benefits to our members."

HELPING COMPANIES STAY CURRENT

Touching upon relevance, Julien Tornare, CEO of Zenith, discussed the issue his business is currently up against since the advent of smart watches.

"Our industry is facing a challenge of how to keep new generations interested in mechanical watches," he said. "Because it's true that in a few years Apple will have produced more watches than the whole Swiss watch industry ever has."

When offered the opportunity to join the Geneva Chamber, Mr Tornare welcomed it with open arms.

"I know how much dynamism Vincent puts into his job and the function of defending Swiss businesses to help companies grow and develop; not only in our region but worldwide," he said. "[Which is why] I immediately jumped on the opportunity to be a member of the Geneva Chamber of Commerce to work on clearly defending and promoting our industry at the global level."

And one way in which Mr Tornare has been able to do this – with the help of the chamber – is by crafting a relevant sustainability angle.

When you produce a mechanical watch it's an object that will live forever...if you have a watchmaker able to maintain it, it will still work in 400 years," he said. "We [our industry] is in the middle of the sustainable circular economy, because we produce objects that will live forever, which

**"IN GENEVA WE'VE CREATED A HIGHLY PROFESSIONALISED MARKETPLACE, BE IT HUMAN OR DIGITAL, WHEREBY WE FACILITATED COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY."**

- Vincent Subilia

is something very meaningful for the younger generation."

ADDING VALUE

Illustrating how the Geneva Chamber helps business, Mr Subilia referenced Dubai Watch Week, which was running in parallel to the #12WCC.

"This timely showcase of the expertise of the watchmaking industry offers a win-win for the benefit of our members, by adding value wherever we can for entrepreneurs in Geneva to understand the power of the chambers movement."

Mr Subilia added that his chamber

assists the business community on a macro and micro level by advocating business conditions on the political front, while remaining constructively critical of the work carried out by the authorities – as a private organisation.

"What we have been doing in Geneva is to deploy a wide range of services, among them the obvious export related services including the famous carnet ATA, that was invented in Geneva, by one of my predecessors," he said. "And it is really a practical tool we offered to the watchmaking industry to help get their watches abroad."

Mr Subilia continued: "In Geneva, we've created a highly professionalised marketplace, be it human or digital, whereby we facilitated communication within the business community."

IMPACT OF COVID ON THE CHAMBER AND BUSINESS

Reiterating a notion expressed throughout the congress, Mr Subilia stressed how much of a game changer the pandemic has been for the chamber environment.

"This is the chambers' moment, because in these difficult times, and through the economic tragedy we have been witnessing, chambers are being called upon to be even more

IN SUMMARY

- The next World Chambers Congress will be held in Geneva from 21-23 June 2023
- Geneva Chamber of Commerce of Commerce, Industry and Services creates a marketplace to facilitate opportunity for the Swiss business community
- The Geneva Chamber invented the ATA carnet, the passport for goods, which is now used around the world for export services
- Chambers now have the opportunity to demonstrate their added value for the business environment

relevant," he said. "[Which is why] we need to showcase on a daily basis what our added value to the business environment is, and ensure we articulate it well."

In doing so, chambers can in some sense become lighthouses for the business community and the private sector, helping them navigate choppy waters.





“[THE 13TH WORLD CHAMBERS CONGRESS] WILL BE A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO DISCOVER SWITZERLAND, THROUGH GENEVA - THE MOST INTERNATIONAL OF SMALL CITIES OFFERING SUCH A VIBRANT AND DYNAMIC ATMOSPHERE.”

- Julien Tornare

FEATURING



**VINCENT SUBILIA**  
Director General, Geneva Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Services (Switzerland)



**JULIEN TORNARE**  
CEO, Zenith, Branch of LVMH Swiss Manufactures SA (Switzerland)



**MIKE VAN DER VIJVER**  
Meeting Designer & Co-Founder, MindMeeting (Netherlands)

# THE GENEVA CONNECTION: #13WCC

Each edition of the World Chambers Congress is as unique as a fingerprint and the 13th World Chambers Congress, set to take place 21 to 23 June 2023, is expected to deliver a theme of multilateralism for shared prosperity, said Vincent Subilia.

Presenting the Geneva vision for bringing the chamber network together, just like Dubai did, Mr Subilia - Director General of the Geneva Chamber of Commerce - said: "Taking the Olympic torch home to Geneva will bring a sense of continuity as we continue to embark on a journey of enhancing the strength of the chamber's movement."

**LEARNING FROM DUBAI**

Illustrating the similarities between the two cities for being trading hubs in their respective regions, Mr Subilia went on to say that learnings from the #12WCC had revealed how the chamber movement can remain even more relevant in years to come. It is a learning that will be carried over to Geneva in two years.

"Geneva and Dubai are both trading hubs, which is something they both have in common as merchants of peace," he said. "Which is essentially an idea which formed the International Chamber of Commerce [ICC] over a hundred years ago."

And with Geneva being what he referred to as a global village, home to hundreds of international institutions and more than 700 non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the city symbolises a neutral marketplace in the heart of Europe.

"The constituencies in Geneva are brokering solutions for a better world through cooperation and multilateralism," he said. "[Something which is] at stake and in danger, as we see from the current geopolitical perspective, and we need to put multilateralism back on stage."

**A UNIQUE VENUE**

The Geneva Chamber will ensure the private sector is duly heard, continued Mr Subilia, "because that is what Geneva is all about. It's about a unique venue where we can venture into dialogue."

The city's international component also aligns with what world chambers are trying to achieve, added Zenith CEO, Julien Tornare.

"[The 13th World Chambers Congress] will be a great opportunity to discover Switzerland, through Geneva - the most international of small cities offering such a vibrant and dynamic atmosphere," he said.

Emphasising how the Congress in Dubai had showcased the agility of the business community in the face of a pandemic, Mr Subilia added how Geneva will demonstrate this further.

"We've heard about the state-of-the-art and ground-breaking innovations emerging from the pandemic. What Geneva will do is leverage expertise and scale them up to deliver for the good of us all."

IN SUMMARY

- Multilateralism for shared prosperity will be the theme of the 13th World Chambers Congress
- Geneva symbolises a neutral marketplace in the heart of Europe
- Multilateralism is in danger and needs to be put back into the spotlight
- The #13WCC will leverage and scale up the expertise shared in Dubai






# GENERATION NEXT: BUILDING TOMORROW'S CHAMBERS




FEATURING



**HAMAD BUAMIM**  
President & CEO,  
Dubai Chambers (UAE)




**FABIENNE FISCHER**  
Minister, Geneva  
Department of Economy &  
Labour (Switzerland)



**VINCENT SUBILIA**  
Director General, Geneva  
Chamber of Commerce  
(Switzerland)



**AJAY BANGA**  
Former CEO & Member  
of the Board of Directors,  
Mastercard; Vice-Chair,  
General Atlantic (United  
States); Chair, International  
Chamber of Commerce



**MIKE VAN DER VIJVER**  
Meeting Designer & Co-  
Founder, MindMeeting  
(Netherlands)

In the final session of the #12WCC, organisers and delegates shared reflections on the successful event which brought together chamber leaders, business heads and government officials from across the globe in the first face-to-face event since the outbreak of the pandemic.

Hamad Buamim, President and CEO of Dubai Chambers, reiterated the importance of the future of chambers and the practical solutions needed to be implemented moving forward.

“This is only the start of the journey and this journey will be able to succeed if we follow up and continue the conversation,” he said.

An “actionable agenda” was important in the planning and execution of the event so that the chambers could take something away for their organisations back home and continue the work and time invested over the three days.

“We want to see more of this continuing and to help delegates in their own day-to-day business.

## IN SUMMARY

- Actions beyond the #12WCC in Dubai are critical to keep momentum going
- Technology employed by the hybrid format of #12WCC was key in making it both sustainable and inclusive
- The future of chambers will certainly include the Chambers Connect platform
- The success of the #13WCC will depend on actionable agendas as employed in Dubai

Mr Buamim also voiced his pride for the launch of the Chambers Connect platform, a tool launched by ICC he says will be vital for chambers of the future “because we believe everything will end up in the platform”.

He added: “I’m very happy [that ICC has] delivered this as we promised.”

**COUNTDOWN TO GENEVA**

Anticipating the upcoming #13WCC in Geneva, Vincent Subilia – Director General of the Geneva Chamber of Commerce – reaffirmed the importance of continuity between Congresses.

“We appreciate sustainability is key, but we don’t want speeches, we want action.”

He called on members to engage others from the developing world on global challenges.

“We want champions of the developing countries’ chambers to join us in Geneva to overcome issues such as access to water.”

Noting the hybrid format which had been used for the first time at the Congress, Mr Subilia pointed out the

very interactive nature of its execution due to the technologies employed by ICC and the Dubai Chamber.

“It’s really set the bar high, because not only is it sustainable but it is inclusive,” although he noted the importance of in-person relationships as well. “We want as many people as possible physically on the ground [in Geneva] as conversations happen around coffee machines.”

The Chambers Connect platform would be an important part of the upcoming Congress, he anticipated, signalling the digitalisation era the chambers were embarking on.

“We are in a very disruptive age, so chambers must adapt and as such the Chambers Connect platform is one part of that.”

**SUSTAINABILITY AT THE FOREFRONT**

Fabienne Fischer, Minister for the Geneva Department of Economy and Labour, agreed that the bar for Geneva had been set high, noting “the quality of the discussions and presentations” as “most impressive.”

Ms Fischer predicted that in 2023 the discussions around reshaping open trade would be strongly influenced by climate action.

“Business can’t be discussed any more without the issue of sustainability,” Ms Fischer said, underscoring the vital role of chambers as the most direct bridge to stakeholders across the world.

Meanwhile, Ajay Banga, the former CEO of Mastercard, and Chair of the International Chamber of Commerce, predicted that trade would become a vital form of stimulus for economies large and small, responsible for fostering, among other things, diversity and innovation.

“Where trade and transparency thrive, people and economies thrive,” he said, adding that chambers continue to be relevant.

