

## **Chairman's Welcoming Address**

Continuing with its theme of improving the service offered to its customers, the Governing Committee of SAFEX International have introduced more innovations in a spirit of continuous improvement attempting to prevent the recurrence of accidents, and to improve all aspects of safety in the production, transport, storage and use of explosives.

First of all, the Governing Committee commissioned The Kelvin Consultants to run a complimentary training programme to interested members of SAFEX. This training programme was on the theme of "Accident Investigation and Reporting".

SAFEX International's whole "raison d'être" is to try and prevent the recurrence of accidents by disseminating information after incidents or near misses. Clearly it follows that accident investigation and reporting is of vital importance if SAFEX is going to succeed in its primary mission. Because this was an interactive course with a high student/tutor ratio, the number of places was restricted to 30. I am pleased to note that all 30 places were taken up by delegates from all over the world. This can only have a beneficial effect on SAFEX and its members.

At the XIII Congress in Dublin in 1999 SAFEX International, for the first time, introduced the concept of "workshops" to allow more delegate participation in smaller groups and more informal discussion between members. At the XIV Congress in Amsterdam, this principle is extended and three workshops will be run concurrently.

The themes for these three workshops were:

- Basis of Safety: Risk Analysis: Hazard Analysis
- Human Behavioural Issues
- Decontamination Issues

Following the success of the workshops at the XIII Congress, each workshop was led by a facilitator nominated from the FEEM Governing Committee. This allowed for the reactive participation of members within the group.

In addition to 18 papers that will be presented at the workshops, 21 papers of very high calibre will be given at the plenary sessions describing various situations with regard to accidents involving explosives throughout the world. On behalf of the Governing Committee, I would like to thank all of the authors for these papers and for their very fine efforts and their contributions towards the improved safety within the explosives industry.

Although civil explosives were not directly involved, the terrible accidents recently at Enschede in Holland and Toulouse in France are a sombre reminder that we can never be too careful, we can never lift our guard, and we must search continuously for improved standards of safety.

Finally, I would like to thank all lecturers and delegates for once again making this such an excellent SAFEX Congress.

Bernard Hueber  
Chairman, SAFEX International