

# The Global Catalyst

IRWA Hosts Inaugural Congress for Global Infrastructure Real Estate

BY BARBARA BILLITZER

IRWA's global expansion has witnessed unparalleled growth over the past several years. The Annual Conference has successfully attracted professionals from around the world to explore diverse educational topics and experience valuable networking opportunities.

With members now spanning 15 countries, our international members have much in common as they share similar challenges in planning and executing infrastructure projects. To facilitate a deeper sharing of best practices across borders, IRWA hosted the Inaugural Congress for Global Infrastructure Real Estate in June. Held the day prior to the Annual Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, the educational event featured consecutive sessions presented by IRWA's global partners.

The event was kicked off by IRWA International Relations Group Chair, Lee Hamre, SR/WA, R/W-URAC, R/W-RAC. After a brief welcome by U.S. Congresswoman from Tennessee, Marsha Blackburn, the sessions began. The topics focused on emerging opportunities, as well as some of the most pressing challenges facing infrastructure planning and development. Some of the topics included Acquiring Land Rights in the United Kingdom, South Africa's Strategic Project Planning Process, an update on IRWA's involvement in the International Ethics Coalition and the International Instructors Program.

## Sharing Common Challenges

From Germany's IKT Institute for Underground Infrastructure, Sissis Kamarianakis, Ph.D. spoke about the country's crowded underground space and innovative practices being tested in conjunction with the utilities and water municipalities. Because the underground right of way is shared, the biggest challenge is determining who will be responsible for maintaining it. Electrical cables are now using sewer space, and thereby subject to environmental conditions that must be monitored.

Jesús Rodríguez Dávalos, whose firm Rodríguez Dávalos Abogados sponsored the luncheon program, addressed Energy Reform in Mexico and changes in laws that have opened up investment opportunities for private investors. Financial infusions have worked to support technology for shale, as well as for storage and transportation of oil. In 2014, more than 25 laws were enacted, one of which makes conducting social impact assessments a requirement before a project can begin.

Soraya Pérez Munguía, President of the Administration and Appraisal of National Real Estate Institute of Mexico, spoke about federal infrastructure projects from an economist point of view. It's estimated that 70 percent of all

project costs are associated with right of way acquisition. For major projects like Mexico's international airport, the need for land is significant. To ensure landowners receive current market value, land value tables are used to set equitable parameters.

From the U.S. Trade & Development Agency, Keith Eischeid, Manager for Latin America and the Caribbean, spoke about the agency's support for international infrastructure project planning. Working exclusively in emerging markets, its top projects are in the areas of transportation, energy and telecommunications. The agency obtains grants for feasibility studies in countries with the greatest needs, ranging from electricity projects to building airports. He stressed how funding for these international projects benefits the hosting companies in North America as well.

In wrapping up, Lee commended the attendees for their active participation. "By encouraging these relationships, we will not only improve infrastructure practices around the globe, but also strengthen the right of way profession and IRWA's reputation as a top-tier provider of credentialing and education in the industry," said Lee. 🌍



U.S. Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn and Lee Hamre, SR/WA



INDAABIN President Soraya Pérez Munguía



IKT's Sissis Kamarianakis, Ph.D. (left) with attendees



Meyric Lewis and Gordon MacNair, SR/WA



Colin Smith



USTDA's Keith Eischeid



Jesús Rodríguez Dávalos



Members of Mexico Chapter 85 with agency partners



Chapter 85 Past President Carlos Sandoval Miranda



Faith Roland, SR/WA and IKT's Roland Waniek