“We must be the voices of businesses, large and small. We must use our voices and strength to improve cooperation .... to achieve peace and stability once again. When we help the world thrive, we too will thrive.”

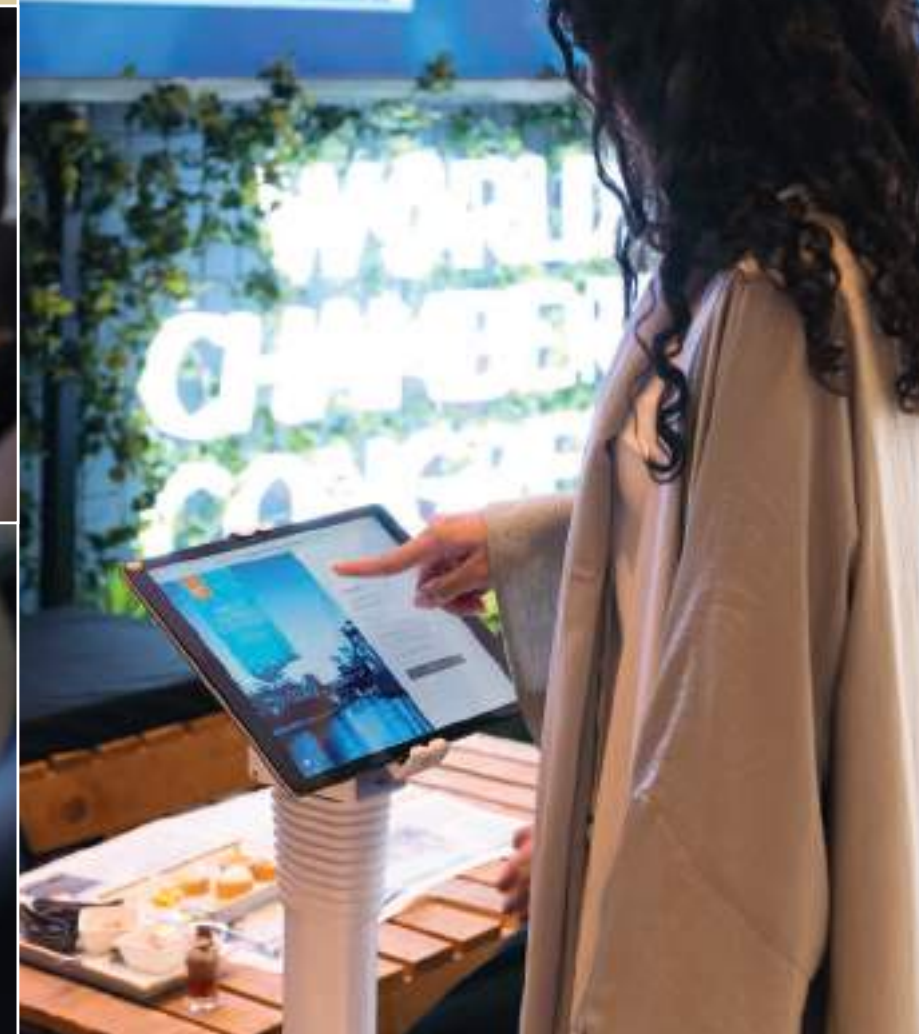
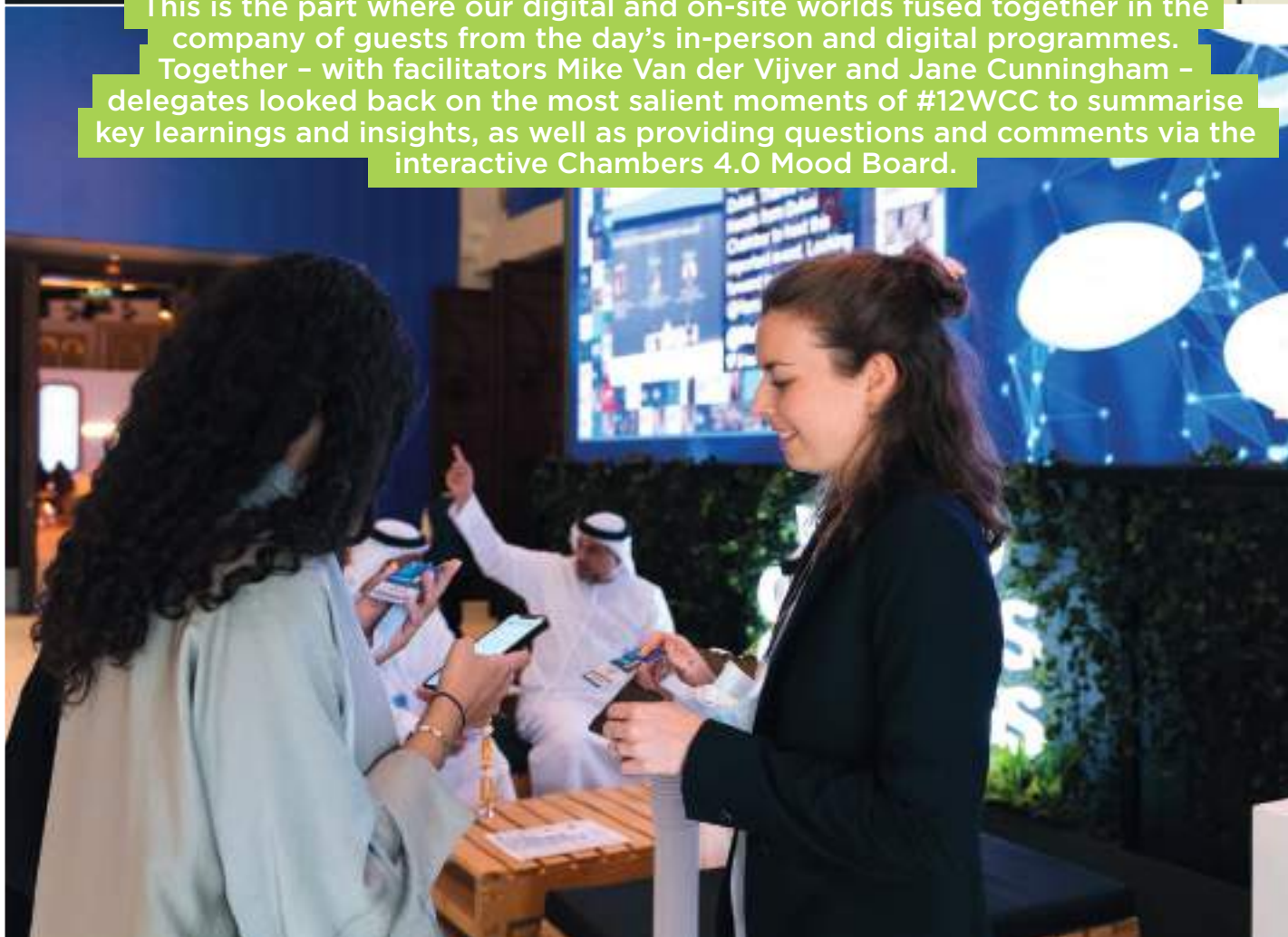
**“WE MUST BE THE VOICES OF BUSINESSES, LARGE AND SMALL. WE MUST USE OUR VOICES AND STRENGTH TO IMPROVE COOPERATION. WHEN WE HELP THE WORLD THRIVE, WE TOO WILL THRIVE.”**

– Ajay Banga



## THE CHAMBERS 4.0 MOOD BOARD

This is the part where our digital and on-site worlds fused together in the company of guests from the day's in-person and digital programmes. Together – with facilitators Mike Van der Vijver and Jane Cunningham – delegates looked back on the most salient moments of #12WCC to summarise key learnings and insights, as well as providing questions and comments via the interactive Chambers 4.0 Mood Board.







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## CHAMBER MODEL INNOVATION WORKSHOP

**T**he first of the Congress' Learning Labs, the Chamber Model Innovation workshop began with a crucial keyword: collaboration.

Adam J. Bock – Executive Education Instructor and Coach at the Wisconsin School of Business and Interim CFO of Endsulin – led the session by urging delegates to unite “in mind”, and collaborate to brainstorm new ways of thinking in business.

“Work with others, have a conversation. It is fundamentally a collaboration process,” he said.

All workshop participants were offered a practical test through a Business Model Canvas, which Mr Bock described as the “core business framework” that can change the way chambers think and do business.

“Fundamentally, Chamber Model Innovation is a customer-driven process that changes the way we create and capture value.”

The Business Model Canvas was split into what has been identified as the key priority areas of any business. This includes value proposition, partners, cost structure, resources, channels, revenue streams, customer segments, and – most critically – customer relationships.

“This is an opportunity to serve an

organisation in a new way; to serve customers in a new way,” Mr Bock continued. “Who are the customers? What are their characteristics? How do they make decisions? Customer behaviour is ultimately our core driver.”

Referencing value proposition, he asked delegates to think about what it is that actually makes customers pay.

“What is something we can provide for them that is not being addressed?”

**“FUNDAMENTALLY, CHAMBER MODEL INNOVATION IS A CUSTOMER-DRIVEN PROCESS THAT CHANGES THE WAY WE CREATE AND CAPTURE VALUE.”**

– Adam J. Bock

### DON'T BE HESITANT TO EXPERIMENT

Mr Bock discussed the importance of running experiments in businesses and in chambers to gauge reaction and collate data to successfully implement and roll-out new ideas.

“This is a reality [in which] chambers will go over time,” he said. “Run experiments to find out what customers actually want.

### FEATURING



**ADAM J. BOCK**  
Executive Education  
Instructor & Coach,  
Wisconsin School of Business  
Interim CFO, Endsulin (USA)

Learn new features and data; design and experiment. This is the core of chamber innovation.”

Workshop participants were then given a case study to work on; to examine what happens when a food delivery venture runs a “buy-one-get-one-free” promotion for one restaurant.

