

ICSB Mid-Year Board Meeting
22 January 2015

President's Report

The past six months have been very active for ICSB. As the current ICSB President, I am happy to present the yearly ICSB President's Annual Report for the 2014 calendar year. The goal of this report is to highlight the 2014 milestones for our members and partners so we can reflect back on what we have accomplished together throughout the year and also look forward to our goals and milestones for 2015.

One of our key areas of focus for the year was affiliate development and we are proud of the inroads we've made in this initiative. During the 2014 ACSB Conference in October, we officially welcomed our newest affiliate ICSB Malaysia, The International Council for SME & Entrepreneurship (ICSMEE) Malaysia. The goal of ICSMEE is to gain a better understanding of local SMEs and entrepreneurs in Malaysia as well as the ecosystem in which they operate. Launching strong, they already have 5 corporate and 50 individual members and have held 6 major events during the year.

One of the most significant changes within the structure of ICSB occurred during the 2014 ICSB World Conference in Dublin, Ireland when the new Board of Directors were officially appointed. In the fiscal year 2012-13, the members of ICSB voted in favor of reducing the board size from 28 to 11 members to make the board more agile and to reduce operating costs. Now comprised of only four elected members – myself as President, Dr. Jeffrey Alves as Immediate Past President, Dr. Ki-Chan Kim as President Elect, Dr. GERALYN Franklin as VP Finance & Control, and Dr. Luca Iandoli as VP Development – we are focused on our initiatives for the new year.

During the last semester, it was continued the policy of insuring transparency and full disclosure information by nonprofit organizations registered in the U.S. like ICSB (Form 990 US Internal Revenue Service). This practice started in 2014 and this report contains information about ICSB as an organization, including our conflict of interest policy and financial statements. The Form 990 is available to members on the ICSB website. And to further the transparency and openness the financial statements presented to the 2014 Annual General Meeting was audited by a Certified Public Accounting firm.

One of our main goals is the formation and promotion of the new ICSB Regional Affiliate Councils; bringing together ICSB affiliates in geographic regions around the world to offer regional programming and events. This initiative will not only allow ICSB to strengthen our network and brand in these areas, it will also provide members with additional opportunities to connect with new members and expand your network globally. We have already seen tremendous movement in Asia with the Asian Council for Small Business hosting their 2nd

annual Asian SME Conference, which brought over 200 individuals from Korea, Japan, China, Taiwan, Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia to Seoul.

One of the expectations when we modified the board to include regional representation was that affiliates would begin to organize regionally. ECSB can be considered a form of regional representation. Korea, China, Japan, Malaysia and Taiwan formed the Asia Council for Small Business (ACSB) and held its second conference in Seoul this fall. It was exciting to see this kind of collaboration and the interest it created for potential affiliates or chapters in Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, and Myanmar. Also, ICSB is working towards a regional initiative in South and Latin America.

We are also very focused on preparing and planning for the highly anticipated 2015 ICSB World Conference in Dubai, UAE. We'll be celebrating 60th annual ICSB World Conference. Offering keynote speeches, parallel sessions and workshops, the conference will explore the theme "Entrepreneurship at a Global Crossroads". Additionally, the program committee is working on exciting new initiatives and events to add to the conference program, ensuring that we provide program activities for members from ICSB's various pillars. The conference will be held from June 6-9th.

In June 2014, ICSB was proud to launch our new, dynamic website. If you haven't already, visit us at www.icsb.org and take a look around. Through this new platform we are able to better connect and communicate with members. The new ICSB blog, The Latest, is focused on highlighting news and updates from the various ICSB affiliate events as well as tracking industry news and trends. The ICSB Portfolio highlights information on the various ICSB programs that are offered throughout the year and the affiliate's page highlights our 16 global affiliates, providing contact information and details about their activities so that new and existing members can learn more about each ICSB location. Finally, the ICSB Calendar provides details on the variety of affiliate events happening throughout the year. With 16 affiliates globally, there is no shortage of ICSB events for members to take advantage of!

Throughout the year we made sure to attend as many events as possible to continue to support our partners in their efforts to bring together members and the international community. In October, ICSB was pleased to once again partner with The George Washington University to host the GW October Global Entrepreneurship Research & Policy Conference. The 4-day event brought together almost 150 delegates from the United States and beyond to discuss trends and best practices in the areas of entrepreneurship policy and research. Additionally, ICSB representatives attended various affiliate events throughout the year including the annual meeting of Brazil and Argentina at the end of September, the ECSB Rent Conference in Luxembourg in November, the ICSB Russia Chapter Entrepreneurial Conference, and the EIF Conference with our affiliates in Taiwan. ICSB was also proud to attend and participate in the OECD meetings in Paris, France at the end of October.

On the affiliate level and membership there are signs of positive progress. Several initiatives were received during the last months. The IO received interest from groups in Mexico, South Africa, Bangladesh, Israel, Ghana, Nigeria, the Philippines, Myanmar, Vietnam, Tibet, Qatar, Chile, Indonesia, Turkey and more recently, Macedonia.

While I believe that on balance our affiliate network is advancing under the stewardship of the Board and International Office, there are isolated challenges that we cannot ignore. In some cases environmental factors make it difficult for affiliates meet their commitments. In other cases the enthusiasm and commitment of a few needs to be supported to build strong affiliates.

As a lead sponsor for the GW October Conference we gain valuable exposure and connections to international organizations working the SME domain. This networking manifested itself with the participation of the Chair of the OECD Working Group on SMEs and the US Small Business Administration Chief Economist participation at the ACSB Conference. These are first steps in making sure ICSB is at the table with the major international players in the SME field such as the World Bank and International Financing Corporation, Inter-American Development Bank, OECD, United Nations, and APEC.

We began this year with three major goals. The first one is to add at least two new affiliates or chapters. It appears that this goal will be met with Malaysia and Mexico. The second goal is to spread globally the activities and institutional presence of ICSB, increasing the number of affiliates/chapters and membership. The third one is to enlarge the sponsorship for ICSB in order to get a stronger ICSB as institution.

In closing, I would like to say thank you to members of the board, to affiliate and chapter boards and especially to the International Office's Team lead by Ayman El Tarabishy for their exceptional work! It is remarkable their continued support and dedication that we are able to continue to deliver programs and events that help establish an industry where entrepreneurs can grow and prosper.

Sincerely yours,

Rubén Ascúa
President of ICSB