



FOR PROFESSIONALS
SINCE 1941

SUSTAINABILITY OF INSURANCE SECTOR EXPLORED AT GLOBAL MUTUAL INSURANCE CONFERENCE IN CAPE TOWN

07 November 2013: The sustainability of the global insurance industry has been a key item on the agenda at the International Cooperative and Mutual Insurance Federation (ICMIF) Biennial Conference, which is taking place between 6-8 November 2013 in Cape Town.

This year's event, which is officially hosted by PPS, marks the first time that this conference is being held on African soil.

According to Mike Jackson, CEO of PPS and recently appointed ICMIF Board member, over 300 delegates, including Chief Executive Officers, Chairs and Senior Managers representing 85 member organisations from 45 countries, have gathered to share their experiences and insights of effective leadership, development and future of cooperative and mutual insurance firms.

On day one of the conference, Kathy Bardswick, CEO of Canada's The Co-operators, emphasised the importance of sustainability for the insurance industry within the context of the rising claims levels, which insurers are already encountering, particularly from extreme weather events.

She said insurers could respond to climate change and environmental degradation by retreating from the problem, perhaps by putting in new policy exclusion clauses or withdrawing from markets. She argued, however, that such an approach would eventually risk the credibility of the whole insurance concept.

She said finding solutions to these issues was key to the survival of the industry, and she threw down a challenge for insurers to get engaged. She called in particular for cooperative and mutual insurers, as organisations run for the benefit of their policyholders, to take the lead.

"From my conversations with senior management of our member firms, it is clear that cooperative and mutual insurers are indeed rising to this and the other challenges we face," says Shaun Tarbuck, CEO of ICMIF.

ICMIF is a global trade association representing more than 220 cooperative and mutual insurers from over 70 countries worldwide, with its members accounting for 5.5% of the world's insurance market in 2012.

Tarbuck says the ICMIF conference has always proved a valuable tool for driving through real change in the industry, with statistics showing that over 87% of the delegates from the last conference held in Manchester in 2011 shared at least one of the conference presentations with their senior management team or Board on their return, and that 61% of ICMIF's member organisations changed their strategy as a consequence.

“This year, as in the past, we are aiming to create a purposeful and professional environment which will allow leaders of our family of cooperative and mutual insurers the time to reflect, to consider new ideas and best practice, to network and, very importantly, to renew their energy for the job,” concludes Tarbuck.