The business idea was that the special promotion would increase orders through a call-in system. In reality, he said, the 72-hour experiment showed the potential of the plan, but also highlighted problems, including long delays, multiple call-ins which burdened chefs, and a lack of delivery vans.

But one positive was that the experiment obtained data that was useful.

Delegates were asked to build on the idea, breaking into teams of two or three and deliberating the task.

Mr Bock explained that the point of the task was to show attendees that any new strategy comes down to a simple formula – identifying the nature of the customer relationships, identifying value propositions, then designing quick low-cost experiments to gauge the success of the idea and to collate valuable data.

“It is about validated learning.”

### FEATURING



**RUEDI BOLLIGER**  
Executive Director, Alliance  
of Swiss Chambers of  
Commerce (Switzerland)



**TINGTING SUN**  
Trade Facilitation Specialist,  
China Council for the  
Promotion of International  
Trade (China)



**MARTIN VAN DER WEIDE**  
Policy Manager on Origin,  
The Netherlands Chamber  
of Commerce (Netherlands)



**VINCENT O'BRIEN**  
Director, ICC United  
Arab Emirates (UAE)

## ATA AND CO: TRADE TOOLS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

**E**xamining the critical role of chambers of commerce in easing cross-border trade, panellists discussed how both private and public sectors can benefit from ATA Carnet – an international customs document that permits the tax-free and duty-free temporary export and import of non-perishable goods for up to a year.

“The ATA Carnet is like a passport for goods that grants access to 70 destinations,” said Ruedi Bolliger, Executive Director at the Alliance of Swiss Chambers of Commerce. “It has been around for over 65 years and to date is the most flexible trade tool. But the bad news is it's still on paper.”

Moving on to speak about the International Chamber of Commerce's ATA Carnet digitalisation (eATA) project, Mr Bolliger added: “ICC is supported by experts in the community; there are a number of components needed to make the eATA a reality. Digitalisation needs to happen in parallel with the traditional system; the curve has changed.”

### LINKING TO THE DIGITAL WORLD

Martin van der Weide, Policy Manager on Origin at the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce stressed the importance of harmonising Certificate of Origin



(CO) – the international trade document that certifies that goods in an export shipment are wholly obtained, produced or manufactured in a particular country – procedures.

“What concerns me the most is how we make the link with the digital world: COs are already digitised but in international trade, there are many blockchain projects; how can we make the connection to our digital COs?”

Spotlighting opportunities in the origin field, Mr van der Weide discussed blockchain in international trade and self-certification, saying: “I see some pilot projects with real benefits; but how can chambers be connected to these blockchain pilot projects since there are currently so many of them... this is our challenge.

“Rules of origin are more and more complex; this means a higher risk for the importer as the exporter can easily make mistakes when declaring the origin itself. SMEs do not have the expertise to deal with origin – who can they ask for to help? We need a strong network of chambers to help exporters in navigating self-certification.”

### NAVIGATING COMPLEXITY

Referencing how importers and exporters are navigating complex free-trade agreements, Tingting Sun,

Trade Facilitation Specialist for the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, explained how the chamber has worked to update and maintain its issuing platform in line with Chinese Customs.

“CCPIT in China has been authorised by [the] Chinese government to issue preferential COs since 2009. We conducted a survey to find out what are the obstacles SMEs encounter when they use FTAs, there is a need to enhance the business community awareness in using FTAs. So a series of measures have been taken, by organising webinars and forums, building an FTA website, providing online courses, we want to tell the public about the critical effect of FTA in boosting trade and economy.”

At closing, the speakers unanimously agreed there is an expectation that things need to move quickly and that the chamber network needs to be strengthened.

“It's difficult to convince ATA issuing bodies that digital is a necessity,” concluded Mr Bolliger. “The good news is, we have everything in place, including infrastructure and technological tools, and by the time we get over this hump it will snowball, to the point we will have trouble educating people how to use it.”





# LET'S GET LOUD: CHAMBER ADVOCACY TO MAKE BUSINESS WORK

**T**he session commenced by stressing the importance of chambers in policymaking for businesses on a local and international level.

Ben Butters, CEO of Eurochambres, explained why chambers not only influence national policy making in Belgium, but also that they must engage the European Parliament and Commission.

"Evidence is crucial in fulfilling that role," he said. "During the crisis we have learnt we can bring members from across Europe with the wonders of Zoom and Google Teams which we should be doing more of, having a direct link between local chambers and policymakers. It's allowed us to become more specific and respond to topics more precisely."

"The pandemic has demonstrated the value of chambers in enabling decision makers to get quick feedback on specific business needs."

In the United Kingdom, Shevaun Haviland, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce explained that her chamber now has weekly meetings with key ministers such as the Minister of Trade.

"As a chamber we are the voice

of British business into government, media and to the world," she said. "The importance of that business feedback through the chamber to the government is crucial. Through the pandemic, we were hour by hour the voice of business into government."

Citing critical policy such as the United Kingdom's furlough schemes and business relief rates during the pandemic, Ms. Haviland continued: "The COVID-19 crisis saw the chambers at its best in this regard. We are the canary in the mine; you're hearing this early feedback from the businesses on the ground, so policymakers make better decisions from that."

### MORE VOICES, MORE DATA

However, for advocacy to gain more traction, there must be more voices, more data, and more means to get the voice of business heard, Ms Haviland stated. Data gathered by the chambers are key to policy making, as seen in recent areas such as Brexit, and the country's fuel crisis.

The need for data was echoed by Emmanuelle Ganne, Senior Analyst in the Economic Research Department at the World Trade Organization.

"Data is the lifeblood of economic

### FEATURING



**BEN BUTTERS**  
CEO, Eurochambres  
(Belgium)



**EMMANUELLE GANNE**  
Senior Analyst – Economic  
Research Department,  
World Trade Organization  
(Switzerland)



**SHEVAUN HAVILAND**  
Director General, British  
Chambers of Commerce  
(United Kingdom)



**QUINLAN CARTHANE**  
Chief of Staff, International  
Chamber of Commerce  
(Paris)

## "THE PANDEMIC HAS DEMONSTRATED THE VALUE OF CHAMBERS IN ENABLING DECISION MAKERS TO GET QUICK FEEDBACK ON SPECIFIC BUSINESS NEEDS."

– Shevaun Haviland

activity but regarding small businesses, data is scattered and incomplete so that makes the life of policymakers complex," she said. "What would be great is more coordination on this globally to give us a complete overview and enable us to act [with more insight]. We rely on the private sector to feed us this information."

She cited the WTO's work to help support small businesses participate in international trade.

"SMEs are so critical in the global economy. We need chambers to tell policymakers what should be focused on, how we can help small businesses. The WTO needs to hear the voice of business."

# MAKING SUSTAINABILITY A BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

**P**osing the question: "Do opportunities for SMEs in sustainability absolutely require government support?", this debate-style session saw speakers split into two teams.

On "Team Agree", Lalu Samuel, Chairman and Managing Director of Kingston Holdings, said he believes governmental support is critical to helping SMEs become sustainable.

"The country creates a mission, and the chamber and individuals execute it," he said, adding that ensuring sustainability is a multi-step approach that needs governance.

And while corporate sustainability and a carbon neutrality commitment should be key priorities for companies, for SMEs this should be a measure that is implemented in stages.

### FEATURING



**KRIS BARBER**  
Founder & CEO,  
DGrade (UAE)



**DARIO GALLINA**  
President, Torino Chamber  
of Commerce (Italy)



**YVONNE OFOSU-  
APPIAH**  
CIO, Wangara Green  
Ventures (Ghana)



**LALU SAMUEL**  
Chairman & Managing  
Director, Kingston Holdings  
(UAE)



**GABRIEL PETRUS**  
Deputy Director, Global  
Partnerships & Develop-  
ment, International  
Chamber of Commerce  
(Paris)



"Sudden implementation can have a negative impact on businesses. It cannot be done overnight," said Mr Samuel. "The government plays a very key role in supporting. It is not just financial support. It is general support, it is awareness, it is supporting implementation, it is supporting studies."

Also agreeing on the importance of governance was Dario Gallina, President of the Torino Chamber of Commerce, explaining that with climate change on the forefront of the global agenda, sustainability is crucial for SMEs. And it has to be "very clear" for chambers of commerce.

But this requires government support.

"We cannot do that without help, support and policies," Mr Gallina said. "In Europe, we have 25 million SMEs. How can they all go in the same direction without policies that help them understand the value of sustainability?"

"We cannot enforce a big change in a few months, a few years. This is a big goal we have to reach, and it has to be done in an intelligent way."

### NO GOVERNMENT SUPPORT?

On "Team Disagree", Kris Barber, Founder and CEO of DGrade, said their company has never relied on

governmental support to implement sustainability practices. He added that he believes it is down to the mindset of companies to incorporate greener standards.

"From our point of view, we don't really need to be told by the government to be more sustainable – we are already in that space."

And I think for a lot of businesses that are starting out, sustainability is at the forefront."

However, Mr Barber pointed out that a common hitch for many SMEs is obtaining funding to support sustainable practices, saying many

see startups as a risky investment.

Yvonne Ofosu-Appiah, CIO of Wangara Green Ventures, added that while governance on sustainability is often easier to implement in wealthier and developed countries, this is not true for African governments that are already overburdened with societal crises such as poverty and water scarcity.

"We cannot overlook government governance. The ideal case is expecting the government to support you. In reality, that doesn't happen," she said. "Ghana already has some sustainability goals, but it is the private sector moving the needle."

At the end of the session, "Team Disagree" had won the debate.

## "FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, WE DON'T REALLY NEED TO BE TOLD BY THE GOVERNMENT TO BE MORE SUSTAINABLE – WE ARE ALREADY IN THAT SPACE."

