



CHAIRMAN'S MARCH MESSAGE

The last two months have been challenging for everyone with the escalation of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation. As I write this message, the virus has now manifested itself globally. Following the Singapore Government's elevation to DORSCON Orange, we have seen many offices requiring their staff to work from home or implementing split teams as part of their BCP or Business Continuity Processes.

The branch has also had to postpone several of its events namely the CIArb Blockchain Event - Workshop 3: DLT, GDPR, Intellectual Property and Legal Validity of Cryptoassets, Settlement Facilitation of International Disputes, the YMG Pub Quiz, the YMG March Supper Club and Arbitral Women Diversity Toolkit. Do keep a look out for the new dates and we thank you for your understanding during these challenging times.

Over the weekend, CIArb also announced the postponement of the 9-day residential Diploma in International Commercial Arbitration in the Asia Pacific region which was to take place from 28 March 2020 to 5 April 2020 at the AIAC in Kuala Lumpur under the directorship of Francis Xavier, our former branch chair. The regional branch chairs meeting will however proceed on 1 April 2020 with CIArb still considering whether the meeting should be held in person or by way of video conference.

Our own Tim Cooke and B Rengarajoo will be in Maldives in early March to conduct an Introduction to International Arbitration Course at the MIAC in Male.

In terms of recent judgments that may be of interest, the English Court of Appeal in *Kabab-Ji S.A.L.(Lebanon) v Kout Food Group (Kuwait)* [2020] EWCA Civ 6 refused to enforce an ICC award in a Paris-seated arbitration after finding that English and not French law applied to the question of whether the debtor was bound by the arbitration agreement. Closer to home, the Singapore High Court in *CBP v CBS* [2020] SGHC 23 set aside an arbitral award, finding that the arbitrator's decision to deny the plaintiff its right to call all seven witnesses amounted to a breach of the fair hearing rule which caused prejudice to the plaintiff.

I am delighted to announce that the CIArb Guidelines on Witness Conferencing have been nominated for the *GAR Awards 2020 – Best Innovation by an Individual or Organisation*. See the attached link for more details: <https://globalarbitrationreview.com/article/1214833/gar-awards-2020-%E2%80%93-best-innovation>.

The guidelines, were prepared by a subcommittee established by our very own branch and were launched last April at the regional branch conference we hosted in Singapore. Do show your support for this great initiative by voting at this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/GARawards2020>

Finally, do save the date for our Annual AGM. Details below –

Date: 28 April 2020

Time: 4.30pm – 6.00pm

Venue: Clifford Chance (12 Marina Boulevard, Tower 3, #25-00, Marina Bay Financial Centre, Singapore 018982)

Paul Sandosham
Chairman