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AIPH Expo Conference urges exhibitions to highlight the benefit of plants to the world

International Horticultural Exhibitions should celebrate the union of world nations, provide life-changing experiences and adapt to the digital age. They have the potential to change the future of horticulture and the actions of a whole generation. These were some of the key takeaways from the first ever International Association of Horticultural Producers (AIPH) Expo Conference.

Opened by AIPH President, Vic Krahn, and sponsored by Doppelmayr and ARCADIS, the event brought together horticultural expo organisers to ensure that future exhibitions reach their maximum potential.

Almost 80 delegates from 13 countries and senior management teams from six major upcoming AIPH-approved international horticultural exhibitions came together at the Marriott Opera Hotel, Paris on 19 March 2015 to share ideas and gain inspiration.

During the conference Expo Consultant, Sven Stimac from Friends & Friends, said, “What makes an A1 horticultural expo so special is the way it brings together the nations of the world. Organisers should celebrate this during expos, in turn strengthening both international relationships and the horticultural trade.” During his presentation Sven suggested starting work at least seven years before the planned opening date.

Secretary General of the 2014 Organising Committee of the Qingdao International Horticultural Exhibition in China, Li Fengli, highlighted the critical importance of implementing sound and rigorous project management when organising an Expo by building a strong team of staff and volunteers. Li Fengli told delegates “In Qingdao we said the Expo was about common people achieving uncommon things”.

Bart Dohmen, Managing Director of BRC Imagination Arts BV, explained why a clear theme statement is critical to success. He said “When people attend an expo they need to leave having been changed, we have to affect their hearts.” In a world full of entertainment options exhibition organisers need to work hard to understand why someone would visit an expo. “Expos must provide life-changing experiences.”

Senior Landscape Architect with ARCADIS, John Boon, challenged delegates by saying the concept of an expo, bringing people together to learn about the world, is outdated in this digital world. Their new role is to inspire change. Giving examples from the recent A1 Floriade Expo in Venlo, Netherlands in 2012, he showed how an expo impacts on the design and development of whole cities, and plays a crucial role in underlining the importance of

bringing horticulture into everyone's lives. He concluded, "The expo is dead, long live the expo!"

Anca Anghel from the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) that approves World expos and A1 horticultural exhibitions gave examples of recent world expos.

AIPH Marketing & Exhibitions Committee Chairman Kevin Chung thanked all participants for making the day so successful and hoped that the many examples presented of turning theory into practice would really inspire everyone. Closing the conference, AIPH Secretary General, Tim Briercliffe, reminded delegates, "By the end of the decade millions of people worldwide will have been exposed to the world of horticulture through international horticultural exhibitions. What they remember and how they are affected by this is up to you. This is huge responsibility, but one that has the potential to change the perception and actions of a whole generation."

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Notes for Editors:

International Association of Horticultural Producers (AIPH)

AIPH is a co-ordinating body representing horticultural producers' organisations all over the world. It was set up in Switzerland in 1948 to stimulate the international marketing of flowers, plants and landscaping services. Currently membership consists of 26 organisations from 19 countries. For further details visit www.aiph.org.

AIPH Expo Conference

With a mandate agreed by an international convention, AIPH has been approving and regulating International Horticultural Expos, with our partners BIE (www.bie-paris.org), since 1960. Enthusiasm for such expos has continued to grow with millions of people visiting expos hosted all over the world. Recent successes over the last two years include the horticultural expos in Suncheon 2013 (South Korea) and Qingdao 2014 (China) which each attracted over 4 million visitors. AIPH has already approved five expos between now and 2022 in Europe and Asia. These include A1 category Expos in Antalya, Turkey (2016), Beijing, China (2019) and Almere, The Netherlands (2022), as well as A2/B1 category Expos in Tangshan, China (2016) and Taichung, Chinese Taipei (2018/19). Overall visitor numbers are likely to exceed 30 million people in total. Billions of dollars will be spent on developing these international spectacles that have the ability to stimulate the development of whole cities and transform the international reputation of host cities. Each expo lasts for 6 months and sites range from 50 to over 900 hectares in size. Each one is carefully regulated, steered and monitored by AIPH. Organisers are required to report progress to AIPH meetings and each expo sends senior officials to the meetings. For the first time AIPH is combining these update reports with a major international conference and dinner in the heart of Paris.