– Kris Barber



# NEW BEGINNINGS: ENABLING A BRIGHTER FUTURE THROUGH EDUCATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## FEATURING



**ANNE CHAPPAZ**  
Chief, Institutions and  
Ecosystems, International  
Trade Centre (Switzerland)



**MARTIN NEUBAUER**  
Head, Institute for  
Vocational Training, Styria  
Chamber of Commerce  
(Austria)



**JOELLE YAZBECK**  
Executive Coordinator,  
ICC-ESCWA Centre  
of Entrepreneurship  
(Lebanon)



**HAZEL JACKSON**  
CEO, Bizgroup (UAE)

**A** recent survey conducted by the International Labour Organisation investigated the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people. The results showed that repercussions are systematic, deep and disproportionate, affecting women and youth in lower-income countries particularly hard.

Anne Chappaz, Chief of Institutions and Ecosystems at the International Trade Centre, stressed the importance of making jobs more inclusive, as experts predict that within the next 15 years, 600 million jobs need to be created to meet the aspirations of young people today.

"These jobs need to be long lasting, and preferably not part of the gig economy [if possible]," she said. "Most of these new jobs will be in sectors we don't even know about yet; they might require the types of skills we haven't even started teaching our young people."

### SUPPORTING START UPS

In responding to a comment on how entrepreneurs can be solution providers for employment problems with chambers helping budding entrepreneurs succeed and scale, Joelle Yazbeck, Executive

Coordinator of the ICC-ESCWA Centre of Entrepreneurship, added that many of these new types of jobs can potentially come from ambitious and innovative entrepreneurs who need to be supported by incubators and chambers.

Engaging young women and people living in rural areas is also important, said Martin Neubauer, Head of the Institute for Vocational Training at Styria Chamber of Commerce.

"People living in the country have higher manual dexterity, which is extremely important [because] Although we need people [with high cognitive development], we [will also] need so many other professions in the future - [and] we don't even know what they are yet."

Ms Chappaz responded that untapping the potential of women alone would contribute around US\$28 trillion in labour for markets.

### THE ROLE OF CHAMBERS

Chambers can play an important role in matching businesses to the right skill sets they require.

"Chambers are well placed to become the connecting point between understanding businesses' needs and communicating them to the people supplying the skills," said Ms Chappaz. "By helping facilitate internships and apprenticeships, or enabling young people to gain the right soft skills required by business, they then become a bridge to solving the problem."

Ms Yazbeck stressed the importance of one-on-one mentorship programmes for entrepreneurs, which is something chambers can also support.

"Business leaders who are members of chambers are well positioned to help entrepreneurs navigate challenges by offering insights into everything," she said. "We also want chambers to open doors for SMEs [and] help create opportunities for them to expand regionally and internationally."

Mr Neubauer concluded that, essentially, chambers can prepare for tomorrow by becoming relatable.

He explained: "We have to change our perception among young members. Currently we're perceived as 'old school', and to become cool we need to reassess our behaviour, lifestyle and mindset."

## FEATURING



**JEROME AUCHERE**  
Strategy Advisor,  
Federation of Saudi  
Chambers (KSA)



**EMMANUELLE GANNE**  
Senior Analyst - Economic  
Research Department,  
World Trade Organization  
(Switzerland)



**NICOLAS FORZY**  
Client Communications  
Expert, McKinsey &  
Company (France)



# CHAMBERS IN 2026: UNLOCKING THE FUTURE OF BLOCKCHAIN IN A B2B WORLD

**D**uring this session, panellists took part in a role playing exercise in which they adopted the position of a fictional chamber of commerce, while members of the audience joined them to assume the role of a fictional member. The group assessed hypothetically how the relationship between chambers and members looked in 2026.

Overall, this outlook predicted a much greater digital future for chambers.

The experts – comprising Jerome Auchere, Strategy Advisor at the Federation of Saudi Chambers, as well as Emmanuelle Ganne, Senior Analyst of the Economic Research Department at the World Trade Organization – hypothesised that by 2026, all chambers will be connected by a global business-to-business (B2B) platform.

The panel then asked the audience theoretical questions as to the needs of a member, and the role of the chamber as they envisage it in 2026. They were asked to imagine what a member could have at their fingertips in the future, such as easier access to tools, including member databases, analytics, data and more – functions

that can be easily accessed via a mobile device.

Exploring the future, the experts agreed how smart transformation will not only be beneficial to members, but to chambers of commerce as well. They examined the better relationships between members and chambers, citing more transparency and vetting processes, as well as access to data.

### BLOCKCHAIN'S POSSIBILITIES

With three quarters of B2B procurement deals gone digital by 2026, the group discussed the definition of blockchain, its structure, users, and methods, including the roles of players such as governments, policymakers, and the wider benefits to citizens and society more holistically.

Referencing the pre-pandemic lack of data and its inefficient use, Mr Forzy told delegates that he envisioned each member being able to access a far greater degree of analytics to the benefit of business going forward.

"Back in 2020, there were lots of tools and potential but not a lot of global standards we could align and connect with. 2026 has a different hold for us," he said.

Ms Ganne added that the increased

**"BACK IN 2020, THERE WERE LOTS OF TOOLS AND POTENTIAL BUT NOT A LOT OF GLOBAL STANDARDS WE COULD ALIGN AND CONNECT WITH. 2026 HAS A DIFFERENT HOLD FOR US."**

– Nicolas Forzy

use of artificial intelligence and machine learning would enhance the use of data, predicting trends and forecasts at a global level.

Lastly, issues such as crypto currencies were discussed. Looking to the audience to role play, they were asked about their sentiment towards crypto and the sharing of data.

Ms Ganne ended by outlining how crypto would be made more secure and the benefits it may bring to business, even to those who or which may be more risk averse.



**"CHAMBERS ARE WELL PLACED TO BECOME THE CONNECTING POINT BETWEEN UNDERSTANDING BUSINESSES' NEEDS AND COMMUNICATING THEM TO THE PEOPLE."**

– Anne Chappaz





## THE #12WCC EXHIBITORS





## BEND & STRETCH: ADAPTING A FLEXIBLE MINDSET FOR SUCCESS

### FEATURING



**RICHARD BURGE**  
Chief Executive, London  
Chamber of Commerce  
and Industry  
(United Kingdom)



**BEVERLY CASSIDY-MACKENZIE**  
Wellbeing initiative Manager,  
Auckland Business Chamber  
(New Zealand)



**ALEKSANDER LEVENTAL**  
CEO and Co-Founder,  
Feathr (United States)



**AKIKO MURAMATSU**  
Sr. Solution Specialist  
Manager, Microsoft (Japan)



**PEDRAM SOLTANI**  
First Vice-President, Iran  
Chamber of Commerce,  
Industries, Mines &  
Agriculture (Iran)

In a debate format this session saw speakers split into two teams, exploring the notion that

liberating employees from the traditional working week and fixed office locations can be a win-win for workers and businesses alike.

Richard Burge, Chief Executive of London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Beverly Cassidy-Mackenzie, Wellbeing Initiative Manager at Auckland Business Chamber were “Team Disagree”. Aleksander Levental, CEO and Co-Founder of Feathr, and Akiko Muramatsu, Senior Solution Specialist Manager at Microsoft, represented “Team Agree”.

With recent research showing that agile companies have outperformed others in adapting to the pandemic, the speakers were asked to explore the question of whether chambers and businesses are agile enough to survive and thrive. Each member was allotted a few minutes to make their case.

### CHAMBERS ARE INHERENTLY AVERSE TO CHANGE

Debating the point of liberating employees from the traditional work week and fixed office locations, Team Disagree argued chambers are inherently averse to change.

“We fear change and think something dreadful is going to happen if we change,” said Mr Burge. “[And] allowing people to determine how they work to contribute best to the organisation is beyond most of us in the management of chambers.”

Ms Cassidy-Mackenzie compounded the point of inflexibility by saying the nature of chambers requires a more “traditional” work format.

“We all know that commerce does not stop around the globe...[and the nature of our business] requires people in the office to do the work. Equally, most transactions are taking place between people, [and we know] that people like to build relationships face to face.”

### FLEXIBILITY MEANS PRODUCTIVITY

Team Agree argued chambers are flexible enough to survive and thrive. Arguing her point from an organisational perspective Ms Muramatsu said: “Over the past 20 years, we’ve made a lot of effort to make business flexible, which has actually seen us achieve 180% revenue growth over the past 10 years.

“The numbers tell you why it’s important to be flexible in business, by giving employees more flexibility in the way they work, be that four-day work weeks [or other initiatives].”

Agreeing with his teammate Mr Levental said: “[Our] fear of change or risk prevents us from exercising our flexibility...[because] businesses and chambers have survived and thrived

through several changes in the world [by being] inherently flexible.”

### EMBRACE DISRUPTION AND FLEXIBILITY

Discussing how chambers can become

more adaptable, Mr Burge touched on how the structure of chamber management systems does not allow for dialogue flows.

“[Chamber] management needs to be flexible enough to respond to teams coming up with their own ideas of what needs to be done,” he said. “[During the pandemic we saw a desire] to get back to normal [but] there is no normal now we’ve got to forget the idea of normal [and] use the experience and acknowledge it forced us to disrupt ourselves [and] we’ve now got to embrace it.”

Ms Cassidy-Mackenzie added: “There is an opportunity for chambers to take advantage of this [change]...to put better systems, processes and infrastructure in place...[and] not be stuck in this phase of going back to the way it was [instead] move forward and take advantage of what COVID-19 has brought us...[to] build a more inclusive environment.”

Here, “Team Agree” took the debate.

## RESILIENT, FLEXIBLE, AGILE: OUR 4.0 APPROACH TO DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Conflict prevention was the theme of this panel, with experts agreeing it was vital for businesses to have mechanisms in place to avoid the costly and time-consuming efforts of dispute resolution.

Hassan Arab – Partner, Regional Head of Dispute Resolution - Arbitration and Litigation, and member of the ICC International Court of Arbitration – said that when it comes to international arbitration, ICC has made a major impact in improving arbitration efforts.

Sana Belaid, Senior Legal Counsel at Cisco, and as also a member of the ICC International Court of

### “ADAPTATION IS WHAT HAS MADE BUSINESS WORK.”

– Alexander G. Fessas

Arbitration, offered a forward-thinking approach to avoiding conflicts in an agile way, noting that businesses are trying to avoid disputes.

