

Newsletter for 2012

As the new Secretary General of the International Economic History Association (IEHA), I am very pleased to send you the 2012 annual Newsletter. Since the Stellenbosch WEHC in July of 2012, the IEHA officers, comprised of Grietjie Verhoef (President), Tetsuji Okazaki (Vice President), Luis Bertola (Treasurer) and myself, have been actively involved in various matters related to the transition of IEHA. This Newsletter is to provide you a brief report on recent IEHA activities, preparation for the 2015 WEHC in Kyoto and the post-Congress summary report on the 2012 WEHC in Stellenbosch.

1. IEHA matters

The first priority of the current secretariat is to transfer the IEHA website to a new and independent domain from the original IEHA website hosted in connection with the University of Tuebingen in Germany. After months of preparation, we are very pleased to bring you this new IEHA website at <http://www.ieha-wehc.org/>. You can find updated information the current Executive Committee (EC) members, list of dissertation prize winners at the Stellenbosch WEHC and other information about the IEHA. This website is entirely the property of IEHA and we aim to build it up over time with more relevant information and features that reflect both the unique history of IEHA as well and the future needs of the economic history discipline. Any suggestions on the current website are most welcome.

2. Preparation for WHEC Kyoto 2015

We are pleased to report that preparations for the next WEHC Kyoto in 2015 have also been in full swing. There will be two rounds of calls for session proposals. The local organizer, in coordination with IEHA secretariat, will issue the first call on March 1st with a deadline to return all submissions by Sept. 1st of 2013. Panel proposals should be submitted online through the Kyoto WEHC site at <http://www.wehc2015.org/>, which is currently under construction but will be in full operation by March 1st. All proposals to be submitted in this first round will be examined by the EC members for discussion and decision at the next EC meeting scheduled to take place in Nov. 7-8 in Kyoto. As with the previous WEHC, there will be a second call for session proposals in Oct. or Nov. of 2013. In the final version, there will be no distinction at the Congress between proposals accepted in the first or second round. Details are to follow in the full version of the first call for session proposals to be issued and distributed from March 1st 2013.

In the Nov.7-8 meeting, the EC members will also have a chance to visit the 2015 WEHC venue, which will be hosted at the spectacular Kyoto International Conference Center.

3. A briefing on 2012 WEHC Stellenbosch

The 2012 WEHC held in Stellenbosch, the first World Congress to be held in Africa, was a great success thanks to the tireless efforts of the local organizers and the energetic leadership of the previous IEHA office. Despite the distance, nearly 800 participants from a total of 55 countries made it to the beautiful and idyllic city of Stellenbosch, South Africa. This included 57 local South African delegates and additional 21 delegates representing 11 African countries. The next largest group of participants were 86 from the US, followed by 67 from the United Kingdom, 62 from Japan, 49 from the Netherlands and 44 from China. The balance was spread over other countries. Participation was therefore truly global although the total attendance, owing to the distance, was admittedly smaller than the two previous Congresses held in Utrecht and Helsinki. Holding the WEHC in Africa for the first time is a truly significant event in IEHA history and will surely generate large long-term pay-offs in the promotion and diffusion of economic history research and teaching worldwide.

Special efforts made by the local organizers have also made the Stellenbosch WEHC a memorable experience being truly global in a uniquely African (or South African) setting. Beyond being an academically stimulating and culturally enriching experience, participants had the opportunity to witness the momentous historical transformation in South Africa and beyond. You may get a glimpse and flavour of the Congress atmosphere by browsing through the series of photos posted as “poststreams” on the Congress web site at <http://www.wehc2012.org/>.

Subsequent to the Congress, the local organizers also conducted a post-congress online survey. Launched on 31 July 2012 and closed on 17 August, all in all, 261 delegates out of 784 completed the survey (33%), This is quite a reasonable return rate given that there was just over 2 weeks to complete the survey. Feedback, according to the survey, was mostly very positive, and where it was not positive, it was constructive. Overall, 37.4% of the response from the surveyed delegates rated the Congress as excellent and 52.8% as good. The IEHA thanks the local organizer for this extremely informative report which will be useful for the organization of future Congresses.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to thank Joerg Baten (the previous Secretary General) and Franziska Tollnek at University of Tuebingen assisting with the transition of the IEHA office to LSE. Our thanks also go to two other IEHA EC Members, Jan Luiten van Zanden (honorary president) and Catherine Schenk, and to Sophia Du Plessis and the organizer of the 2012 Stellenbosch World Economic History Congress (WEHC) for their help. I am particularly grateful to my LSE colleagues, Stephen Broadberry, Leigh Gardner, Tirthankar Roy, Helena Ivins (LSE administrative staff), Niels Kriehoff (LSE Phd student) as well as Chris Colvin (Queen's University Belfast) who have been very generous with their time and expertise whenever called upon.

With best regards

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Secretary General
International Economic History Association (IEHA)