“Businesses are about creating wealth, and disputes take us back to the past. We want to be forward-looking,” she said. “In corporations that want to be efficient, there are internal ways to minimise disputes. We can’t avoid them, but we can minimise others. [The key] is communication and [ensuring] we disclose our real intentions to the other party from the beginning.”

### WHAT SMEs ARE FACING

Nassif Bou Malhab, Partner at Clyde & Co., shared insights into how SMEs are approaching dispute resolution outside traditional processes.

“Some of the trends we’ve identified, and the most innovative, are that SMEs are now asking for dispute resolution lawyers to sit on their advisory committees,” he said. “As part of dispute avoidance at the very outset, what we are seeing is members of advisory committees are being engaged in discussion before things go pear-shaped.”

Given how much disputes can affect cash flow at critical growth times for small businesses, Mr Malhab said

this approach was critical. Additionally, he said that online dispute resolution including virtual hearings and electronic filings and communications have helped accelerate processes as a result of the pandemic, “a trend which will stay”.

Alexander G. Fessas, Secretary General of the ICC International Court of Arbitration, and Director of ICC Dispute Resolution Services, agreed that such changes were opportunities to come from the crisis.

“Adaptation is what has made business work.”

Offering closing remarks of the session, Nayla Comair Obeid – Partner, Dispute Resolution Practice at Obeid & Partners Law Firm and member of the ICC International Court of Arbitration – noted that the nature of adaptation across dispute resolution and international arbitration marked a new era, punctuated by technological innovation.

“States and businesses have had to adapt and be visionary, including arbitral institutions,” she said, noting that as a result of ICC’s own adaptation, it played an important role in protecting SMEs and providing access to justice during the global crisis. “Adapting is proving not only the best way forward, but the only way forward.”

### FEATURING



**HASSAN ARAB**  
Partner, Regional Head  
of Dispute Resolution -  
Arbitration & Litigation  
Member, ICC International  
Court of Arbitration (UAE)



**SANA BELAID**  
Senior Legal Counsel, Cisco  
Member, ICC Court of  
International Arbitration  
(UAE)



**NASSIF BOU MALHAB**  
Partner, Clyde & Co. (UAE)



**ALEXANDER G. FESSAS**  
Secretary General, ICC  
International Court of  
Arbitration; Director,  
ICC Dispute Resolution  
Services (France)



**NAYLA COMAIR OBEID**  
Partner, Dispute Resolution  
Practice, Obeid & Partners  
Law Firm; Member, ICC  
Court of International  
Arbitration (UAE)



**DANIA FAHS**  
Arbitration & ADR Regional  
Director, ICC International  
Court of Arbitration (UAE)







**C**iting issues relating to the World Trade Organization (WTO), Andrew Stoeckel, Chief Economist at the Centre for Economic and Regional Development in NSW, admitted that problems were “predicted decades ago.”

He explained: “The key thing is that the head of the WTO doesn’t make the rules; the rules are made by ministers of trade of the member countries, [these are] trade policies made at home.”

“Fundamentally, the WTO has become inoperable. It’s three functions and not working. It has taken 21 years to even get close to removing those fishing subsidies. There’s no monitoring; countries are using disguised and non-tariff barriers as a means of protecting their trade, when they shouldn’t. And the dispersed settlement process has broken down entirely. The problem is; all of this was predicted and predictable decades ago.”

Referencing a study by the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI), Mr Stoeckel outlined the four reasons for the problems faced by the WTO.

“One is the rules themselves, the inconsistencies. Second is this mission creep, to try and deal with everything, [which] the WTO cannot do. Third, are the new issues that haven’t been addressed effectively, particularly the digital economy. The fourth has been the decline of a leader.”

“They need fixing [for us] to get anywhere.”

**KEEPING PACE**

For Udit Arora, Head of Committees Affairs and Economic Research at Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association, the Gulf region’s industry appreciates the WTO in “supporting trade flows as smoothly as possible,” saying: “As members of the WTO, the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] states are really invested in ensuring its success in the modern world, where the role of emerging and developing economies are becoming much more crucial in the success of the WTO going forward.”

The issue, Mr Arora acknowledged, is that the WTO is struggling to keep pace with the rapid economic, social, technological, and environmental changes taking place.

“This, in turn, is making it challenging to achieve multilateral commitments between the members of the WTO.”

**MAKING TRADE POLICY MORE SUSTAINABLE**

Turning to how nations can make trade policy more sustainable, Mr. Arora stated that it was critical to support developing countries and emerging economies.

“The WTO can play a key role here, working with members to identify, promote, and enable an agenda that encourages further investment and streamlines access to third-country markets worldwide in support of deployment and implementation of these technologies and products.”

**FEATURING**



**UDIT ARORA**  
Head of Committees Affairs & Economic Research, Gulf Petrochemicals & Chemicals Association (UAE)



**UTE JOHN**  
Head of Trade & Sustainability, Daimler AG (Germany)



**ANDREW STOECKEL**  
Honorary Professor, CAMA, Australian National University; Chief Economist, Centre for Economic & Regional Development, NSW (Australia)



**QUINLAN CARTHANE**  
Chief of Staff, Secretary General Office, International Chamber of Commerce (Paris)

**THE ROLE OF DATA**

Panelists also discussed the role of blockchain data in trade policymaking, and how more and better data is required by the WTO. How data differed between international policymaking and trade policies made at national level was also addressed.

Ute John, Head of Trade and Sustainability at Daimler AG, questioned how data could be utilised to inform policy making and discussions at a government level.

Private businesses could help, said Mr Arora, adding: “Regulatory cooperation and collaboration are needed with the private sector. They have the capabilities and capacities.”

“They can help the governments make the right decisions based on science-backed and risk-based analysis that will help build these policies.”

Mr Arora acknowledged that there remained challenges, such as a lack of harmonisation in standards.

“If you don’t have that harmonisation, you will see different countries use different data sets,” he said. “And then [there’s] a mismatch in the rules or policies that they come out with.”

**LOOKING AHEAD**

In the first instance, the speakers agreed that urgent action is required for change.

“There’s only one tool that the WTO – or a country – has,” said Mr Stoeckel. “You can either allow trade across your border, or you can disallow it. If you only have one tool, you can only ever achieve one goal. So, what should that one goal be?”

# MEMBERSHIP MODELS




**A**t the start of the session – aimed at helping participants master the art of membership – the audience was asked to vote for certain topics that Reggie Henry, Chief Information and Engagement Officer at ASAE, would then tally in his presentation to discuss.

The first discussion point voted for was membership engagement, which Mr Henry addressed based on recent ASAE research.

“It is important to understand there is a distinction between engagement and activity [and] what the research shows is [that] people who are fully engaged in an organisation also bring in new members, attend the annual conference and are more likely to volunteer for your organisation.”

**FEATURING**



**REGGIE HENRY**  
Chief Information & Engagement Officer, American Society of Association Executives (United States)



**MIKE VAN DER VIJVER**  
Meeting Designer & Co-Founder, MindMeeting (Netherlands)

**ENHANCING ENGAGEMENT**

One way in which an organisation can immediately improve engagement, he said, is by simply asking the right questions.

“Engagement could be as simple as having a question at the end of a website page,” Mr Henry continued. “People have jobs they are trying to get done and if you ask them if they were able to get the job done, then you’ll figure out if they were able to engage with the organisation.”

Stressing true engagement often involves an emotional component, he added: “True engagement gives people a sense of belonging to something larger than themselves, [which is why it’s important] for engagement measures to be tied back to organisational objectives.”

Another tip offered was to separate marketing conversations from engagement.

“[At the ASAE] we don’t use the typical surveys [and] when people get an engagement email from ASAE it looks like it’s coming directly from a person, and the open rates on those hover around 50%, which we know is way more than the engagement we get from surveys.”

**THE IMPORTANCE OF MOBILE ENGAGEMENT**

Mr Henry then moved on to discuss how the ASAE’s research on membership found there are

specific needs that people have.

“There are moments when people have a particular thing they are trying to get done in their organisation [nd] increasingly that’s usually a digital thing [and] the research tells us that mobile is the way to go.”

Adding that most chambers are behind in digital adaptation to mobile, he stated: “It’s important to be there in your member’s moments of need,” suggesting that chambers and organisations should conduct their own research to find out what members require.

And data, to understand those membership needs, is key.

Mr Henry went on to discuss how organisations can best utilise tools to create private social network visualisations of community discussions. In doing so, organisations can better inform engagement strategies by being relevant to their members.

He offered an example of how his organisation utilised data to address growing concerns within the community at the start of the pandemic.

“The data showed a huge spike in certain conversations when COVID made its way into our lives. We used that information to host events that convened CEOs on immediate response tactics, and these events sold out.”

Data tools can provide chambers with the necessary insights into their members’ conversations, which can help them gauge what needs need to be met through engagement.





## ACCESSING INTERNATIONAL MARKETS: HELPING SMES SECURE FINANCE TO TRADE NOW!

**I**nternationally, SMEs suffered tremendous setbacks due to the pandemic – finance is key to helping economic recovery.

Not only is access to finance a global challenge, but financial literacy is something chambers must be actively engaged in dissipating, experts said.

Citing that over 45% of requests received by banks for small business trade finance are rejected – which

creates a trade finance gap worth trillions of dollars – chambers of commerce, banks and fintechs must engage to enhance financial services via technology with an objective to improve access to cheaper and quicker finance.

Iain MacLennan, Vice-President of Trade and Supply Chain Finance, Product and Engineering at Finastra, explained that his company works with over 200 banks around the world using technology to boost supply chain services. He stated that across the board, better trust must be built between SMEs and finance houses.

**“WE HAVE TO GET BETTER ACQUAINTED WITH ALL THESE NEW BUSINESS MODELS AND MAKE SURE WE UNDERSTAND THESE SO WE CAN PROVIDE THE FINANCING AND EXPAND OUR KNOWLEDGE OF WIDER SECTORS.”**

– Angel Bustos

“Banks must understand what it is they’re financing. For us, that means bringing data together so both parties know who and what they’re dealing with in a risk assessment fashion,” said Mr MacLennan, adding that SMEs must provide better data for banks such as collateral and accounts.

Gennadiy Chyzhykov, President at the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry acknowledged the challenge

SMEs face in economies where governments are financially unable to support them such as he sees in Ukraine.

“For Ukraine, money is a huge question for SMEs,” he said, referencing the country of 40 million with over three million

SMEs. “The role of the government is important for a country such as Ukraine, [but] there is a shortage in the budget, so it’s not so easy.”

As mediators between government and business, in addition to being educators and connectors, this makes

### FEATURING



**ANGEL BUSTOS**  
Global Head of Advisory,  
Santander Global  
Corporate Banking (Spain)



**GENNADIY CHYZHYKOV**  
President, Ukrainian  
Chamber of Commerce &  
Industry (Ukraine)



**IAIN MACLENNAN**  
Vice-President, Trade &  
Supply Chain Finance,  
Product & Engineering,  
Finastra (United Kingdom)



**JULIAN KASSUM**  
Director, Global  
Partnerships &  
Development, International  
Chamber of Commerce  
(France)

the role of chambers of commerce even more important.

### NEW BUSINESS IN A NEW WORLD

Angel Bustos, Global Head of Advisory at Santander Global Corporate Banking, spoke of the relationship Santander has with SMEs, noting it provides finance to more than four million SMEs globally.

He said the pandemic has given rise to many different business models and startups and as such, banks must be better acquainted with these moving into a post-pandemic era.

“We have to get better acquainted with all these new business models and make sure we understand [them] so we can provide the financing and expand our knowledge of wider sectors,” said Mr Bustos.

His takeaway advice for SMEs globally was that financial strategy and literacy is key. “Financial literacy must be part of the strategy because that knowledge dictates every decision made,” he said.

Also acknowledged was the lack of women represented in the SME sector generally, suggesting that women-led SMEs face more discrimination.

“When female-led business is turned down for finance they rarely reapply and we need to address that,” concluded Mr MacLennan.

## CHAMBERS IN ACTION: SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT

**B**ureaucratic delays and red tape pose a significant burden for traders, and therefore, trade facilitation – the simplification, modernisation and harmonisation of export and import processes – is critical for both private and public sectors.

February 2017 saw the establishment of the World Trade Organization’s landmark Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), which comprises provisions for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods. And while the TFA has resulted in major progress, there is still much work to be done. Chambers can play a key role in advancing the agenda, agreed panellists, with trade facilitation arguably benefitting MSMEs the most.

**“CHAMBERS HAVE THE CREDIBILITY, KNOWLEDGE AND LEGITIMACY TO BRING SUCCESS TO THIS COLLABORATIVE WORLD.”**

– Amine Belkhadir

### COLLABORATION IS KEY

One area that requires improvement is that of early joint collaboration between the public and private sector, said Nicolas Uribe Rueda, President of the Bogota Chamber of Commerce.

“Chambers work all day, every day to help SMEs [and other] companies strengthen their capabilities,” he said, adding that chambers’ work with governments can enhance the TFA.

He reiterated the importance of building relationships early on.

“It’s about building trust, confidence and delivering results. We [the chamber] have a transparent and honest relationship [with the government], and so we [convey] the needs of the private sector [in an open and honest way].”

Céline Bacrot, Economic Affairs Officer - Trade Facilitation at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, agreed that trust is crucial.

She explained that while National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs) had “weight” with the public sector, there was still “a lot of mistrust” among the private sector being wary of governments.

“The NTFCs have become the best and the right platform to discuss and decide on the right environment, policies and strategies,” she said, adding that the committee provides efficiency, transparency and predictability.

“That’s what the traders want. They want to make sure that they can rely on the public services to trade.”

### ROLE OF CHAMBERS

For Amine Belkhadir, Trade Facilitation Expert at the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation, the International Chamber of Commerce has proven crucial in connecting the Alliance in different cultures and environments.

“We benefit from the trust that chambers have built on the ground with the smaller companies,” he said. “It’s very important for us to have chambers that represent the voice of the private sector and guide us through the complexities of the economic challenges of the trade.”

“Chambers have a very important role, because they have the credibility, knowledge and the legitimacy to bring success to this collaborative world,” he continued. “SMEs have different problems that bigger companies do not have. Small companies are more vulnerable to trade complexities. They have less means to tackle technology challenges, as well as trade and logistical challenges.”

To conclude, Ms Bacrot stated that NTFCs face two major challenges at

### FEATURING



**CÉLINE BACROT**  
Economic Affairs Officer -  
Trade Facilitation, United  
Nations Conference on  
Trade and Development  
(Switzerland)



**AMINE BELKHADIR**  
Trade Facilitation Expert,  
Global Alliance for Trade  
Facilitation (Morocco)



**NICOLAS URIBE RUEDA**  
President, Bogota  
Chamber of Commerce  
(Colombia)



**VALÉRIE PICARD**  
Deputy Director, Global  
Alliance for Trade  
Facilitation - International  
Chamber of Commerce  
(Paris)

present: financial sustainability and engagement from the private sector.

“Here, the chambers have a crucial role to play to inform what the government is doing in partnership with the private sector. The chamber can engage, compare and disseminate information,” she said.







# WORLD CHAMBERS COMPETITION 2021

Organised by the ICC and the World Chambers Federation, the World Chambers Competition is the only global programme to identify and reward innovative entrepreneurial solutions by Chambers of Commerce.

Receiving 78 entries from 33 countries around the world, the 2021 edition of the competition – which took place during #12WCC – held pitches for four categories: Best Digital Project, Best Resilience Project, Best Climate Action Project, and Best Unconventional Project.

## A LONG HISTORY

Since its launch in 2003, the World Chambers Competition has helped generate a wide range of case studies that showcase the entrepreneurial spirit of participating Chambers. Submitted projects have varied, from networking and diversity initiatives, to employment and membership drives.

Every edition, an international jury – comprising ICC World Chambers Federation leadership, along with representatives from transnational, national, and local chambers – is responsible for shortlisting category finalists.

During the 2021 competitions, each candidate was given five minutes to pitch their chamber's idea, followed by six minutes allocated for questions. Both the judges and the audience could ask questions through #12WCC's virtual platform.

Meanwhile, at the end of the pitching sessions, delegates were invited to vote via the WCC website.

**“OUR GOAL IS TO PROVIDE A GLOBAL PLATFORM TO SHOWCASE THE ABILITY OF CHAMBERS TO MOVE THE DIAL ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRESS THROUGH INNOVATIVE, LOCALLY TAILORED SOLUTIONS TO CHALLENGES AND DISRUPTION. THE COMPETITION HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPACT THESE CHAMBERS ARE HAVING, WITH A VIEW TO INSPIRING FURTHER ACTION, OPENING DOORS FOR COLLABORATION AND INITIATING NEW CONVERSATIONS.”**

– John W.H. Denton AO



## THE CATEGORIES

### BEST DIGITAL PROJECT

Four hopeful finalists made a pitch for Best Digital Project, presenting their chamber's innovative technology solutions that have disrupted the traditional way of doing business for themselves and/or their community.

### BEST RESILIENCE PROJECT

This category recognised chambers that created innovative initiatives to combat the economic health consequences associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. This included but was not limited to technology programmes, digital platforms, risk and crisis management support, and business continuity guidelines – all created to benefit chambers' communities.

### BEST CLIMATE ACTION PROJECT

The Best Climate Action category recognised chambers that developed projects to support bold action to tackle climate change and help members, and the community, adapt to today's climate challenges.

### BEST UNCONVENTIONAL PROJECT

Four hopeful finalists made a pitch for Best Digital Project, presenting their chamber's innovative technology solutions that have disrupted the traditional way of doing business for themselves and/or their community.





# BEST DIGITAL PROJECT

**FINALISTS**

**JAMES MONK**  
Commercial Director, Business West Chamber of Commerce (England)

**ARMIN BARBALATA**  
Chief Data Officer, Chamber of Commerce and Industry for Munich and Upper Bavaria (Germany)

**MÓNICA CHÁVEZ**  
Foreign Trade Manager, Lima Chamber of Commerce (Peru)

**BENJAMIN ASTETE**  
Assistant Manager for Online Dispute Resolution, Santiago Chamber of Commerce (Chile)

**JUDGES**

**ANN MCGREGOR**  
CEO, Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Northern Ireland)

**SAMIR MODI**  
President & Managing Director, Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (India)

**MIN YU**  
Director, ICC China - China Council for Promotion of International Trade (China)



**PITCH 1:**  
**Great British Food Programme**

Starting off the competition was James Monk, who pitched the Great British Food Programme. The digital solution can help the chamber support food and drink producers in the UK grow their international sales through a series of virtual events and initiatives.

“Could we digitally process what has been going on for decades in a face to face way?”, was the question that fueled the development of the Great British Food Programme. The platform became one of the first blockchain, carbon neutral platforms, designed to boost the chamber members’ training activities and drive up revenue from exports.

**PITCH 2:**  
**Cert4Trust**

Armin Barbalata presented Cert4Trust, a blockchain-based validation of digital certificates and documents.

The chamber’s solution is an automated end-to-end solution for digital documents that ensures tamper-proof handling and validation of documents’ origin, validity and

authenticity. It aims to disrupt the traditional issuing of certificates through blockchain technology. The documents can be authenticated in seconds using a mobile phone only.

**PITCH 3:**  
**Digital Chambers: The New Age**

When Lima Chamber of Commerce started its Digital Chambers: The New Age project back in 2019, it was intended to move all its in-person services online. Little did the Chamber know how crucial and beneficial the project would become.

Mónica Chávez pitched the platform, highlighting the impact it has had not only on the chamber’s activities, but its members and clients too.

The project was also launched to help SMEs establish a tech culture internally. The main barriers SMEs faced included access to investment and knowledge of technology solutions.

**PITCH 4:**  
**Resolución en Línea**

Only one in four customers will come back to a brand after an unsatisfying experience and will tell 25 people about their experience. Settling and resolving customer complaints and disputes in a timely manner is therefore crucial for businesses hoping to minimise negative feedback.

Pitching the solution for this was Benjamin Astete, whose chamber developed Resolución en Línea, the first online dispute resolution platform in Chile. The digital solution allows businesses and consumers to access algorithm-assisted negotiation and online mediation. Harnessing the power of online mediation, artificial intelligence and Software as a Service (SaaS), Resolución en Línea, helps companies and people resolve complaints in less than 48 hours.

# BEST RESILIENCE PROJECT



**FINALISTS**

**SARA GILLESPE**  
Policy Officer, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Australia)

**HANNES FARLOCK**  
Managing Director DEInternational, German-Russian Chamber of Commerce Abroad (Russia)

**TIFFANY TAUSCHECK**  
Chief Operations Officer, Greater Des Moines Partnership (United States)

**TOM BAUMERT**  
Director Entrepreneurship, Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce (Luxembourg)

**JUDGES**

**AJIT MANGRULKAR**  
Director General, IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (India)

**PAULINE ZAHLAOUI**  
Manager, Members & Partnerships, Geneva Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Services (Switzerland)

**YI YOUNG LAM**  
CEO, Singapore Business Federation (Singapore)

**TODD LETTS**  
CEO, Brampton Board of Trade (Canada)

**PITCH 1:**  
**Covid-19 Support for Australian Businesses**

“During the pandemic, Australians needed to be resilient, and so we made it our job to support businesses in their time of need,” said Sarah Gillespe as she began her pitch.

The comprehensive support service aimed at helping businesses through every stage of the COVID-19 pandemic. This included being the catalyst for a government support package that saw the creation of a travel bubble hub between Australia and New Zealand.

It also included the development of employer guides for a range of business support services and mental health resources, as well as creating a new online portal to share live updates.

**PITCH 2:**  
**#Resilienttogether**

Hannes Farlock spoke about an initiative aimed at ensuring the continuity of the chamber’s services for all members and clients throughout the pandemic.

“We were one of the first chambers to go online and do everything digitally,” he said. “We quickly

integrated our work methods with MS Suites to ensure everything fed into each other.”

In doing so, the chamber was able to smoothly shift all its main services and products online, while also providing interactive professional and social platforms that helped businesses effectively, and safely, navigate the crisis.

**PITCH 3:**  
**DSM Forward Playbooks**

Tiffany Tauscheck spoke of the Greater Des Moines Partnership initiative, which devoted its efforts to the development of industry-specific and professional business function playbooks, that integrated key learnings and best practice by global leaders across industry including McKinzie.

The initiative also ensured dedication to helping businesses and industries prepare for the next steps related to economic recovery from the pandemic.

**PITCH 4:**  
**House of Entrepreneurship**

The Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce’s initiative was aimed at supporting entrepreneurs throughout their whole entrepreneurial experience, from business creation to development and business transfer.

“As a chamber, we led by example to our stakeholders, by showcasing how our institution could be agile and adaptive,” Tom Baumert said.

“We maintained strong connections with government because we found solidarity to be key, as it enabled us to work together on solutions for our programme.”

The objective of which was not only to help entrepreneurs with administrative challenges, but also project and product analysis, as well as partnership and funding opportunities in order to create a resilient entrepreneurial landscape across the board.



# BEST CLIMATE ACTION PROJECT

**PITCH 1:**  
**The Dublin Chamber Sustainability Academy**

Aebhric McGibney began by pitching this initiative that brings businesses from awareness to action on sustainability through earning, training, and advice. Offering a core set of training courses from entry level to more advanced, all the five training courses available are delivered by expert trainers.

“Our initiative adopts a bottom-up approach based on feedback from firms determining what they want against what they need,” he said. “It’s an integrated offering formed by business as a service to evolve Environmental Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) for firms.”

He added that the initiative is now being rolled out as a national programme, with each course evolving with government changes.

**PITCH 2:**  
**Chamber Low Carbon Project**

Miranda Barker spoke of her chamber’s initiative aimed at transforming the region of Lancashire in the United Kingdom into a profitable, low carbon economy through unlimited support to help businesses create, review, and implement their low carbon plans.

Working with all SMEs along with two other chambers, the East Lancashire Chamber has had a real impact, she said.

“Started in 2017, we now have an investment portfolio of £40 million, and we work with SMEs of all sectors to give them fully funded carbon footprints and help them formulate an action plan and implement it,” she said. “Today we’re working with more than 1,000 companies and have helped achieve 5,300 tonnes of CO2 savings.”

**PITCH 3:**  
**Secure Management Platform for Shared Process Resources (Sharebox)**

Celalettin Kesikbas pitched an initiative that uses an industrial symbiosis approach in pilot areas, such as the Eskisehir Organised Industrial Zone in Turkey, as a mechanism to provide both environmental and economic returns by increasing cooperation between companies.



“The Sharebox software programme was developed through a symbiotic ecosystem that saw a synergy of industry members, public institutions and universities come together for collaboration and sustainability,” he said. “And although it is possible to come across similar projects, what makes Sharebox unique is the financing of methodology supported by external resources.”

The main objective of the initiative, he added, was to develop a secure platform for the flexible management of shared process resources with intelligent decision support tools.

**PITCH 4:**  
**Voka Sustainable Business Charter**

Jens De Vos pitched an initiative which offers companies the opportunity to continuously improve and optimise their environmental, social, and economic performance by means of bespoke and results-oriented action plans.

“The Voka Sustainable Business Charter is a tangible certificate that supports organisations in realising their own sustainability goals,” he said. “It uses the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] as the framework, and is directly supported by the UN.”

He added the charter has grown from 78 participants in 2017 to 300 in 2022, with participants not only improving their own sustainability policy but also contributing to the realisation of the SDGs.

**FINALISTS**

- AEBHRIC MCGIBNEY**  
Director of Public and International Affairs, Dublin Chamber of Commerce (Ireland)
- MIRANDA BARKER**  
Chief Executive, East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce (England)
- CELALETTIN KESIKBAS**  
Deputy Secretary General, Eskisehir Chamber of Industry (Turkey)
- JENS DE VOS**  
Project Director, Voka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (Belgium)

**JUDGES**

- KEVIN HIN**  
Secretary General, Junior Chamber International (United States)
- MOUNIR MOUAKHAR**  
President, Permanent conference of African and French-speaking consular chambers (Tunisia)
- PEDRAM SOLTANI**  
First Vice-President, Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (Iran)
- NICOLÁS URIBE RUEDA**  
President, Bogota Chamber of Commerce (Colombia)

# BEST UNCONVENTIONAL PROJECT

**PITCH 1:**  
**We: Academy for Women Entrepreneurs in Ecuador**

This initiative, explained Carlos Loaiza, seeks to empower women through free business training under the e-learning and face-to-face modality.

The programme aims to strengthen the skills needed to facilitate the growth and development of their businesses. It also has dedicated specialist mentors and globally recognised tools in various areas that provide insights on topics such as leadership, management, finance, marketing, and social networks.

**PITCH 2:**  
**The Foreign Trade Intelligence Centre**

The Çorlu Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s initiative enables SMEs in the Thrace region of Turkey to engage in cross-border trade by providing them with free trade intelligence services to integrate them into the global trading system, explained Yetkin Ozer.

“The Centre offers tailor-made consultancy for SMEs,” he said. “According to OECD data, SMEs constitute 95 per cent of all the companies across the world, however they only account for 20% of international trade.”

Ozer continued that SMEs face several challenges when they attempt to export or import.

“We aim to eliminate all these challenges through our centre,” he said.

**PITCH 3:**  
**Schüfi: The App for Teen Entrepreneurs**

This app teaches curious students not only the key basic elements of successful entrepreneurship, but also offers guidance on setting up a company. In essence, it is a small, easy-to-use enterprise resource planning system, said Mario Tobias.

“Our objective was to empower teenagers, and with our little chamber we developed something for students, from students,” he said. “Our app enables young students to understand

how a company works in order for them to run their own business, and we aim to make the app available around the world for free.”

**PITCH 4:**  
**Extended Reality Hub**

Martin Neubauer pitched this offering which gives future employees the chance to explore career options before entering employment, to avoid wrong choices. And they do this by using virtual reality to reinvigorate the learning process with excitement and quality.

“Young generations want something that inspires them,” he said. “And currently how they are trained is very different to what’s needed in the workplace. “Through the extended reality hub, the chamber sought to create a virtual learning environment to transform the educational process into an interactive adventure via a multisensory learning experience.”

**FINALISTS**

- CARLOS LOAIZA**  
President, Chamber of Commerce of Quito (Ecuador)
- YETKIN OZE**  
Expert, Çorlu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Turkey)
- MARIO TOBIAS**  
Chief Executive Officer, Potsdam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Germany)
- MARTIN NEUBAUER**  
Head of the Institute for Vocational Training Styria (WIFI), Styrian Chamber of Commerce (Austria)

**JUDGES**

- OLUBUNMI OSUNTUYI**  
Secretary General, ICC Nigeria (Nigeria)
- NOLA WATSON**  
Deputy President, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Australia)
- AMBROSIO BERTOLOTTI**  
Past President of AICO & Past President, National Chamber of Commerce and Services of Uruguay (Uruguay)
- JOHN W.H. DENTON AO**  
Secretary General, International Chamber of Commerce (Paris)





# #12WCC GALA DINNER AND COMPETITION AWARDS CEREMONY

Our Congress Gala Dinner concluded the 12th World Chambers Congress activities. But chamber innovation remained on the menu, and excitement was still running high, as the winners of each World Chambers Competition category were announced and celebrated during the course of the evening.







# AND THE WINNERS ARE...

Taking place during the final gala evening, awards for the World Chambers Competition 2021 were presented to the winners by Hamad Buamim – President and CEO of Dubai Chambers, and Chair of ICC-World Chambers Federation – and Maria Fernanda Garza Merodio, First Vice-Chair of the International Chamber of Commerce, Mexico in the presence of John Denton AO, Secretary General of the ICC.



**BEST CLIMATE ACTION PROJECT**  
East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce (England)



**BEST UNCONVENTIONAL PROJECT**  
Potsdam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Germany)



**BEST DIGITAL PROJECT**  
Lima Chamber of Commerce (Peru)



**BEST RESILIENCE PROJECT**  
Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce (Luxembourg)

## SPECIAL AWARD

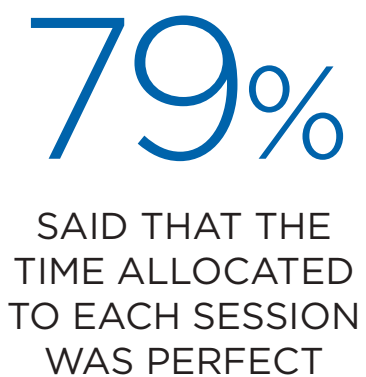
During the awards ceremony, a special award was presented to the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) and other members of the ICC network who were able to organise the safe eviction of those based in at-risk areas from Kabul to Istanbul.

The ICC launched the “I Care for Colleagues” solidarity campaign in September 2021 to bring financial support where it was critically needed, and it is continuing that work today to help remaining staff and associates in Afghanistan.





# #12WCC SURVEY LEARNINGS



## REASONS TO ATTEND



## WORDS FROM THE DELEGATES



“The World Chambers Congress in Dubai was the perfect scenario for gathering 1,500 delegates from businesses and chambers of 123 different countries. We shared best practices, exchanged insights, addressed the latest business issues, learned about new areas of innovation but, most importantly, we reinforced our international networks and made a call to action with chambers of commerce for the benefit of businesses worldwide.”  
**NICOLAS URIBE RUEDA** | President, Bogota Chamber of Commerce (Colombia)



“The ICC World Chambers Federation and Dubai Chamber did a fabulous job to deliver this event in the circumstances prevailing, while also providing an innovative and effective online platform for those unable to travel.”  
**IAN TALBOT** | Chief Executive and Secretary General, ICC Ireland (Ireland)



“Despite our different languages and cultures, the construction of a digitised, interconnected network of chambers of commerce is an essential condition for the most humanistic and prosperous world.”  
**JACQUES BANYANKINDAGIYE** | Director General, Maison de la Francophonie au Burundi (Burundi)



“Congratulations on an amazing event! It will certainly mark the standard for future Congresses. The engaging hybrid activities were priceless for attendees, since they were able to share ideas and best practices in a safe environment, much needed after the social distancing time we have been through the last two years. Looking forward to Geneva in 2023.”  
**MARIA FERNANDA GARZA MERODIO** | First Vice-Chair, International Chamber of Commerce (Mexico)



“Excellent opportunity for chambers’ networking.”  
**GABRIELA DIMITROVA** | Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Bulgaria)



“I had a great pleasure in participating in this Congress. All my compliments to the organisers and the quality of the sessions.”  
**SANA BELAID** | Senior Legal Counsel, Cisco & Member, ICC Court of International Arbitration (UAE)



“The #12WCC was a success; I got knowledge and methodology from the keynote speakers; I received information from the parallel sessions; I was exposed to interesting start-ups and indeed, I was introduced to new people that we can develop further communication with.”  
**RAFI SAMARDJIAN** | CEO, Management Mix (Armenia)



“A real meaningful experience encompassing learning, networking and exploring new ideas for chamber growth and development.”  
**PETER BYRNE** | CEO, South Dublin Chamber (Ireland)



“Amazingly well-organised, very informative and a great bonding experience.”  
**FADY ASLY** | Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Caucasus and Central Asia, International Chamber of Commerce (Georgia)



“Many thanks to the team at ICC for the invitation. I was excited about to share my experience and learn from other participants.”  
**YVONNE OFOSU-APPIAH** | CIO, Wangara Green Ventures (Ghana)



“It was a pleasure to participate in the #12WCC – thank you for having me! I liked the innovative use of the main hall where you were able to split the room into three spaces, and also have exhibition stands. Kudos to the entire team.”  
**UDIT ARORA** | Head of Committees Affairs & Economic Research, Gulf Petrochemicals & Chemicals Association (UAE)



“It was an excellent event, with superb hosts, I brought home some important phrases to treasure and apply!”  
**CLAUDIA RITZEL** | President, Santa Marta Chamber of Commerce (Colombia)



# PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

100 RHÔNE AVOCATS  
A&CH ASOCIADOS  
A101 INNOVATIONS INC.  
ABU DHABI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY (UAE)  
ABUJA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (NIGERIA)  
ACC ABOGADOS  
AFRICA TRADE AND STRATEGY CONSULTING FIRM LIMITED  
AFRICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - DFW  
AFYON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (TURKEY)  
AGREGADOS NVP  
AHA ART & CULTURE INSTITUTE  
AHK RUSSLAND / DEINTERNATIONAL  
AHVAZ CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRIES, MINES AND AGRICULTURE  
AIX-MARSEILLE UNIVERSITY  
AL BAYAN NEWSPAPER  
AL EKH BARIYA SAUDI TV  
AL GHANEM INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT  
AL ITTIHAD NEWSPAPER  
AL KARAM TRADING  
AL KHARJ CHAMBER (SAUDI ARABIA)  
AL ROYA NEWSPAPER  
AL SALAMA USED CAR TR L.L.C.  
AL-AHSA CHAMBER (SAUDI ARABIA)  
ALBORZ CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
ALEXANDRIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (US)  
ALEXANDRIA UNIVERSITY  
ALGHAD TV  
ALJOMAIH HOLDING COMPANY  
ALLIANCE & CO SAS  
ALLIANCE OF SWISS CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE  
ALP CONSULTORES  
AL-RIYADH - DAILY NEWSPAPER  
ALYAF ZAGROSS PEYMAN INDUSTRIES CO.  
AMAZON PAYMENT SERVICES  
AMCHAM PERU  
AMERICA MÓVIL  
AMERICAN SOCIETY OF ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES  
AMERICAN WORLD TRADE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
AMMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (JORDAN)  
ANDERS GROUP  
ANIT INDUSTRIAL GROUP  
ANKARA COMMODITY EXCHANGE  
ANNABELL MANAGEMENT CONSULTANCY  
ANNUAL INVESTMENT MEETING  
ARAB-BRAZILIAN CHAMBER OF

COMMERCE  
ARAK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
ARBITRATION CENTER OF THE LIMA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (PERU)  
ARDEBIL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
ARY DIGITAL FZ. LLC  
ARY NEWS  
ASDA'A BCW  
ASHRAFI UNIVERSITY  
ASIA NEWS TRENDS  
ASIAN PAINTS LTD  
ASSOCIAÇÃO COMERCIAL E INDUSTRIAL DE SETE LAGOAS  
ASSOCIATE OF KNOWLEDGE  
BASE ENTERPRISES KHORASAN  
RAZAVI PROVILANCE  
ASSOCIATION OF CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EXECUTIVES (US)  
AUCKLAND BUSINESS CHAMBER (NEW ZEALAND)  
AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY  
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
AUSTRIAN EMBASSY / ADVANTAGE AUSTRIA  
BAHRAIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
BAKHSHI GROUPS  
BANK FAB  
BANK OF IRELAND  
BANQUE CANTONALE DE GENÈVE  
BARTOLOME & BRIONES  
BASRAH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
BCI GROUP  
BEHROO FOOD CO  
BELARUSIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY  
BELGIAN CHAMBERS  
BIC-BRED  
BIZ GROUP  
BIZ TODAY INTERNATIONAL  
BLANKET MINE  
BLESSING PETROLEUM  
BNETD - BUREAU NATIONAL  
D'ETUDES TECHNIQUES ET DE DEVELOPPEMENT  
BOR - THE BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS' REPORT  
BOZAC CONTINENTAL LIMITED  
BRAMPTON BOARD OF TRADE (CANADA)  
BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC  
BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MYANMAR  
BRITISH CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE  
BRODARD SEARCH  
BRUSSELS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

BRUSSELS ENTREPRISES  
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY  
BULGARIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY  
BUSINESS 24HD  
BUSINESS NOVOROSSIYSK NEWSPAPER  
BUSINESS NSW (AUSTRALIA)  
BUSINESS WEST (UK)  
CAMARA ARGENTINA DE COMERCIO Y SERVICIOS  
CAMARA DE COMERCIO DE ARAUCA (COLOMBIA)  
CAMARA DE COMERCIO DE BARRANQUILLA (COLOMBIA)  
CAMARA DE COMERCIO DE BOGOTA (COLOMBIA)  
CAMARA DE COMERCIO DE BUGA (COLOMBIA)  
CAMARA DE COMERCIO DE CALI (COLOMBIA)  
CAMARA DE COMERCIO DE CARTAGENA (COLOMBIA)  
CAMARA DE COMERCIO DE DOSQUEBRADAS (COLOMBIA)  
CAMARA DE COMERCIO DE ESPAÑA  
CAMARA DE COMERCIO DE ESPAÑA - DELEGATION TO THE EU  
CAMARA DE COMERCIO DE IBAGUE (COLOMBIA)  
CAMARA DE COMERCIO DE LIMA - INSTITUTO DE ADMINISTRACION Y NEGOCIOS  
CAMARA DE COMERCIO DE LIMA (PERU)  
CAMARA DE COMERCIO DE QUITO (ECUADOR)  
CAMARA DE COMERCIO DE SANTA MARTA PARA EL MAGDALENA (COLOMBIA)  
CAMARA DE COMERCIO DE TULUA (COLOMBIA)  
CAMARA DE COMERCIO E INDUSTRIA DO DISTRITO DE AVEIRO - AIDA CCI (PORTUGAL)  
CAMARA DE COMERCIO LATINA DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS  
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